



YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Lotus Circle Advisors, Members, and Friends,
As this year comes to a close, I think of the critical work still to be done to improve the lives of women and girls across Asia. But it is also important to celebrate the work we have accomplished this year in service of that goal—below are some key highlights for you to explore. Much of this work is only possible as a result of the generous and enthusiastic support of the Lotus Circle. On behalf of the Women’s Empowerment Program, I thank you all for everything you do to improve the lives of women and girls.

In the new year, we hope to launch a number of exciting programs, including projects focused on advancing women’s entrepreneurship, women’s safety in urban centers, and securing climate justice.

[As you consider your end-of-year giving, I hope you will keep The Asia Foundation in mind.](#) We would be thrilled to continue this impactful partnership with you in the year ahead.

Warm regards,
Jane

Donate

FEBRUARY



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN: On February 13, Jane Sloane met Lotus Circle advisors in New York to provide an update on WEP's ambitious and exciting vision and strategic plan, as well as to share some of the recent ways Lotus Circle funds directly impacted women and girls in Asia.

MARCH



TWEETCHAT FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: On March 7, The Asia Foundation, in partnership with World Vision, ACDI/VOCA, Knowledge for Health (K4Health), Chemonics, Promundo, WI-HER, URC, and Banyan Global held an all-day Twitter conversation to celebrate International Women's Day. The Foundation led a dialogue "Building a Gender Smart Organization." Using

the hashtag #IWDchat17, government, NGO, and private sector development and health experts reflected on progress made to advance women's rights and gender equality, gaps that remain, and what it will take to empower women in 2017 and beyond.

APRIL



YOUNG LOTUS SOIREE: Lin Jamison hosted an extraordinary 5th Annual Young Lotus Soiree at Klein Sun Gallery in New York City. Seventy people attended and many participated in a silent auction that featured items like a beautiful Indian sari, Chloe handbag, Gucci necklace, Aubert Chardonnay, private painting lessons, Yankee tickets, stunning earrings designed by Lin Jamison,

and an exclusive breakfast and Tiffany shopping experience at Tiffany & Co. The event raised

\$22,830 for our women's empowerment program, supporting our work across Asia.

MAY



ASEAN SUMMIT: The Asia Foundation, on behalf of the US State Department, organized the [ASEAN Summit](#) in Manila. At the summit, Jane Sloane facilitated a conversation with Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies; Ambassador Rosario Manalo, Philippine Expert in the CEDAW Committee, United Nations; and

Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh, President, Ho Chi Minh City Peace and Development Foundation and former Member of Parliament. Key recommendations included:

- Map women's entrepreneurship across ASEAN countries and create a regional women entrepreneurs' initiative.
- Commit to a regional action plan for women, peace and security that responds to the needs of domestic and migrant workers, and a 2018 ASEAN women's conference in Singapore.

JUNE



NEW ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROJECT:

The Foundation launched an anti-trafficking project in Mongolia that will build capacity of over 500 law enforcement officers to adhere to international best practices on victim-centered investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases. [Read more.](#)

JULY



SANTA FE INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART MARKET: From July 15–17, the Lotus Circle supported five women entrepreneurs along with representatives from local artist training organizations from Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, and Laos to attend the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. The female entrepreneurs sold their textiles and products from The Asia Foundation booth, making over \$15,000,

which will support them to sustain their businesses, educate their children, and attract more women to take up this work in their villages.

AUGUST



GENDER SMART TRAININGS: Throughout 2019, the Women's Empowerment Program's Barbara Rodriguez and Elizabeth Silva facilitated interactive gender training workshops for Foundation staff in Laos, Vietnam, Pakistan, and San Francisco, as well as with our Asia Development Fellows. The trainings included gender sensitization exercises about how gender issues affect us

individually, and how and why it is critical to advance gender equality both institutionally and programmatically. The trainings ended with participants brainstorming what each could do in their work to advance gender equality. The trainings were funded by The Asia Foundation's Gender Smart Initiative, made possible through the generous support from Lotus Circle Advisor Gina Lin Chu.

