

IMPROVING LIVES, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES.

The Asia Foundation is built to help people, organizations, and systems thrive. Locally grounded and globally connected, our goal is to improve lives across Asia and the Pacific. We are collaborative and center our work on the experiences of the communities we serve across the region. Our programs focus on building resiliency and strengthening capability at all levels.

OUR VISION

A peaceful, just, and thriving Asia and the Pacific.

OUR MISSION

The Asia Foundation improves lives, expands opportunities, and helps societies flourish across a dynamic and developing region. We work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance pathbreaking reforms. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia and the Pacific's continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.

OUR VALUES

Trust and partnership Lasting presence and commitment Deep respect for local context Inclusion of differing views Innovating and adapting for impact

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT

This year brought exciting changes to The Asia Foundation, including selection of a new president, who began her tenure in 2023. On behalf of our dedicated board of trustees and outstanding staff, we are pleased to share a glimpse into our work across this unique and special organization.

Equal to the caliber, expertise, and enthusiasm of our staff is the value placed on our organization by our donors and the wide array of partners with which we collaborate. We take this trust seriously, and commit ourselves to working with diverse government institutions, civil society, citizens, and the private sector in pursuing and achieving realistic and sustainable solutions to development and public policy challenges.

We are particularly grateful for the support of our institutional, philanthropic, and individual donors who believe in our strategic vision and are passionate about contributing to Asia and the Pacific's long-term resilience. We take pride in our collective achievements in support of the individuals, communities, and governments who are shaping the future of Asia and the Pacific. Here are some highlights:

- **Boosting joint action on cross-cutting climate and gender issues.** Throughout the more than 20 countries in which we work, we are committed to removing obstacles to climate action and amplifying the roles of women and girls in building resilience. Learn about our women-led forest defenders in Indonesia's precious Leuser Ecosystem on pages 12-13.
- **Equipping and catalyzing leaders.** We are proud to partner with changemakers, both emerging and established, as they innovate and inspire solutions. Our leadership and exchange programs strengthen capabilities and build networks. Read more on page 17-19.
- Strengthening inclusion in economic opportunities. We are investing in public-private cooperation to address issues of shared interest, including the huge undertaking of developing the future workforce. We are bringing new skills and networks to diverse populations, some with significant unmet needs, for example in Malaysia, page 37, and in Vietnam, page 33.

Many of the places in which we work have experienced political upheaval, natural disasters, economic downturns, or conflict in recent years. Despite this, together with our local partners and committed donors we've created lasting impact that reflects the mission of our organization. We look forward to the year ahead.

Tim Collis

Tim Kochis, Chair of the Board and Executive Committee

fame Dulike

Laurel E. Miller, President & CEO

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GOVERNANCE

In a flourishing society, governance is transparent, participatory, collaborative, and inclusive.

TIMOR-LESTE

Strengthening the country's institutions, increasing citizens' understanding of the role of government, diversifying an oil-based economy, and ensuring safety for all, especially women, are key focus areas of the Foundation in Timor-Leste.





Supporting robust discourse on policymaking and political reform

Timor-Leste needs sound policymaking to meet its development goals. The Foundation worked to support robust public discourse on policymaking and political reform. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, we also resumed the annual *Tatoli! Public Perception Survey* including face-to-face interviews across all 13 municipalities to capture real time data on people's perspectives on employment, income, the economy, the direction of the country, and government functions, performance, and service delivery. About half of respondents reported Covid-19 as the main issue facing the country, their community, and themselves as individuals. Beyond this, respondents highlighted jobs, unemployment, and economic diversification as key issues facing their community. Outside of Dili, the capital, road and bridge infrastructure is the second most reported priority. The Foundation is conducting the 8th *Tatoli!* survey in 2023.

NEPAL

The Asia Foundation supports Nepal's vision for sustainable peace, good governance, development, and prosperity through research, knowledge exchange, and accelerating more inclusive and accountable democratic governance practices. Partnering with government and civil society, we promote inclusive economic development, peaceful conflict mitigation and resolution, women's leadership, and cooperation on environment and human security.



