

Malaysia



Since 1954, The Asia Foundation has supported Malaysia's aspiration to achieve economic growth. TAF works with governments, the private sector, and local communities to create access to the digital economy for all, strengthen Malaysia's future-oriented workforce, upskill local talent, strengthen women's economic participation, and catalyze climate resilience.

Project Highlights

Increasing opportunities for women's employment and entrepreneurship

Trained more than 5,000 Malaysian women micro, small, and medium enterprises owners in one year in skills needed to grow their businesses online and provided mentorship to 500 of these women and e-commerce training to 70 others.

Narrowing the digital divide

TAF in two years reached more than 16,000 Malaysians—unemployed youth, women, rural and disabled communities—and equipped them with essential digital skills, enabling them to safely access the growing digital economy.

Supporting more high-skilled women in the workforce

We conducted research for evidence-based development of a childcare policy at both state and federal levels in the country from 2021 through 2022 and supported a childcare bill in the state of Selangor.

Improving the technical and vocational education and training ecosystem

TAF mapped out bottlenecks and inefficiencies across the 11 ministries that comprise the technical and vocational education and training ecosystem in Malaysia and provided recommendations for enabling more future-ready, industry-aligned graduates in 2022.

2022 Snapshot



6,000 women entrepreneurs trained from Malaysia & Indonesia



100 early-career women in STEM connected with mentors



225,000 women, youth, and MSMEs across ASEAN trained in digital skills



16 youth from the Philippines CX certified



Flagship Initiatives



Hub for digital skilling in Asia-Pacific

TAF's Future Skills Alliance is a broad coalition of partners from the public and private sectors working together to deliver future skills at scale to the region's most marginalized. Drawing on a collective impact model, the alliance creates a pathway for businesses to contribute to environmental, social, and governance efforts that transform access to and participation in the digital economy across Asia and the Pacific. We developed and maintain partnerships with leading tech and IT companies across the region.

The Go Digital ASEAN initiative, endorsed by the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and funded by Google.org, broadens digital skills participation across the region. The project's first phase exceeded its target and trained more than 220,000 individuals from underserved communities in ASEAN, 60 percent women. The second phase (2022 through 2024) expanded the project's reach. It provides fit-for-purpose training on business and financial literacy, digital marketing, cybersecurity, and carbon footprint reduction to 200,000 MSME owners and employees.

Policy reforms for a future-ready workforce

Supporting Malaysia's ambition to build a future-ready workforce, TAF contributes to reforms to build quality talent and provide equitable economic opportunities. TAF engages with key government and private sector stakeholders to provide evidence-based policy recommendations focused on retaining high-skilled women in the workforce and supporting the national technical and vocational education and training system. Our work supports innovative sectors such as the creative, care, and green economies.

Sustainable growth and climate resilience

TAF's programming includes reinforcement of climate resiliency, convening experts to gather regional perspectives on the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and sharing views on the economic case for environmental resilience. As Malaysia begins implementing a national carbon pricing policy, carbon pricing instruments, and the voluntary carbon market, TAF's report on the economic costs and returns of emissions reductions and carbon sink conservation strengthens the business case for conservation. With carbon pricing, the business case for the conservation and protection of environmental goods and climate resilience will have a greater foundation in Malaysia.

TAF is also working on a green economy initiative in the state of Sabah to support the state government's plan to steer economic growth and development locally. TAF convenes consultative discussions with local experts and community members to inform its research and understand the various challenges and best practices in building community-based industries that are resilient and sustainable.

The Asia Foundation is an international nonprofit organization working to solve the toughest social and economic challenges in Asia and the Pacific. Informed by more than 70 years of experience and deep local knowledge, we work with partners across more than 20 countries through 17 offices to improve lives and expand opportunities.