

# Advancing Future Skills for ASEAN Youth Workforce: ASEAN Foundation and LinkedIn Launch ASEAN Ahead Programme

*The ASEAN Foundation, with support from LinkedIn, launched the ASEAN Ahead programme to equip ASEAN youth with AI skills, soft skills, and career pathways.*

JAKARTA, DKI JAKARTA, INDONESIA, February 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The ASEAN Foundation, with support from LinkedIn, has officially launched the ASEAN AI for Youth Empowerment and Development or ASEAN Ahead, a two-year regional initiative aimed at equipping 18,200 young people across the 11 ASEAN Member States with workforce-ready artificial intelligence (AI) skills, necessary soft skills, and practical career pathways through training, mentorship, and access to professional networks and employment opportunities.

Over the past five years, ASEAN economies have increasingly leveraged AI to support economic growth. However, concerns remain over workforce readiness and inclusive access to emerging opportunities. While there is evidence that AI is impacting jobs in small pockets, it's also creating demand at scale – including more than 600,000 new, AI-enabled data centre jobs and 1.3 million new roles like AI Engineers, Forward-Deployed Engineers and Data Annotators globally. Additionally, AI Engineer is one of the fastest-growing jobs on LinkedIn over the past three years, reflecting sustained demand for AI-centric roles ranging from Directors of AI to Machine Learning Researchers. This mix of uneven hiring and AI-driven job creation marks the emergence of the new-collar era, a workforce that blends knowledge work, advanced technical skills and distinctly human strengths.

Furthermore, an estimated 57 per cent of the region's 164 million workers may see their jobs transformed by generative AI, with women, youth, and informal workers particularly vulnerable. LinkedIn predicts that skills for all jobs will change by at least 70% by 2030. Without timely and inclusive intervention, existing inequalities could deepen, as only a small proportion of the workforce transitions into higher-skilled, AI-enabled roles.

In response to these challenges, the ASEAN Foundation, supported by LinkedIn, aims to empower ASEAN youth with future-ready AI skills to remain competitive in an increasingly digital and AI-driven economy.

"ASEAN's competitiveness in the digital era will depend on how well its workforce adapts to technological change. Preparing young people for an AI-enabled economy is not a short-term

intervention, but a long-term investment in the region's economic resilience. Through this programme, we are committed to equipping ASEAN youth to navigate an evolving future of work," said Dr. Piti Srisangnam, Executive Director of the ASEAN Foundation.

ASEAN Ahead is a regional initiative that combines AI-powered tools with human-centred approaches to strengthen the school-to-work transition and improve youth employability. Through personalised learning pathways, mentorship, and direct connections to employers, the programme supports young people, including those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), university students, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) learners, and underserved youth, to gain job-relevant AI and digital skills and access real employment opportunities across the 11 ASEAN Member States.

The programme comprises a series of integrated activities, including AI Career Readiness Training leveraging LinkedIn's AI-enabled learning resources, peer mentorship, talent matching and employment pathways that connect learners directly with job opportunities, and a Regional Dialogue and Job Fair. These platforms will bring together youth, policymakers, employers, industry leaders, and other stakeholders to foster inclusive dialogue on the future of work and AI-driven workforce development in ASEAN.

"The labour market is rotating towards AI-enabled opportunity — and the priority now is ensuring young people can access it. We're proud to partner with the ASEAN Foundation on ASEAN Ahead to equip ASEAN youth with future-ready skills, mentorship and pathways into work, so the region's transformation is inclusive and sustainable," said Tuan Pham, Director of Social Impact, APAC.

The initiative directly supports ASEAN Shared Vision 2045 by expanding inclusive digital learning opportunities for NEET and TVET youth, enhancing workforce competitiveness through AI skills and decent work, and promoting sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable groups. Aligned with the ASEAN Youth Index (2023) and regional employment priorities, the programme addresses persistent challenges such as high NEET rates (16.3 per cent) and gender gaps by equipping young people with recognised digital and AI competencies for the platform economy.

At the same time, ASEAN Ahead also advances ASEAN's broader AI agenda by supporting the principles outlined in the ASEAN Responsible AI Roadmap and the ASEAN AI Guide, helping to bridge AI readiness and skills disparities, and preparing ASEAN youth to participate meaningfully in the region's emerging USD 1 trillion digital economy.

\*\*\*

#### About the ASEAN Foundation

Three decades after ASEAN was established, ASEAN leaders recognised that: there remained inadequate shared prosperity, ASEAN awareness and contact among people of ASEAN. It was of this concern that ASEAN leaders established the ASEAN Foundation during ASEAN's 30th

Anniversary Commemorative Summit in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 15 December 1997. ASEAN Foundation is an organisation from and for the people of ASEAN. The Foundation exists because of one vision: to build a cohesive and prosperous ASEAN Community. As an ASEAN body, the Foundation is tasked to support ASEAN mainly in promoting awareness, identity, interaction, and development of the people of ASEAN. For more info about the ASEAN Foundation, visit [www.aseanfoundation.org](http://www.aseanfoundation.org).

#### About LinkedIn

LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful and transforms how companies hire, learn, market, and sell. Our vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce through the ongoing development of the world's first Economic Graph. LinkedIn has over 1.3 billion members and has offices around the globe. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

Anthoni Octaviano

ASEAN Foundation

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/893618165>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.