



**The Asia Foundation**



## **IN THIS ISSUE**

- Lotus Leadership Awards 2022
- Australasian Aid Conference Speaker Series: Debt Prospects and Challenges for Developing Countries in the Continuing Pandemic
- The Impact of Covid-19 on Small Businesses in Southeast Asia: A Deeper Look at the Women's Workforce in Thailand and Malaysia
- Book Launch: Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN: Challenging Perceptions, Concretizing Consolidations
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution, Covid-19, and Women
- Nepal's Federalism Milestone: Five Opportunities and a Second Round of Elections
- Cybersecurity in the Philippines: Global Context and Local Challenges
- Sri Lanka: Optimizing Screening and Support Services for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Trafficking in Person (TIP) Victims



## EVENTS

### Upcoming Event - [Lotus Leadership Awards](#)

APRIL 6, 2022 (New York City) - The annual Lotus Leadership Awards recognize outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions towards women's and girls' empowerment in Asia. The 2022 Gala will honor Reshma Saujani, Founder of Girls Who Code and Marshall Plan for Moms, for working to close the gender gap in STEM for women and girls; G-Star RAW Denim (GSRD) Foundation, for advancing women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment; and Kampuchea Action to Promote Education (KAPE), for strengthening girls' education and leadership in Cambodia. Register to attend [here](#), listen to the [InAsia podcast with honoree GSRD Foundation](#), and learn more about the Foundation's work on [women's empowerment and gender equality](#).

### Recent Virtual Event – [Australasian Aid Conference Speaker Series: Debt Prospects and Challenges for Developing Countries in the Continuing Pandemic](#)

MARCH 1, 2022 - Developing countries already held precarious levels of sovereign debt prior to Covid-19. Now, over half of all low-income countries are at high risk of or are currently in debt distress, and some middle-income countries face debt sustainability challenges as well. In his address, President of the Center for Global Development Masood Ahmed detailed the current debt situation, explained initiatives by the global community to promote debt sustainability and restructuring, and presented a path forward. The event was moderated by The Asia Foundation's [Sofia Shakil](#).

### Recent Virtual Seminar - [The Impact of Covid-19 on Small Businesses in Southeast Asia: A Deeper Look at the Women's Workforce in Thailand and Malaysia](#)

FEBRUARY 21, 2022 - The Foundation's [Japan office](#) cohosted this seminar with Shizenkan University which featured presentations on the Foundation's recent report [Barely Staying Afloat: The Impact of COVID-19 on MSMEs in Southeast Asia](#). The discussion highlighted the ways in which COVID-19 has affected small businesses, especially women in the workforce, and provided recommendations for post-COVID recovery.

### Recent Virtual Event - [Book Launch: Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN: Challenging Perceptions, Concretizing Consolidations](#)

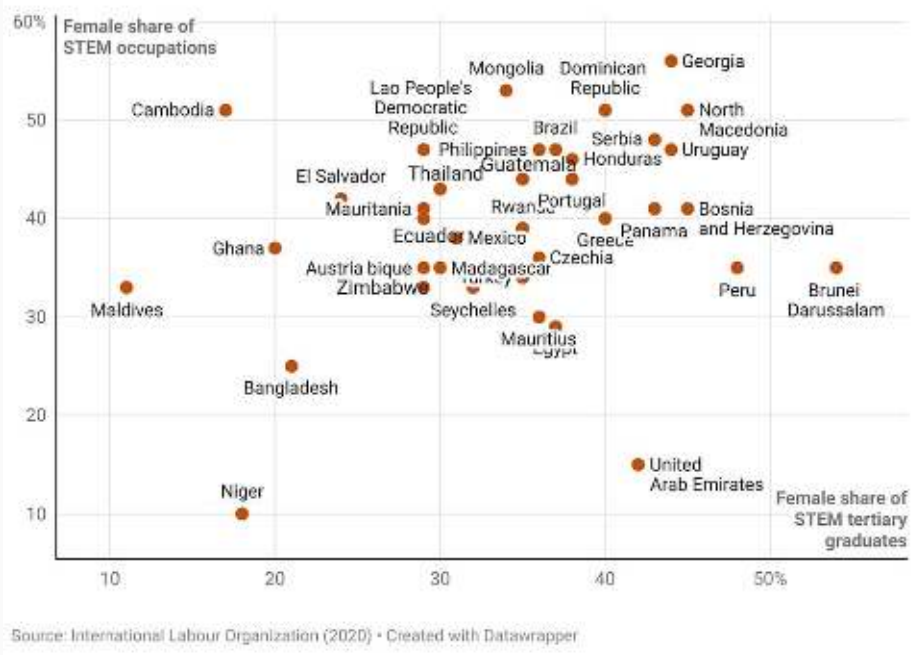
FEBRUARY 8, 2022 - The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, with Asia Foundation support, authored *Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN: Challenging Perceptions, Concretizing Consolidations*. This book serves as a "handbook" for relevant stakeholders to take stock of prospective opportunities, consider hindering challenges and navigate through external influences. The Foundation's [John Brandon](#) moderated a conversation with authors and thought leaders to share ideas on Cambodia's ASEAN Chair year. Learn more about our work in [Cambodia](#) and [International Relations](#).

