



Above: Members of the Aceh Women Forest Defenders Movement in Sumatra, Indonesia, and recipients of The Asia Foundation's 2023 Lotus Leadership Award
Photos by HAKA Foundation

At a Glance

- More than \$4.3 million invested since 2008
- Investments in 18 countries across Asia and the Pacific
- Regional and country-specific projects
- Projects focus in three core areas: women's rights and security, women's voice and leadership, and women's economic empowerment and girls' education
- Smallest project: \$8,442 to support rapid response and community outreach on GBV in Cambodia during COVID
- Largest project: \$165,000 for work to combat gender-based violence in Sri Lanka
- Includes a Gender Smart project that invests in Foundation staff capacity and visibility
- Includes a Lotus Rapid Response Fund to support emergency programs

The Lotus Circle is a vibrant community of committed individuals and organizations supporting The Asia Foundation's Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Program (WEP) to strengthen economic, social, and political rights and opportunities for women and girls in Asia and the Pacific. WEP launched the Lotus Circle in 2007 to engage a growing group of philanthropists committed to investing in women across Asia. Funds raised strengthen The Asia Foundation's work to advance women's empowerment and gender equality and promote gender mainstreaming efforts. To date, more than \$4.3 million in Lotus Circle Funds have been programmed through more than 100 grants/projects to:

- Support innovative pilot programs with long-term potential for impact, including those in underfunded areas of women's empowerment and gender equality programming;
- Build a proven track record in programming that advances women's empowerment and gender equality at the country or regional level;
- Strategically fill a gender gap in an existing program, such as funding a key activity needed to achieve success for the overall program;
- Respond rapidly during crises, conflicts or natural disasters by leveraging a network of trusted partners;
- Promote representation and inclusion of Asian women's voices in key policy, advocacy, and decision-making arenas; and
- Ensure continuing engagement in and iterative refinement of core programs that meet key needs of women and girls and that advance gender equality in the region.

Many projects have leveraged other donor commitments, either public or private, greatly expanding the impact of relatively small investments of Lotus Circle funds.