



July 2018

Dear Lotus Circle Advisors, Members, and Friends,

The past month has offered terrific opportunities to reflect on our work and to share key lessons and insights with audiences around the world – including the Chatham House International Policy Forum in London, the latest Lotus Salon in New York, and the release of a short video spotlighting one of the women entrepreneurs from the Women's Business Center in Mongolia who is having such success with her work.

Next month in Sri Lanka we'll be convening key staff who work on women's empowerment and gender equality across The Asia Foundation's 18 country offices. Here we'll be sharing programs with a strong gender focus that have the potential to be adapted and scaled to other countries and contexts together with considering trends and issues where we need to focus more attention. Importantly, as part of our [Gender Smart Initiative](#) – of which Lotus Circle Advisor Gina Lin Chu was the lead investor – this convening will contribute to our commitment to staff having the capacity and skills necessary to design and implement effective programming that promotes women's economic empowerment, political voice and leadership, and rights and security in Asia and the Pacific while advancing gender equality through all of our programs.

In the meantime, I'm looking forward to seeing those Lotus Advisors who will be joining a Lotus

Circle retreat on the East Coast in just a few days' time!

Warm regards,
Jane

HIGHLIGHTS

New video profiles graduate of Women's Business Center in Mongolia



The Asia Foundation has created a new video profiling Undrakh, one of the first participants in the Women's Business Center and Incubator in Mongolia. Undrakh migrated from the countryside to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital city, and started her own handicrafts business to support her family. However, she did not know how to get her product to market and reach customers. The Women's Business Center helped her access a network, advisors, trainings, and support services so that she could overcome barriers,

develop a profitable market strategy, and turn her business ideas into a reality.

See Undrakh's journey [here](#).

Asia Foundation and Attorney General's Office of Afghanistan prepare women law graduates to be prosecutors



Women's participation in the legal sector has increased dramatically in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, but overall representation remains low. Working with the Attorney General's Office (AGO) of Afghanistan, The Asia Foundation led a six-month legal internship program to train 242 female law

graduates in practical skills such as legal writing, public speaking, courtroom behavior, networking, and basic computer literacy. The overall goal was to prepare them for success on the AGO entrance examination, giving them the opportunity to join the legal sector as entry-level prosecutors across the country. 115 of these graduates have since been hired by the AGO and are working as prosecutors in 31 provinces.

Read more about our work to expand the number of female prosecutors in Afghanistan and improve Afghan women's access to justice [here](#).

Lotus Circle Salon in New York: Timor-Leste Country Representative Todd Wassel



On July 20th, The Lotus Circle in New York gathered to hear an update on Timor-Leste from Todd Wassel, Country Representative for The Asia Foundation's office in Timor-Leste. It was an engaging discussion on the many challenges Timor-Leste faces sixteen years after independence. Todd spoke to the persistent gender inequality, high rates of violence against women, and how reliance on subsistence farming among women and men poses significant risks to development

and growth. He also highlighted the accomplishments of the *Nabilan* project – The Asia Foundation's largest program focused on ending violence against women – and recent efforts to strengthen business practices among women's collectives. Foundation Trustee Emeritus and Lotus Circle Advisor, Missie Rennie, hosted the breakfast program.

Asia Foundation shares lessons on sexual harassment at Chatham House International Policy Forum



On July 9th and 10th, Eileen Pennington, Senior Advisor to The Asia Foundation's Women's Empowerment Program, and Hao Yang, Program Officer in The Asia Foundation's China office, participated in the 2018 Chatham House International Policy Forum in London. Yang spoke on a high-profile panel on "Sexual harassment and

accountability" and shared key lessons from the Foundation's work with Chinese employers to address domestic violence. She also emphasized the importance of changing the "culture of silence" that keeps victims from speaking out and perpetuates the myth that sexual harassment in the workplace is uncommon.

Read more about 2018 Chatham House Forum and how The Asia Foundation's work aligns with key priorities and recommendations from the global gathering [here](#).

Spotlight: Meet Lotus Circle Advisor Lisa Lum



Lisa Lum currently serves as Executive Director at the Asia America MultiTechnology Association (AAMA), leading the association's efforts to accelerate ideas and best-in-class collaboration with high-tech venture capitalists, successful entrepreneurs, and up-and-coming innovators in Silicon Valley and Asia. Prior to AAMA, Lisa was at The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Ltd. responsible for the operational development

and planning for the Group's portfolio Peninsula Hotels in Asia, the United States and Europe, which include the opening of The Peninsula Paris in 2014 and the opening of The Peninsula Shanghai in 2009.

Lisa grew up in San Francisco and received her bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from U.C. Berkeley and spent one year with the Associate Kyoto Program at Doshisha University, Japan. As a lifelong learner, Lisa recently completed the Venture Capital Executive Program at Haas School of Business and a Certificate in Hotel Revenue Management from Cornell University.

COMING UP

September 27: Jane Sloane, "As A Woman My Country is the Whole World," Sausalito



We are pleased to invite Lotus Circle Advisors to join a special event on September 27th 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Sausalito Woman's Club in Sausalito, California.

Jane Sloane, Director of the Women's Empowerment Program at The Asia Foundation, will speak about the journey to her global work in support of women human rights defenders and creating a global citizen movement, including what has sustained and inspired her own work as an activist and advocate for women's rights and gender equality.

For more information or to RSVP, please contact
Melissa Weakley:

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SUPPORT OUR WORK

Missed the June 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.

