

ASEC team at Asian People Forum 2018 Advocating Transformative Economies through SSSE & SDGs

Seven member Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) team participated at the ASEAN People Forum (APF). They were Dr Ben Quinones (Philippines), Dr Eri Trinurini & Chandra Firmantoko (Indonesia), Boonsom Namsomboon & Daodol Rummanpol and Kon Onn Sein & Dr Denison Jayasooria & (Malaysia)

APF or the ASEAN Civil society Conference is an annual gathering of CSOs in ASEAN interfacing with the ASEAN Summit. The 2018 gathering was hosted by Singapore and over 250 people gathered at the Singapore Polytechnic Graduates Guild in Singapore from Nov 2 to 4, 2018.

Plenary Sharing at APF

Both Dr Ben Quinones and Dr Denison Jayasooria were speakers at Day one plenary session. Denison highlighted the theme of Sustainable development goals- the 2030 agenda with that the ASEAN community vision of 2025 drawing complementarities & lessons. Ben on the other hand presented the fivefold agenda of SSE namely the triple bottom line (people, profits & environment) and two others namely governance & edifying values. We both noted that SSE could be a useful tool to realise the holistic goals of SDGs at the grassroots.

Workshop Sharing at APF

The ASEC Team hosted a workshop on day 2 on the theme Transformative Economic Movements at the ASEAN Grassroots: Hope & Inclusion. About thirty people participated at this WS1 held on Nov 3, 2018 from 11am to 1pm at ACSC/APF 2018 in Singapore. Here we made five presentations.

Denison presented an overview of SDGs, SSE & ASEAN community vision followed by the presentation of four case studies which are country specific. Onn Sein presented a micro case study from Malaysia of how a group of nomadic forest based indigenous community who were hunter & gathers are now organic vegetable farmers. Boobsoom highlight the story of the informal sector namely street vendors in Bangkok who were in solidarity for their business development but at the same time exercised their citizenship human rights in hosting a street demonstration to fights and advocacy their rights to undertake business activities without corruption and harassment of local city enforcement officials. Eri of Indonesia drew on the work of Bina Swadaya's village revitalisation program to address rural-urban migrations well as migration to other countries as low skilled workers. Ben highlights the exploitation of poor peasants in Isabela province in Philippines highlighting their application to SDGs and SSE in their grassroots action.

We concluded the workshop noting the challenges and solutions needed. ASEC has recommendation that ASEAN CSO/NGOs undertake a mapping exercise of our activities with SDGs – goals, targets and indicators. We also have called for the write up of grassroots realities not just the description of human rights violations but the local solutions undertaken by the grassroots committees in addressing their economic, social & cultural rights as well as their civil & political rights.

Written by Denison Jayasooria, Chair of ASEC. (Nov 4, 2018)