EXPLORE OUR STORIES

BLOG

Bringing Data to Center Stage: Asia Foundation at the Digital Nepal Conclave Evidence-Based Policymaking: A Path to Data Culture



Timely and reliable data for development

The Asia Foundation's Data for Development (D4D) project supports problem-solving by helping local governments identify and integrate available data from across all departments in a municipality and onto one unified platform. One example demonstrated the challenge. We worked with local leaders to prioritize needs in the wards. Everyone supported the extension of roads, but there was a feeling that more urgent challenges were present in several wards—children had to travel for hours to school, health clinics missing adequate facilities, and lack of attention to the needs of women and youth, among other issues. A focus on road infrastructure while neglecting other challenges is common among local governments, particularly without access to data.

Another challenge is the practice of allocating the same budget to each of their wards despite demographic differences and uneven needs. These misapplications of resources show a need for timely and reliable data. The project calls it creating a "data lake" in each municipality for decentralized, democratic access. Based on the demands and needs of the municipality, we also support provincial government in generating primary data. Providing access to this existing information can open the door to fundamental changes in government procedures and the development and implementation of local policies, plans, and strategies. The next step is to establish standards and guidelines for the use of this data and then put in place data-driven deliberation—public consultations with many stakeholders involved along the way.

LAOS

In Laos, 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 of and safeguard their natural environment, increase access to information, and promote Laos' international cooperation.



Using data to drive evidence-based policy decisions

The Foundation trained more than 500 National Assembly (NA) and Provincial People's Assembly (PPA) members and their staff to make better use of data and research when drafting and monitoring legislative policies. We worked closely with new and returning members and staff from technical committees, including the Economic, Technology, and Environment Committee; the Planning, Finance, and Audit Committee; the Institute of Legislative Studies; the Ethnic, Social, and Cultural Affairs Committee; and the Secretariat Affairs Committee on strengthening research methods, drafting reports, holding public hearings, writing legislation, and monitoring of government agencies. The goal is to help lawmakers, especially the newly elected NA and PPA members, to make more evidence-based policy decisions. The project also supported cra new publication that describes the roles, responsibilities, and organizational structure of the NA and the PPA, including a hotline number for each PPA member so that citizens can access information and better understand what their elected representatives are doing.

SRI LANKA

Asia Foundation programs in Sri Lanka improve subnational governance and the enabling environment for economic growth, increase access to justice, promote gender equality, foster social cohesion and community dialogue, strengthen civil society, and support the well-being and resilience of individuals and communities.





Speedy, affordable access to justice

For three decades, Mediation Boards in Sri Lanka have played a vital role in resolving minor disputes, including family, criminal, land, and commercial matters, thereby reducing lengthy court procedures and costs, with Asia Foundation support at their inception. Their success led the government to include the Mediation Boards in the national budget. Asia Foundation support extended the Boards to northern and eastern regions after the war. However, due to the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka, national budget cutbacks impacted the regular sittings of Mediation Boards. Responding to a government request, we provided emergency support to sustain the regular operations of the Mediation Boards across the country. This past year, we also trained 194 new Mediation Officers (49 male/145 female), including emphasis on diversity and inclusion for some, and on data collection and management systems developed by the Foundation. Currently, Mediation Boards handle 200,000 disputes annually, settling 65-70% and providing access to speedy and affordable access to justice.

CLIMATE ACTION

In a flourishing society, investment in clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, green growth, and natural resource management is essential.

CHINA

The Asia Foundation started supporting work related to the People's Republic of China in the 1970s. Since then, we have successfully collaborated with government agencies and institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, on United States-China exchanges, social governance innovation, and disaster management. The Foundation has also supported many projects with Chinese academic institutions and nonprofit partners to strengthen domestic philanthropy. Today, we focus on peopleto-people exchanges, environment and climate action, women's economic empowerment, and disability inclusion.



