Terms of Reference (ToR)

Flagship Research-Adaptation of the _**Research Data Collector Leader**_ for Assessing the Impact of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiatives in Laos (Bokeo and Savannakhet provinces).

1. Background of the AMPLIFY program

**AMPLIFY: Amplifying women's peace actions in ASEAN** ("the Program") is a 5-year program intended to mitigate the disproportionate impacts of conflict and insecurity on women in ASEAN, and to strengthen peace actions through women's participation and receipt of benefits.

The program builds on ASEAN's Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and is aligned with global WPS commitments under UNSCR 1325. Through strengthened partnerships and capacity building, the project envisions long-term institutional changes that will continue to influence peace and security efforts in the region beyond the life of the project. The outcomes recognise that for action to be comprehensive, it must engage women in communities impacted by conflict and insecurity, civil society organisations, and national and regional decision-makers _to both respond to existing threats and de-escalate emerging threats at the regional, national, and local levels._ Three outcomes are envisioned:

- _**Outcome 1:**_ ASEAN and ASEAN Member States demonstrate meaningful commitment to women, peace, and security and advance knowledge and dialogue.
- _**Outcome 2:**_ Civil society organisations in ASEAN influence women, peace and security actions and delivery of national and regional commitments and elevate and amplify women's participation and leadership.
- _**Outcome 3:**_ Women meaningfully participate and lead in peace and security actions in areas vulnerable to insecurity so that responses are informed by women's voices and mitigate insecurity.

The program will support women undertaking peace and security initiatives within their communities, as leaders and contributors to peace initiatives, to connect with local civil society organizations who are also working on peace and security issues. These engagement platforms will be a safe space where participants will be able to share experiences and learn from one another about local efforts to manage peace and security.

The program will integrate a strong focus on learning, knowledge, and understanding of WPS while designing activities in new programming areas. This is key to developing activities that are contextually relevant, sustainable, and ambitious while adhering to the principle of Do No Harm. A learning approach is especially important, given the significant information gaps that exist about WPS in Laos and Cambodia, and the challenges around meeting ASEAN regional commitments.
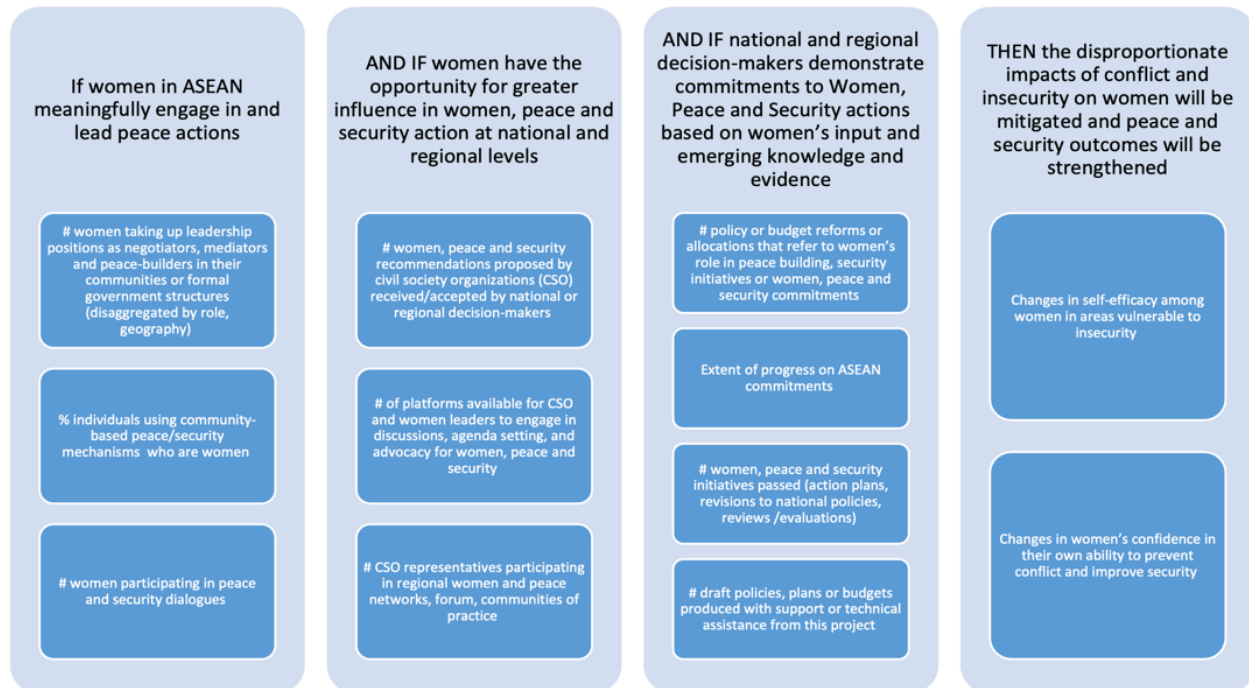
2. The Flagship Research

