



## MAY 2018

Dear Lotus Circle Advisors, Members, and Friends,

It was great to see many of you last week while I was in New York, and to share program updates on our Lotus funded work and discuss plans for the time ahead, including our work in emerging areas such as women's climate resilience and women, peace and security. I was also thrilled to speak at the 6th Annual Young Lotus Soiree, which attracted new supporters thanks to the work of Lin Jamison and her event committee. We're excited to sustain the momentum with additional Lotus Circle salons planned in New York and the Bay Area in the time ahead!

Warm regards,  
Jane

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## HIGHLIGHTS

### 6th Annual Young Lotus Soiree, New York



The 6th Annual Young Lotus Soiree was held in New York on May 17 at Eli Klein Gallery, known for its cutting-edge contemporary Chinese art. Members of the

Young Lotus Circle gathered to hear programming updates from Jane Sloane, mingle, and share their passions for improving the social, economic, and political opportunities for women and girls across Asia.

The event was hosted by Lin Jamison, a Lotus Circle Advisor and a founder of the Young Lotus Circle, and her husband Stephen Jamison. Lin also shared a brief film on the critical role the Lotus Circle plays in supporting The Asia Foundation's work to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. [Watch here.](#)

### **President of Mongolia Visits the Women's Business Center**



On May 14, the President of Mongolia, Mr. Khaltmaagiin Battulga, visited The Asia Foundation's Women's Business Center in Ulaanbaatar. It was a fantastic occasion to showcase the skills and opportunities that participants have gained through the Center and Incubator. Twenty-eight women introduced their businesses and products to President Battulga; they also shared with him the challenges they face as women

entrepreneurs and how the Center helps them overcome these barriers. Read more about the President's visit [here](#); read about the Women's Business Center and Incubator [in our blog](#); and see the entrepreneurs in action in [this short video](#) (in Mongolian).

In sharing the news of the President's visit, The Asia Foundation's Deputy Country Representative in Mongolia, Diana Fernandez, sent the following message for Advisors: *"I would like to thank the Women's Empowerment Program and the Lotus Circle for helping us to keep the Women's Business Center alive!"*

### **Sri Lanka Shares Lessons from the *Inside Justice* Program**



With support from the Lotus Circle, 18 months ago The Asia Foundation's Sri Lanka office launched a groundbreaking project to make the formal justice sector more sensitive to combatting sexual and

gender-based violence and responding to the needs of survivors. The Sri Lanka team has since leveraged the Lotus Circle's initial support to gain funding from the European Union and expand the scope of this critical work. Now midway through the program, the team has produced a reflection of the key lessons and insights they have gained thus far. They plan to share these lessons with other development partners working to increase women's access to justice to ensure that best practices are widely adopted.

### **Spotlight: Meet Lotus Circle Advisor Lucy Lee**



Lucy Lee is an Associate in the Goldman Sachs Growth Equity team based in San Francisco. She invests in technology companies across North America and works closely with founders and company executives to help grow their businesses. Previously, Lucy worked for Goldman's Investment Banking Division in New York. Lucy moved to San Francisco in 2016 to work with Goldman Sachs in her current role and in 2017 she became convener of The Asia Foundation's Lotus Circle in the Bay Area. She is also a board member at Z Space, a performing arts theater company based in San Francisco. Lucy has a degree in Comparative Literature (French and Chinese) from Princeton University. Starting this fall, Lucy will be pursuing her MBA at Harvard Business School.

Here's Lucy on what drew her to The Asia Foundation's women's empowerment work and the Lotus Circle:

"I was first drawn by the passion, vision, and leadership of the Lotus Circle. It is much more than just a donor circle; it's a community where members play an active role in program strategy planning and execution. The Foundation's strong emphasis on helping women in Asia gain financial independence as a way to unleash other social benefits was something that really compelled me deeply given my own personal experiences. Jane shared a conversation she had with an Asia Foundation grantee in Laos: without the income that she has earned from starting her own business, she wouldn't be able to provide basic subsistence for her family, much less keep her children from falling prey to the possibility of trafficking. To empower people, you need to provide them the resources to impact change. This takes the form of both access to financial capital, and also a support network to help them break down social, political and economic barriers to their endeavors."

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## Women's Empowerment Reception, Washington DC



On May 14, The Asia Foundation hosted a reception on women's empowerment in Washington, DC. Jane Sloane shared updates on the Women's Empowerment Program with friends and partners from organizations such as the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, the U.S. State Department, USAID, and the Australian Embassy.

Jane also recognized Onaba Payab, a Women's Empowerment Program Fellow and Fulbright scholar from Afghanistan (and valedictorian of the American University of Afghanistan class of 2014), as an emerging leader who has helped advance The Asia Foundation's understanding of

women, peace and security in Asia. Onaba then presented some of her key research findings and recommendations to advance The Asia Foundation's work on this critical issue.

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## COMING UP

**June 7: Lotus Circle Salon, San Francisco**  
**Women & Girls: Readers into Leaders in Asia**



Lucy Lee, Lotus Circle Advisor and Bay Area Convener, will host a Salon on Thursday, June 7 in San Francisco, featuring Melody Zavala, Director of The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia program and Nikki Sayres, Senior Director of The Asia Foundation's Asia Operations Coordination. Melody and Nikki will share how The Asia Foundation is catalyzing girls' learning and leadership by

collaborating with authors and illustrators in Asia to create entertaining children's books that

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defy gender stereotypes and depict strong female lead characters overcoming obstacles with courage and ingenuity.

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

[melissa.weakley@asiafoundation.org](mailto:melissa.weakley@asiafoundation.org)

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SUPPORT OUR WORK

*Missed the April 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.*

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