An integrated approach for local climate solutions

In the post-Covid world, infrastructure development will be an important engine for economic recovery. As we approach target dates for peak carbon emissions and subsequent carbon neutrality across the globe, countries must adapt infrastructure to a changing climate. Our China office approaches environment and climate resilience from a development perspective, acting as a bridge to promote green development and sustainable infrastructure development. The Asia Foundation project, Promoting Climate Resilience and Sustainability in Infrastructure Development, worked with major Chinese financial institutions and global propterty developers, to integrate climate considerations into infrastructure development and explore pathways to climate resilience. Through targeted research, tools development, and capacity building, the project increased industry knowledge on developing sustainable infrastructure.

In China, the Foundation builds on our longstanding expertise and knowledge sharing on cross-cutting topics, such as empowering women and marginalized groups, and engaging youth to cope with environmental and climate issues.

INDONESIA

In Indonesia, we advance reforms that improve environmental governance, increase social inclusion, strengthen justice systems, protect human rights, and promote tolerance and equitable economic growth.



27,276 hectares of forest now managed by women

115 women hold leadership roles in forest governance

549 women have social forestry permits

The women defending Indonesia's forests

The Leuser Ecosystem is a mountainous tropical forest on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. With a name alluding to "above the clouds," its rugged 6 million acres are the last place on earth where the elephant, rhino, tiger, and orangutan still roam together in the wild. But the forest is under pressure from poachers and illegal loggers, who strip the land of resources, causing floods and landslides that destroy and displace villages.







Now, a group of forest defenders organized and led by women, with support from The Asia Foundation, is demonstrating that social forestry can stop destructive exploitation by engaging the communities whose lives are entwined with the health of the forest. Beginning with a handful of women in the Aceh village of Damaran Baru, more than a thousand forest defenders across five provinces now patrol the forests, in areas known as historically patriarchal. Women in these communities often lack decision-making power. Their remarkable success is due, in part, to an Indonesian NGO called HAkA, which helped the village women win the government's approval to manage their forest.

EXPLORE OUR STORIES

VIDEO Indonesia's Forest Defenders

PODCAST <u>The Women Defending</u> <u>Indonesia's Forests</u>

INDIA

Our New Delhi office supports initiatives to enhance women's safety, security, and economic empowerment, and initiatives that facilitate India's engagement in regional and global affairs. The office also serves as a focal point for the Foundation's regional programs in South Asia, including intraregional trade.





Towards a climate-smart tomorrow

2022 delivered a stark warning of evolving climate change disasters in Asia and the Pacific. A new India-U.S. Triangular Development Partnership (TriDeP) focuses on ways development cooperation can address the impacts of climate change, including in renewable energy, disaster management, and vital food systems. A published report by the Partnership makes the case for countries to share replicable and effective climatesmart solutions in industries experiencing the effects acutely across the region. In India, for example, extreme temperatures have forced a rapid transformation of agriculture, including developing climate-resilient agri-tech, land shaping, and integrating agriculture with livestock management to replenish soil and improve productivity.

EXPLORE OUR STORIES

REPORT

India's Experience with Climate Smart Agriculture: Opportunities for Triangular Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In a flourishing society, emerging leaders gain the tools, networks, and support they need to make positive change.

LeadEx

Creative and networked problem solvers for our shared future

The Asia Foundation Development Fellows: Emerging Leadership for Asia's Future is an annual program that provides a select group of young professionals from Asia and the Pacific with an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills and gain in-depth knowledge of the region's critical development challenges. This past year, our 12 Fellows included: Irina Sthapit, an engineer and innovator from Nepal who loves working with tools and building creative solutions, and is passionate about empowering girls in STEM fields; Fereshta Abbasi, a human rights lawyer from Afghanistan who has documented human rights abuses in Afghanistan for seven years and is currently documenting abuses since the Taliban takeover in August 2021; and Mac Andre Arboleda, founding president of the UP Internet Freedom Network, a Philippine nonprofit dedicated to digital rights advocacy, and leader of the Artists for Digital Rights Network, an alliance supporting cultural practitioners in Asia and the Pacific on digital rights issues. To build on our leadership development activities, we launched LeadNext: Ambassadors for a Global Future last year, for emerging leaders aged 18-25 from across the Asia-Pacific region and the U.S.