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

## The Fourth Industrial Revolution, Covid-19, and Women

The pandemic has entrenched increasing gender and geographical inequalities between the Global North and Global South in the knowledge production sector, in tertiary education, particularly science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and in technological developments using artificial intelligence (AI). These systemic inequalities need to be addressed by tackling the issue of gender inequality throughout the life cycle, using an intersectional framework to understand impacts based on an overlap of different identity markers, greater investment in data and information infrastructures, and providing improved access to information and communication technology, especially in areas with high concentrations of vulnerability and poverty. Read about the [Foundation's response to the evolving Covid-19 situation in Asia](#).

**Figure 2: Female share of STEM occupations versus female share of STEM tertiary graduates**



## Nepal's Federalism Milestone: Five Opportunities and a Second Round of Elections

After two decades of political disarray in Nepal, the arrival of newly elected representatives in 2017 was an unprecedented opportunity to chart a new course toward responsive and effective governance. While the new federal system has gradually earned political legitimacy, government inefficiency, collusion, and corruption have persisted. While time, reform, and intergovernmental coordination are to bring Nepal's federalism fully operational, the upcoming elections on May 13, 2022 present a golden opportunity to consolidate the lessons of the federal experiment and take

forward-looking action to protect the safety and integrity of the political process. Learn more about our work to [strengthen governance](#) and our [Nepal](#) office.



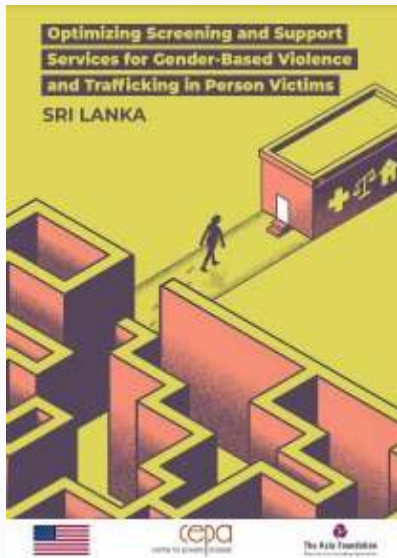
Bidya Sundar Shakya after being elected mayor of Kathmandu in the first phase of Nepal's local elections in 2017.

## PUBLICATIONS

### [Cybersecurity in the Philippines: Global Context and Challenges](#)

The first comprehensive review of cybersecurity in the Philip Cybersecurity in the Philippines explores cybersecurity governanc rapidly changing global context amid the growing risks and chall of accelerated digitalization. This report reviews regional and na cybersecurity governance frameworks, analyzes the major cyberse issues in key sectors, especially in critical infrastructure, recommends ways to improve the nation's cybersecurity posture. more about our programs on [technology and development](#), and [Philippines](#).





## Sri Lanka: [Optimizing Screening and Support Services for Gender-Based Violence \(GBV\) and Trafficking in Person \(TIP\) Victims](#)

This multi-country study, anchored by The Asia Foundation, was conducted in [India](#), [Sri Lanka](#), and Nepal to critically examine how screening and service delivery can be optimized for TIP victims. A key question underlying the research was the possibility of integrating or separating services for TIP and GBV victims and ensuring that they have better access to services. Largely qualitative data gathered in Sri Lanka points to the challenges TIP victims encounter in trying to access services. The question of integration or separation offers a nuanced understanding of how TIP and GBV victims are perceived and the resultant differential access to services. Perceptions about who constitutes a victim and the feminization of victimhood are obstacles in attempting to access services. The study offers recommendations that could support victims in a more

cohesive and meaningful manner. Learn more about the Foundation's programs in [Sri Lanka](#).



**The Asia Foundation**

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation

The Asia Foundation, Washington DC, 1779 Massachusetts Ave NW #815, Washington, DC 20036, United States