2.1 Purpose

The program's flagship research, the _Comprehensive Multi-Year Research,_ examines the core theory of change (TOC) of the program, which _engages women in peace and security initiatives across the entire system (regional-national-civil society-community), mitigates insecurity's negative impacts on women, and ultimately leads to greater peace and security for everyone._ This

research is critical to addressing significant gaps in the understanding of gender dynamics in WPS+[1] in the Lao PDR. Hence, by adapting the well-established Monash Study[2]Originally designed to assess attitudes toward violent extremism, this research will broaden its scope to encompass community-level conflict and insecurity, allowing for tailored, context-specific insights that will inform local and regional peacebuilding efforts. Cambodia

Below is a visual representation of the AMPLIFY TOC:

2.2. Research Questions

The flagship primary purpose is to build on the Monash research methodology piloted in other Asian contexts.[3] and assess the program theory of change and outcomes, particularly outcome 3: **Women meaningfully participate and lead in peace and security actions in areas vulnerable to insecurity so that responses are informed by women's voices and mitigate insecurity.**

While additional indicators may be considered following the baseline stage of this research, the following indicators, under outcome 3 of the program at which the flagship study is targeted at, would be of particular interest to guide the overall purpose and methodology of the study:

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[1] While traditional WPS has centered issues of armed conflict, insecurity , peace process and peacebuilding, WPS+ recognizes the importance of emerging issues such as cyber security, trafficking in persons and migration, climate change, natural resources and their management, and violent extremism.
2 https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_9e01bedbe6694e1780aa0fab557cbadd.pdf
[3]https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1779024/Academic-paper-Building-an-evidence-base-for-empowering-women-for-peaceful-communities.pdf

- Changes in self-efficacy among women in areas vulnerable to insecurity
- Changes in women's confidence in their own ability to prevent conflict and improve security

The program aims to empower women, but the research will examine outcomes among men and women. The study will track changes in attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions related to peace, insecurity, and conflict mitigation among women and men in program sites (primary site) in a way that reasonable comparisons can be made with non-program sites from other similar studies (secondary data).

The flagship is guided by preliminary research questions, including:

- To what extent do existing peace activities and mechanisms meet the needs of women?
- To what extent does engaging in WPS programming change self-confidence and self-efficacy for mitigating conflict and insecurity, resolving disputes, and promoting social cohesion disputes among women and men?
- What are the perceived benefits that women and communities, reached through the Amplify program, experience as a result of engaging with WPS platforms and mechanisms available in their communities?
- How have attitudes and behaviours of target communities changed as a result of the Amplify program activities?

Noted:
1. *All research questions will be developed by the research consultant team and translated into the local language by the program in Laos. So, the research assistant just needs to make sure that all questions align with the local context of each research area and population in Bokeo and Savannakhet provinces.*
2. *The research consultant team will work on the data analysis and report to the program of the whole research scope, including Lao and Cambodia.*

2.3. Scope of Work

The research Assistant should have strong skills in using quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess the impact of social cohesion and women's empowerment programs on attitudes and perceptions regarding WPS+ issues. While conflict and insecurity are a central focus, the Monash tools and methods will be adapted to address wider issues of peace and security in different communities. Key features of this approach include:

1. **Contextual Adaptation:** The Research Data Collection Leader will incorporate the research consultant team, local program staff, and government partners at the district and community level for the data collection tools adaptation to ensure that all fit into the Lao and specific target communities.
2. **Participatory Approach:** Local researchers will be actively engaged in the research design and implementation. This participatory process will ensure the study's cultural relevance, using key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather diverse perspectives.
3. **Longitudinal Comparison:** The study will track changes over time at both individual and group-specific, if applicable, at community levels by incorporating longitudinal components.