EXPLORE OUR STORIES

- VIDEO Meet our 2022 Leaders on the Frontlines
 - BLOG LeadNext Fellows: Citizens of the World



THE RAPPLER TEAM

Chang-Lin Tien Distinguished Leadership Award



"You must embrace your fear. And I say that to The Asia Foundation, to the people who support The Asia Foundation. Asia is also on the edge of a cliff. I think we need to put our best foot forward. You heard from the Development Fellows, this time matters. So, where do we find courage? There is no other path. We do our jobs. But if I do go to jail, please make noise."



This past year, we invited Maria Ressa and the Rappler team to San Francisco to celebrate their leadership in independent and fearless journalism in the Philippines. Rappler is the Philippines' leading digital media company, founded by a group of women journalists who endured attacks and even death threats for their commitment to the truth. -Nobel Laureate María Ressa

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PODCAST

The Heady Early Days of Rappler

TWEET

"Personally, it was a special night of my worlds colliding! I was also a former Asia Development Fellow of @ Asia_Foundation. Being there w/former colleagues & meeting this year's young development leaders made me grateful for the opportunities I've received."

-Natashya Gutierrez

2018 Asia Foundation Development Fellow; President, Rappler

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THAILAND

In Thailand, our programs address many of the country's greatest challenges including the middle-income trap, education reform, women's workforce participation, and the transition to a low-carbon economy. The Foundation and its local partners also support Thailand's role in ASEAN and the Mekong subregion to address regional challenges.

"Students want principals who are just, who are instructional leaders, who are a presiding presence in the school, and who create more spaces for educational exploration. The challenge now is for policymakers to turn these hopes into reality."

> Rattana Lao, Asia Foundation Senior Program Officer for Policy and Research, Thailand



Good schools are everywhere

Since the National Education Act of 1999, concepts such as school autonomy, decentralization, and student-centered learning have been promoted as core principles of Thai education reform. However, Thailand has struggled to find the political will and resources to keep its reform commitments. Educational inequality is still rampant, the education system remains highly centralized, and schools still rely on intensive rote learning.

The Asia Foundation's education program in Thailand worked to build support and momentum for the reforms to achieve better schools for Thai students and the country's development as an advanced middle-income country. We conducted nationwide research on the challenges in delivering quality education in Thailand and found school principals are the key to turning policy reform into change in the classroom and the students. We then launched a Good Schools Are Everywhere campaign, searching for model schools with great principals. Once we found the great schools, we produced documentaries that were televised on Sundays in prime time to inspire citizens about what is possible when reform is implemented. A national student essay contest for kids to describe the ideal principal revealed the hopes and dreams of students: in 3,300 nationwide submissions, students speak of a principal who is a powerful person in their school and in their lives, who is present, just, and who creates more spaces for educational exploration.



EXPLORE OUR STORIES

BLOG

In Thailand Principals Are "Black Box" between National Policymaking and Kids in the Classroom



Let's Read

Building Asia's next generation of readers

Societies that cultivate children's reading and digital skills development from an early age are likely to have more dynamic economies. Let's Read, the Foundation's growing free digital library, has more than 10,000 locally written and illustrated books produced by the Asia-Pacific's next generation of writers, creators, and illustrators. Their efforts create new and relevant literature, inspiring young readers to be lifelong readers, critical thinkers and inspiring future leaders.



MONGOLIA

In Mongolia, we strengthen anticorruption efforts, improve urban governance, support justice sector development, increase gender equality, advance climate change mitigation, and promote literacy and access to information.



Fifteen Minutes

Mongolia has strong primary school attendance and a culture that values books and reading. In spite of this, only 67% of Mongolian three- and four-year-olds are developmentally on track to meet literacy and numeracy standards. A recent survey by The Asia Foundation and the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia suggests that the learning environment at home may play a part. The survey found that fewer than 10 percent of children aged five or younger are read to on a daily basis and under 40 percent at least once a week.

