

Lao People's Democratic Republic



The Asia Foundation works with local partners and the Lao government to improve governance and access to justice for all citizens, advance women's rights and opportunities, help communities manage development and safeguard their natural environment, increase access to information, and promote Laos' international cooperation. The Foundation has worked in Lao People's Democratic Republic since 1958.

Project Highlights

More inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms

627 National Assembly and People's Provincial Assembly members across Laos strengthened their skills in evidence-based research, gender equality, and public consultations to foster grassroots policy engagement.

Fairer, more just, and more accessible legal systems, services, and decision-making

114 Legal Aid Offices and Clinics across Laos improved their offerings and provided 3,954 clients with legal aid services, including advice, documentation, and court representation to vulnerable individuals.

Increasing opportunities for women's education, employment, and entrepreneurship

The Foundation provided 69 university scholarships and workplace stipends for marginalized women to study for STEM degrees and to enter the legal sector, both areas where women are not well represented.

Increasing attention to environment and climate change in national and local development strategies

Through the introduction of the Xe Bang Fai River Basin Management Plan in Khammouane Province, public consultation and participation in local water resources management increased by 79%, expanding wetlands and conservation areas, increasing biodiversity while reducing water use.

2023 Snapshot



3,954 legal aid services provided to vulnerable individuals



48,845 children's books in Lao language read in past 12 months



245 government and community leaders trained on human trafficking identification



Flagship Initiatives



Legal aid and access to justice

Under the Legal Aid Support Program, the Foundation assisted the Ministry of Justice and the Lao Bar Association in expanding legal aid services to nine provinces and Vientiane. Legal aid offices and clinics make justice more affordable for the poor and vulnerable, especially women, children, and minority populations, and provide legal information and advice. We work to increase the number of lawyers providing legal aid, especially female lawyers, by offering scholarships for professional legal training and funding internships. The Foundation also supports nonprofit associations and university clinics to provide legal aid and community legal education.

Energy transition and climate action

The Foundation is helping to develop a cleaner and more sustainable energy transition in Laos. We are working with the Ministry of Energy and Mines on a Green Hydrogen Road Map, economic models of rooftop solar, promoting carbon financing initiatives that benefit communities, and regional integration of variable renewable energy.

Supporting survivors of trafficking

Along with local partners, the Foundation is working to increase the effectiveness of subnational networks to identify trafficking-in-persons survivors and assist them in pursuing legal remedies. Our work strengthens the ability of law enforcement, community leaders, shelters, and other actors to identify survivors and refer them to support and legal services. Local legal service providers are supported to help prosecutors and survivors in holding perpetrators to account.

Strengthening legislative research

Credible parliamentary research is critical; concerns such as land ownership, economic growth, and infrastructure planning are increasing pressure on the National Assembly and People's Provincial Assemblies to act. We strengthen the skills of technical committees and the Institute of Legislative Studies research team to deliver research that responds to urgent, high-level requests related to economic, social and legal development.

Community-based solutions for environment

The Foundation's environment program supports community-based projects that enable Lao citizens to benefit from and protect natural resources critical to their livelihoods. Working with the Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment in Khammouane Province, our River Basin Management project enables communities to take a more active and informed role in conserving their local water resources. Activities improve waste management, reduce agrochemicals, and mitigate flooding and drought through nature-based solutions.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives and expanding opportunities across Asia and the Pacific. Informed by decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region is focused on good governance, women's empowerment and gender equality, inclusive economic growth, environment and climate action, and regional and international relations.