

Pacific Islands

Resuming a physical presence in Pacific Island countries in 2021, The Asia Foundation builds on decades of on-the-ground experience in the region. Areas of focus include supporting locally led reforms on governance and accountability; partnering with local NGOs and government agencies to reduce gender-based violence and advance women's leadership and agency; strengthening disaster risk management capacity; enhancing digital economic opportunities and cybersecurity; and advancing leadership development. Additionally, the Foundation is distributing books to schools, non-government and government agencies through our Books for Asia program, and is planning to support local language digital and print children's books through our Let's Read initiative.



TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The Asia Foundation has undertaken a series of technology programs in Pacific Island countries. A Google-funded, multi-year partnership with APEC supports dialogue and pilot projects focused on digital prosperity in the APEC region. The Foundation, Google, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) also partnered in a program initiative that linked Papua New Guinea (PNG) women cooperatives that manufacture bilums (traditional handbags) to an online e-commerce platform thereby expanding economic opportunities for the women's cooperatives while demonstrating to APEC and PNG leadership the power of online platforms as drivers of inclusive growth. In addition, with DFAT funding, the Foundation and the Asia Pacific Network Information Center have partnered to address critical infrastructure challenges in the region

on behalf of the APEC Secretariat. For example, in advance of PNG's hosting of APEC in late 2018, the Foundation worked to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities of PNG and reduce national-level network inefficiencies that contribute to slow internet speeds.

BOOKS FOR ASIA

The first of the Foundation's scheduled Books for Asia shipments arrived in Fiji in March, 2020. The Foundation is working with the U.S. Embassy in Fiji, which also serves Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu, to support education, literacy, and skills building, by distributing books to over 30 educational and government institutions including libraries, schools, learning centers, and government offices. The Foundation's Let's Read free digital library and reading initiative for children, is partnering with Bilum Books to translate, digitize, and deliver books in three Papua New Guinea languages.

EXPERIENCE IN THE PACIFIC

The Asia Foundation has a long history of engagement in Pacific Island countries. Our first Pacific program was launched in 1980. Following a decade of non-resident programming, the Foundation operated a Representative office in Suva, Fiji from 1990-1995, from which it provided grants and technical assistance to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and other Pacific Island countries aimed at strengthening parliaments, judiciaries, and other institutions of democratic governance, support for women's rights and empowerment, building the capacity of universities, providing educational materials through the Books for Asia program, and promoting regional cooperation and exchanges.

From 1995 to 2014, the Foundation conducted a regional disaster risk management training program in the Pacific Islands, funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of USAID. The program engaged with 14 Pacific Island countries and trained more than 7,000 participants at the regional, national, and subnational levels, building the capacity of thousands of disaster management and response personnel to more effectively manage weather and climate-related risks throughout the region. With additional support from USAID, the Foundation managed the East Asia Pacific Women's Initiative on Trafficking and Violence against Women (2002-2009) in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Cook Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. This project supported nationwide anti-violence and women's rights public education campaigns in Fiji, PNG, and the Solomon Islands, and provided direct services for women survivors of domestic violence in PNG to help them recover from trauma and rebuild their lives.

The Foundation has also undertaken a number of activities in partnership with the

Government of Australia in Samoa, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands. Between 2010 and 2012, it received support from the Australian Federal Police to conduct a series of trainings in Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia focused on disaster management and emergency operations. In 2014, the Foundation completed a three-month election observation and reporting project in Fiji with DFAT. In 2017, the Foundation conducted a scoping study for the Australian High Commission in the Solomon Islands. The purpose of this study was to improve understanding of civil society actors in Solomon Islands, and how they might be strengthened and engaged to support governance and democratic reform. The Foundation also took part in a similar study in PNG in 2020 with the Whitelum Group for the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby.

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.



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PACIFIC ISLANDS

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