These figures represent a missed opportunity to invest in children's development, happiness, and school readiness. Mongolian families surveyed most commonly cited a lack of time. This issue of time is a central theme of our campaign 15 *Minutes*, which provides clever reminders, encouragement, tools, and information to parents and caregivers about the benefits of reading even briefly with young children. Storytime sessions at bookstores, libraries, and other spaces, as well as radio, TV, and podcast segments encourage and demonstrate the practice of reading to children.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

In a flourishing society, all genders have access to the opportunities they need to succeed.



To expand the awareness of our work in women's empowerment and the needed resources to carry it out, the Foundation honors special partners and leaders in New York each year to raise support. Kampuchea Action to Promote Education (KAPE) was recognized in 2022 for its three decades of scholarship support to empower young women to go to college, learn English, and gain computer skills. Student Sao Ma traveled from Cambodia to share her story of how these scholarships change the course of a life.

"When women and girls gain access to the tools, networks, and resources they need, there is no limit to what they can achieve."

 –2022 Lotus Leadership Awards co-chairs Cheng-Ling Chen, Laurette Hartigan, Missie Rennie, and Deshi Singh

EXPLORE OUR STORIES

VIDEO <u>#No Limits for</u> KAPE Scholar Sao Ma



The Multiplier: Girls' STEM Education

CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, we equip young people for success in the future economy, engage policy actors toward more inclusive policy dialogues, and support increased attention to environment and climate change issues at the local level. We focus on economic inclusion, environmental resilience, integrated regional development, and improved public service delivery.

A fast track to the future workforce

Most Asian nations have reached gender parity in primary education, and literacy has surged among girls and women. But in many places, girls are absent when it comes to secondary education: they drop out because it's unsafe for them to travel to school or be in the classroom; they leave due to early marriage; or their families prioritize educating boys over girls. And 11 million more girls may not return to school as a result of Covid-19.

The Asia Foundation sees an opportunity in the fact that 80 percent of jobs in Asia will require basic digital literacy by 2030. By focusing on getting girls ready to compete for the coming boom in STEM jobs, there is a real chance to fast-track girls into the future workforce. In Cambodia, a growing youth population is hungry for new skills. The Foundation's STEM Promotion among University Students project trains students in digital technology with experts from OTIS-Singapore and supports developing new business ideas in 15 areas of robotics and automation. Standout designs include a smart vehicle crash-alert system, a smart parking lot, and a first-aid robot. In addition, our Learning and Leading program helps high school students gain muchneeded "soft skills"-like problem-solving, teamwork, and effective communication-that are increasingly valued in the contemporary workplace.







EXPLORE OUR STORIES



BLOG

<u>A Cold Winter of Hunger Unfolding</u> in the Heart of Asia

Code to Inspire

The Foundation partnered with Code to Inspire (CTI), an Afghan initiative building skills and infrastructure for women to compete in the global tech market, empowering them financially and socially. CTI uses digital technologies in three ways: for instruction with mentors using online platforms such as Google Classrooms and Telegram; to deliver virtual courses centered on digital skills such as graphic design, web development, and game design; and to pay staff and students in areas with unreliable financial infrastructure using new technologies. Over the course of one year, students acquire skills that position them for online jobs in their areas of interest, allowing them to work remotely from home. Some students return for a second year to diversify their skillset. At the completion of their studies, students develop and present an original capstone project that demonstrates their ability to deliver a viable technical product.

AFGHANISTAN

Although we have worked in Afghanistan for decades, since the August 2021 political upheaval, The Asia Foundation has suspended most of its activities there for the safety of our staff and their families. With a deep and enduring commitment to that nation's development, we will continue to seek a positive path forward for the people of Afghanistan.

CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

In places where violence is persistent and government functioning diminishes, development suffers dramatically and conditions can deteriorate to extreme levels.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the Foundation's overarching objectives are to promote inclusive growth, sustainability, and good governance. We collaborate with local institutions and engage with public sector stakeholders to reinforce the rule of law, improve access to justice and social cohesion, facilitate inclusive economic development, and empower women.



