



ASEAN Youth Volunteers Inspire Through Sustainable Fashion Education

Friday, November 7th, 2025

eYAA (eMpowering Youth Across ASEAN), is a program launched by the Maybank Foundation and ASEAN Foundation, they aim to harness the potential of young leaders to deliver meaningful and sustainable impact across communities. This year, ten youths from all ten ASEAN member states were selected through a competitive process to represent their countries. Together, they work to address pressing social, cultural, and environmental issues.

TRI Cycle, a social enterprise, based in Bali - Indonesia, was among those chosen to join this year's cohort. Known for their commitment to sustainability and textile upcycling, TRI Cycle's selection marks a proud achievement not only for their team, but also for Indonesia's growing green innovation movement.

Rekynd, a community center in Bali and a textile waste management initiative founded by TRI Cycle, focuses on empowering communities and turning textile waste into valuable materials. Through sorting, donating, upcycling, and community initiatives like clothes swapping and workshops, Rekynd welcomed a diverse group of ASEAN Youth Volunteers from 10 countries

which all united by a shared mission to learn, create change, and inspire a new perspective on fashion and sustainability.

Behind the vibrant fabrics and trendy styles lies a hidden crisis: the overwhelming environmental toll of textile waste. In Indonesia alone, over 2.3 million tons of textile waste are generated every year, much of which ends up in landfills or polluting rivers and surrounding ecosystems. At the same time, many families, especially those from lower-income communities, continue to struggle to access affordable, good-quality clothing. This paradox highlights the urgent need for sustainable and inclusive solutions within the fashion industry.



Indonesia still lacks effective systems for textile waste management, leading most discarded materials to end up improperly disposed of or incinerated, releasing harmful pollutants into the air. Limited public awareness and education on sustainability have also contributed to the problem, revealing a significant knowledge gap among students and local communities about how fashion consumption directly impacts the planet.



To address this, Sustainable Fashion Fest (SFF) 2025 returned to promote fashion that's more sustainable and eco-friendly. The event was held on August 2-3, 2025, at The Ambengan Tenten (TAT), Denpasar. The movement encourages people to start living a more sustainable fashion lifestyle. Together with 10 youths of ASEAN Youth Volunteers, TRI Cycle and Rekynd organized a series of educational activities road to Sustainable

Fashion Fest to introduce the concept of sustainable fashion to the younger generation. A total of 800 participants with 8 partners joined and 1300+ clothing washes were managed during the two-day event.

Tria Syaftira, SFF Participants stated, "This was my first experience joining the event. Through the swap clothes activity, I discovered that refreshing your wardrobe doesn't have to be expensive or wasteful. It's all about exchanging, reusing, and finding joy in something new to you."

Through the **Sustainable Fashion Festival 2025 pre-events**, they collaborated with students to turn discussions on waste and creativity into hands-on learning experiences. In collaboration with SMPN 5 Abiansema, Badung, they hosted an upcycling workshop involving 1,050 students, guiding them to create keychains from fabric scraps. The activity sparked creativity and environmental awareness, showing participants that even the smallest pieces of waste can be transformed

into something useful and meaningful. Despite facing challenges such as cultural and language barriers, the team remained resilient and adaptable. Moments of confusion quickly turned into collaboration and laughter, reflecting the spirit of unity that drives cross-ASEAN initiatives. In the end, the volunteers not only shared knowledge but also built lasting connections, proving that when creativity, empathy, and purpose come together, meaningful change follows.



Mang Gus, one of the beneficiaries, shared his impressions of the program. He stated that the workshop is meaningful because it helps reduce fabric waste. Instead of discarding old fabrics which can harm the environment, we can reuse them to make something useful and creative, like these keychains.



Beyond school, they also targeted low-income family communities in Bali through Charity Bazaar at Sungai Watch Community Center Bali to provide access to affordable and good-quality clothing while raising awareness about the environmental impact of textile waste. The Youth Volunteers took part in organizing and executing the event, assisting from the early preparations through to the implementation. They helped set up the bazaar area, arranged clothing displays, and directly

served customers throughout the day.

This event was supported by Sungai Watch, an organization dedicated to cleaning rivers from waste; TUKR, a local partner specializing in renewable energy innovation by collecting and recycling used cooking oil (UCO) into renewable biodiesel and jet fuel; and Rekynd, which manages textile waste through circular fashion initiatives. Together, these organizations managed to give 96 clothes to 21 recipients, embodying the spirit of collaboration between environmental, social, and creative sectors.



"We hope this activity reaches more people. Clothing waste is difficult to decompose, so after joining this event, I've come to better understand the importance of not throwing textile waste carelessly, especially into rivers," added I Nyoman Mudita, also known as Pak Man, Community Leader of Sungai Watch Community Center.

"We initiated this event because we believe that wearable clothing should be accessible to everyone, regardless of economic background. This is a small step towards fairer and more sustainable fashion," explained Lucia Mira, Co-Founder of Rekynd. "We hope this initiative will not only help those in need, but also inspire the wider community to start seeing used clothing as something valuable and full of stories. Instead of ending up in landfills, these clothes can find new life with people who truly need them." added Lucia Mira.

"I really enjoyed this activity. I also appreciated the contributions made by the youth volunteers, from sorting clothes to distributing flyers to the local community to attract visitors. I really learned a lot today," said Yaya, a youth volunteer from Malaysia.

The enthusiasm of the ASEAN Youth Volunteers showed how unity across ASEAN can turn diversity into strength. Through collective effort, they are helping build a greener, more inclusive future, proving that empowered youth can transform awareness into real action. Together, they carry a simple yet powerful message: sustainability and solidarity can guide the next generation toward a more conscious world.

All of the activities highlighted how sustainability can be inclusive and action-driven. By engaging students, local residents, volunteers, and business owners, Rekynd showed that small actions from sorting fabrics to repurposing used clothes can collectively make a big impact. The collaboration proved that sustainability is a shared responsibility. Each participant, no matter

their background, contributed to reimagining fashion as a force for social and environmental good.

To learn more about Rekynd's and TRI Cycle's sustainability initiatives and future programs, visit:

[\[https://rekynd.tricycle.co.id|https://www.instagram.com/rekynd.id\]](https://rekynd.tricycle.co.id|https://www.instagram.com/rekynd.id)

[\[https://tricycle.co.id|https://www.instagram.com/tricycle.id\]](https://tricycle.co.id|https://www.instagram.com/tricycle.id)

and be part of their journey toward a more conscious and sustainable future in fashion.