4. **The data** will be collected at three key points: baseline (Year 1), midline (Year 2.5), and endline (Year 4), providing a comprehensive view of the program's impact.
5. **The data report:** the local researcher needs to ensure that all primary and secondary data have been put together safely, systematically, and be able to submit the key findings/data to the research consultant team.
6. **Requirements**
   o **Survey n=200 across research sites (planned programming and non-programming sites) in 5 districts (2 districts from Bokeo with 80 people and 3 from Savannakhet provinces for 120 people)**
     a. 50/50 adult men and women (if weighted, towards women), ideally including people who identify as gender-diverse and/or trans
     b. Variety of backgrounds (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion, language, age, rural/urban, etc.)
     c. The raw data will be shared with the research team from Monash University and Griffith University, who will conduct the statistical analysis.

   o **40 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and FGD with specific expertise on the subject to help us interpret the survey findings in an ethical, confidential format (2 districts from Bokeo with 16 groups and 3 from Savannakhet provinces for 24 groups)**
     d. 50/50 adult men and women (if weighted, towards women), ideally including people who identify as gender-diverse and/or trans
     e. variety of backgrounds (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion, language, age, rural/urban, etc.)
     f. **KII/FGD participants**: community and religious leaders/scholars (Buddhist and non-Buddhist), civil society organizations (women and LGBTIQ+ focused), (local) government, programme recipients

2.4. Expected Deliverables

The deliverables from this research will serve multiple purposes. Baseline, midline, and endline survey reports will inform both national programming on WPS, while comparative analysis reports will offer actionable insights to policymakers and CSOs working to enhance women's leadership in peacebuilding efforts. The study report will provide key recommendations aimed at strengthening WPS policies and promoting more effective interventions in areas impacted by insecurity. The midline and final study will also help the Asia Foundation and partners strengthen the knowledge base on WPS.

- A data report with all required sections (to be agreed upon) with a customized research instrument tailored to the contexts of Laos.
- A baseline report with initial findings on community peace, insecurity, and women's empowerment, and further adaptation of methodology and tools for midline and endline research.
- Midline (if feasible) and endline reports developed after subsequent survey rounds.

2.5. Timeline (tentative)

Year 1: Formative Research/baseline data collection and data report by August 2025.
Year 2-3: Midline data collection and report by December 2026 (The feasibility of a midline will

be discussed and assessed the practicality).
Year 4: Endline data collection and final report by December 2028, covering the entire period of the project.

2.6. Requirements

Technical Expertise: (individual and team)
- Proven experience in conducting large-scale, mixed-methods research with a focus on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) or related fields such as gender equality, conflict prevention, social cohesion, or community peacebuilding.
- Strong ability to collect data and translate surveys and participatory qualitative tools (e.g., Surveys, KIIs, FGDs).
- Proven experience designing and conducting **baseline, midline, and endline** studies, including longitudinal data tracking.
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- Familiarity with adapting research tools and methodologies to different sociocultural contexts, particularly in Laos, with demonstrated ability to modify instruments to reflect local dynamics and linguistic considerations.
- Previous experience working with vulnerable populations, including women, ethnic minorities, and marginalized communities,

Experience and Samples:
- A portfolio of previous research outputs demonstrating high-quality deliverables such as baseline/midline/endline studies, comparative analyses, and other related research products.
- Prior experience conducting similar studies in Laos, with samples of relevant work included in the application.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency:
- Ability to engage with local researchers and community stakeholders in Laos to ensure that data collection tools and methodologies are culturally and contextually appropriate.
- Proficiency in local languages (Lao) or proven ability to work with local translators to adapt research tools for diverse communities.
- Knowledge and application of **Do No Harm** principles, including familiarity with safeguarding, confidentiality, and informed consent processes.

Access to Target Areas:
- Demonstrated capacity to access and conduct fieldwork in remote or hard-to-reach areas of Laos, while addressing potential geographic, political, or logistical barriers.

Digital platforms
- Familiar*ly with digital platforms such as* a Kobo Toolbox, ODK is a plus.
- Strong capacity to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, with experience in longitudinal studies and a track record of delivering high-quality research reports

2.7. Budget

Based on the number of working days and professional fees per day.

2.8. Application process:

Technical Proposal:
- A detailed technical proposal (maximum 5 pages) that outlines your approach to adapting the Monash Study for Laos, including proposed methodologies and samples, ethics

review, risks and do no harm principles, data collection and analysis strategies, and a timeline for delivering the key milestones.

Sample Work:
- At least 1-2 samples of previous research reports or studies similar in scope to the Flagship Research, demonstrating experience in WPS or related fields.

Team Composition:
- A brief description of the researcher, including the role and expertise, with CVs attached

Work Plan and Budget:
- A service fee per day and any anticipated travel or logistical expenses will be covered by the program for each work period.

References:
- Contact information for at least two references from recent clients or institutions for whom similar research has been conducted.

Submission Details:
- Submit all documents in PDF format by 15 May 2025 to khamsa.homsombath@asiafoundation.org. Please include "Application for Flagship Research Assistant" in the subject line.