

Research objectives and parameters

1. The main objective of the research is to examine and evaluate women's access to justice in the plural legal systems of eight countries in Southeast Asia towards developing strategies for enhancing women's access to justice. The eight countries are Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Viet Nam. The research will be directed at answering two main questions:
 - (a) *What does access to justice look like for women in the plural legal systems of Southeast Asia?*
 - (b) *How can an understanding of women's access to justice in the plural legal systems of Southeast Asia be used to inform strategies for enhancing women's access to justice?*
2. The examination of women's access to justice in plural legal systems in Southeast Asia will cover *state, non-state, and quasi-state legal orders* or justice mechanisms existing in well-defined communities, which are recognized and accepted as the legitimate sources of law and authority for conduct regulation and dispute resolution by members of the community, regardless of the legal order's relation to the state. A "well-defined community" may be confined to a territory or physical space, or defined by identity (e.g., by religion, culture, ethnicity, or sexuality) or political affiliation, among others, whether by ascription or self-ascription. Some itinerant or mobile populations may qualify as a well-defined community. Well-defined communities by political affiliation may include social or mass movements. Sometimes communities overlap and the issues they face intersect with those of other groups and communities (given multiple identities and self-ascription).
3. In answering the research questions, a number of sub-questions have to be answered as aspects of the problem of women's access to justice. Some of those questions are: