



The Asia Foundation has worked in Lao People's Democratic Republic since 1958. We work 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.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

More inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms

Trained 99 People's Provincial Assembly members to inform their constituents about the importance of elections, reinforce participation in elections as a constitutional right, and encourage policy engagement at the grassroots level.

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

Established 111 Legal Aid Offices and Clinics across the country that provided 1,026 clients with legal aid services, including advice, documentation, and court representation.

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

Delivered livelihood support—including business training and primary and post-secondary scholarships to 99 women and girls in 2021, building on a university scholarship program that supported another 126 women since 2015.

Expanding economic opportunities through reading and digital literacy skills, education reform, STEM, and workforce development

Developed a mobile app to help entrepreneurs start their own businesses, featuring micro-lessons on basic digital business literacy, eCommerce, and business planning, reaching over 9,000 users to date.

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

Trained 67 local government staff and village authorities on habitat assessment and community mapping to support improved and better-informed water resources and related development planning processes.

2021 SNAPSHOT



111 new legal aid offices and clinics opened



30 young women received funding for university degrees in STEM-related fields



800+ community members trained on gender-based violence & human trafficking laws.



FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



Legal aid and access to justice

Under the Legal Aid Support Program, the Foundation has assisted the Ministry of Justice and the Lao Bar Association in expanding its legal aid services to nine provinces and Vientiane Capital. 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.

Digital upskilling for MSMEs

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Foundation convened dozens of MSMEs, developers, and logistics companies online to identify priority gaps in digital trade and design a solution. Developed with support from Google.org, ToolaKit targets entrepreneurs and MSMEs to increase access to the digital skills needed to start and improve businesses, navigate social media, and expand their markets.

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, as well as better equip local legal service providers 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 the Institute of Legislative Studies research team to deliver research on a range of diverse subjects and to respond to urgent, high-level requests related to upcoming legislative sessions.

Community-based solutions for the 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 across a dynamic and developing Asia-Pacific. Informed by six 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.