SEPTEMBER



ASIAN APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT: The Asia Foundation, in partnership with the Korea Development Institute, hosted the Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation dialogue series, focusing on aligning efforts

with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Development experts and government officials from across Asia and beyond came together [in May in Manila](#) to explore planned urbanization and the New Urban Agenda (SDG 11), and again [in September in Ulaanbaatar](#) to discuss women and girls' empowerment (SDG 5). [Read the report.](#)



SALON ON PAKISTAN: The Asia Foundation's Pakistan Country Representative, Sofia Shakil, joined a Lotus Circle Lunch and Learn in New York City hosted by Lotus Circle Advisor Carol Rattray. Sofia described the key challenges facing women and girls in Pakistan and the opportunities for an increased focus on women's economic empowerment and

agency. Sofia gave an overview of the Foundation's work to empower women and girls, including:

- a program to decrease child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, and
- supporting women's access to justice by strengthening the quality of alternative dispute resolution services for women.

[Learn more](#) about The Asia Foundation's work in Pakistan.

OCTOBER



LOTUS LEADERSHIP AWARDS GALA: On October 12, the Foundation's Women's Empowerment Program and Lotus Circle Advisors honored Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen and The Henry Luce Foundation for their contributions to women's and girls' empowerment in Asia, at the seventh annual Lotus Leadership Awards Gala in New York City. [View image slideshow.](#)



SALON ON NEPAL: On October 27, Lotus Circle Advisors Winnie Feng and Lin Jamison co-hosted a Lotus Circle Salon at Christie's New York with The Asia Foundation's Representative in Nepal, George Varughese. George spoke about the new constitution, as well as the impact of recent and upcoming elections on women and girls in Nepal. He also described how the funds raised

by the Lotus Circle were very quickly mobilized to save lives in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes in 2015 and supported work with local partners in preventing human trafficking of vulnerable women and children.



FIRST SALON IN SAN FRANCISCO: On October 21, Wendy Soone-Broder, Acting Chief Philanthropy Officer, hosted a dozen prospective Lotus Circle members and Advisors for a luncheon in San Francisco. After hearing from Jane Sloane about the Foundation's programs to empower women and meeting Elizabeth Silva and Barbi Rodriguez, attendees heard from Lucy Lee of

Goldman Sachs, Lotus Circle Bay Area Convener, who described what inspired her to get involved. We were delighted to hear such excitement from this group of philanthropists and industry leaders who are very much looking forward to sponsoring and attending the Lotus Leadership Awards Dinner in San Francisco.

NOVEMBER



IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE WORKPLACE IN CHINA: In November, we released a new report on the impact of domestic violence (DV) on the workplace in China. The Asia Foundation and SynTao initiated the one-year research project in 2016, which surveyed 706 employees and 93

employers and conducted in-depth, structured interviews with eight DV survivors and seven employers in diverse industries. The study fulfilled two purposes: (1) to establish a baseline of knowledge on the understandings, experiences, and effects of DV in the workplace among employees and employers; and (2) to inform and improve employer responses to DV, as required by the DV Law. [Read the report.](#)

DECEMBER



SALON ON THAILAND: On December 4, Thomas Parks, Country Representative in Thailand, discussed Thailand's crucial transition year, as the country returns to an electoral democracy and tries to move on after the royal succession. Women's leadership will be crucial in shaping the future political situation. Guests heard about how, with the Lotus Circle's support, The Asia Foundation is supporting women's engagement and

leadership in peacebuilding and economic opportunities.



LOTUS CIRCLE NY GROWS: On December 21, Lotus Circle Advisor and Foundation Trustee Winnie Feng hosted a salon with David Arnold, President of The Asia Foundation, and Barbara Rodriguez of the Women's Empowerment Program to welcome two new Lotus Circle advisors, Debby Carter and Leyli Zohrenejad. Current Lotus Circle Advisors Masako Shinn, Janet Montag, Lin

Jamison, and Nobuko Sakurai helped welcome Debby and Leyli, as well as newcomers interested in learning more about our work. David Arnold and Barbara Rodriguez discussed The Asia Foundation's groundbreaking research and reports, provided highlights from the WEP program, and gave a preview of what's to come in 2018.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Missed the November edition of Lotus Letter? View it [here](#).

The Lotus Letter photo (top of email) depicts The Asia Foundation's mental health and psychosocial training sessions held with Counselling Assistants in Sri Lanka. Image courtesy of Gemunu Amarasinghe.

