

Afghanistan

The Asia Foundation has had a long presence on the ground in Afghanistan, from 1954 to 1979 and from 2002 to present. With a history of implementing effective programs that benefit the country and its citizens, the Foundation maintains strong relationships with the government and civil society that have led to sustainable initiatives in governance and law, women's empowerment, education, regional cooperation, and our signature *Survey of the Afghan People*, an annual nationwide opinion poll.



GOVERNANCE & LAW

Afghanistan continues to face significant challenges that will require improvements in security, the economy, and particularly in governance. The Asia Foundation works with local partners to build capacity, systems, procedures, and policies in key government ministries and civil society organizations. The Legal Aid through Legal Education project collaborates with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Higher Education to improve accountability, access to justice, legal education, and the delivery of legal aid to vulnerable populations through the provision of practical legal education courses and clinics, legal aid services, direct advocacy and strengthening the advocacy capacity of partner organizations. The Foundation has also worked to substantively revise the university curricula for national law and *sharia* faculties, bringing the two legal education tracks into closer alignment.

With representatives from national judicial institutions – including the Supreme Court and the MoJ, the Foundation in 2019 completed the substantive review and commentary of 916 articles of the new Penal Code of Afghanistan, which complied with international treaty obligations in criminal justice and incorporated modern best practices in criminology for the first time.

SURVEY RESEARCH

The Asia Foundation's annual, nationwide *Survey of the Afghan People* has interviewed nearly 130,000 respondents since 2004, providing an unmatched barometer of Afghan public opinion over time. Covering all 34 provinces, these surveys provide decisionmakers with vital data relevant to governance, policy, and development. The survey gauges Afghan opinion on national mood, security, economic growth and employment, development and service delivery, governance, gender, political participation, access to information, and peace, among other key issues.

Launched in May 2019, *A Survey of the Afghan Returnees* is the first of its kind ever conducted in Afghanistan and explores the many challenges facing returnees to the country. The public perception survey addresses gaps in empirical knowledge about returnees and host communities. In 2019, the Foundation also began work on the *National Disability Survey of Afghanistan*, the first comprehensive assessment of disability in Afghanistan since 2005. This survey will seek to provide reliable and evidence-based data on the prevalence of disability as an input for future policy making and programming that impacts people with disabilities.



AFGHANISTAN

The Foundation has provided legal aid and representation to nearly 17,000 indigent Afghans.

More than 7,600 Afghan girls, supported by the Foundation, successfully passed the Kankor – the national public university entrance examination – and were admitted to four-year national universities.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In the years since the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghan women have made great strides in reclaiming active roles in social, economic, and political life. However, women continue to face barriers to full and free public participation. The Asia Foundation works with government agencies and influential non-state actors, particularly traditional community decisionmakers and religious leaders, to promote opportunities for Afghan women, and supports programs that increase women's access to justice, legal awareness, and education.

In March 2019, the Foundation launched the five-year initiative, Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL). WVL-Afghanistan supports the capacity and activities of women's organizations and movements seeking to empower women and girls, advance the protection of women's and girls' rights, and achieve gender equality.

Building upon successful initiatives and progress towards women's empowerment over the past decade, the Foundation is implementing the Strengthening Access to Justice for Women Affected by Violence II project to achieve a sustained reduction in violence against women in Afghanistan, and increase women's rights awareness, and sustainable protection of women. The Bridging the Gap Between Formal & Informal Justice project, facilitates linkages between the formal justice sector and informal justice mechanisms and providers, and builds capacity for peacemaking and peacebuilding at community levels, with a focus on the role of women in these processes.

EDUCATION

The Asia Foundation's programs for primary, secondary, and tertiary education are aligned with the strategies of the Afghan Ministries of Education and Higher Education. The Foundation focuses on primary school literacy, teacher training for higher education, developing programs that promote employment, scholarships for women, and building the capacity of civil society organizations to work in the education sector.

The Foundation's Strengthening Education in Afghanistan II project aims to improve the institutional capacity, operations, management, and programming of educational institutions and civil society organizations that implement activities in line with the basic and higher education needs of Afghanistan. In 2019, the Foundation worked with Ministry of Education to design and develop a new distance-learning portal to support science and mathematics education for all teachers and students in Afghanistan. The Foundation has also facilitated the development of the national Private School Strategy to help establish and expand affordable private schools in the country.

Through the Promote Women's Scholarship program, the Foundation has also provided over 700 scholarships to young Afghan women to complete their bachelor's degrees at private universities across Afghanistan; and scholarships and assistance to 147 Afghan women to pursue master's degrees in India.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

The Asia Foundation's programs in Afghanistan emphasize a regional approach, consistent with the Afghan government's development strategy of becoming the "roundabout of Asia," to facilitate economic, political, and cultural integration between Afghanistan and its neighbors. The Foundation also works to enhance bilateral economic cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, leveraging the longstanding Foundation presence in both countries.

Under the Promoting Regional Cooperation project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foundation is supporting the Regional Cooperation Directorate to implement a host of activities to further enable the Ministry to successfully lead Afghanistan's agenda for regional cooperation, especially related to the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. The Foundation is supporting the Ministry in revising Afghanistan's Regional Cooperation Strategy while also helping build the capacity of staff and conduct critical research on key priorities and issues for the country and region.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.



HEADQUARTERS

465 California Street,
9th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104 USA
Tel: (415) 982-4640
sf.general@asiafoundation.org

WASHINGTON, DC

1779 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 815
Washington, D.C. 20036 USA
Tel: (202) 588-9420
dc.general@asiafoundation.org

AFGHANISTAN

Tel: 93 (0) 75 202 3558
afghanistan.general@asiafoundation.org

www.asiafoundation.org