Reducing barriers to justice and promoting social cohesion

Vulnerable groups in Pakistan often face barriers when seeking access to justice. There are systemic, cultural, and financial obstacles when it comes to interacting with the relevant institutions — especially on complex and sensitive issues like gender-based violence (GBV) cases. The Asia Foundation is strengthening the justice sector in Punjab province to gain the skills and tools needed to handle GBV cases. We are empowering law enforcement officials, investigators, prosecutors, survivor advocates, legal aid professionals, local *jirga* officials, and judicial officers. We partner with local organizations to enhance the officials' capabilities to promote a survivor-centric approach, and fostering cooperation and coordination among stakeholders. A goal is to increase awareness of the impact of GBV on society as a whole and individual survivors and to promote accountability.

PHILIPPINES

The Asia Foundation in the Philippines works with the government, civil society, and the private sector to strengthen democratic institutions, support economic growth, strengthen the rule of law, improve education, and foster peace and development in Mindanao.

Using social media to increase public awareness of Mindanao's new parliament

Twenty-five young people from across North Cotabato and Cotabato City in Mindanao completed a three-month AktiBangsa Social Media Fellowship program through which they launched social media campaigns reaching more than a million people. The goal? For citizens to understand and engage with their newly created regional parliament in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It's part of the Activate Bangsamoro project, funded by the United Kingdom, under which the Foundation has trained hundreds of leaders from civil society, academia, and faithbased groups on the parliament's mandate, powers, functions, procedures, and structures, and how to use social media to share this information.





EXPLORE OUR STORIES



<u>A New Generation Takes the</u> <u>Driver's Seat in Bangsamoro</u>

MYANMAR

Our work in Myanmar includes research, analysis, and data gathering activities, which are crucial in this period of change and disruption. This work assists bilateral and multilateral development partners, INGOs and local civil society to make informed decisions with greater impact. We work both inside and outside Myanmar to promote the empowerment and safety of women and girls, assist independent education initiatives, support measures towards just and sustainable peace, and build local capacity including how to conduct independent research.



Protecting the vulnerable from the dangers of trafficking in a time of political turmoil

Widespread armed conflict and loss of livelihoods in the wake of the February 2021 military coup have forced many people in Myanmar to migrate internally or across borders for safety and survival. Desperate travelers often know little about safe migration practices and are at risk of falling into the hands of human traffickers. In 2022, the Foundation funded independent, Myanmar-based CSOs to provide protections during this challenging time. Under a project to increase information on the risks of trafficking and migration, three local organizations trained peer educators both in person in the Yangon Region and online for the Ayeyarwady Region. The peer educators then held community sessions for hundreds of community members, many female and at extreme risk. The trainings went on despite severe political turmoil, challenges of Covid-19 restrictions, fear of arrest and disruption by authorities, frequent electrical blackouts, and limited internet access.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

In a flourishing society, economic growth is inclusive, and workers are equipped with skills they need for future jobs.

VIETNAM

In Vietnam, we are promoting fair, inclusive, and transparent governance, increasing resilience and readiness in the Vietnamese economy, reducing the causes and managing the impacts of climate change, supporting learning and educational achievement, empowering women, and fostering peace and prosperity through regional and international cooperation.

Mobile banking unlocks essential financial services for women, underserved populations

Our public-private partnership with the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies (VBSP) and Mastercard creates access to digital financial services for women and low-income populations. The partnership generates both economic and social returns in the near term, and offers a full range of financial services, in particular, for women-led microenterprises, in the long term. Through a mobile app, the partnership helps customers manage loans, savings, and transactions with the bank. VBSP and Mastercard also signed a commercial business agreement, an important milestone in building a business partnership, to provide payment and other financial services for the underserved population in Vietnam.



PACIFIC ISLANDS

As we expand our programs in the Pacific Islands and our recently established office in Suva, Fiji, The Asia Foundation is building on decades of on-the-ground experience in the region. We support Pacific solutions to Pacific challenges by working with respected leaders and local NGOs. We promote women's leadership in climate action and disaster management. We enhance digital opportunites and cybersecurity, and counter trafficking in persons. We've launched print and digital book distribution programs to promote children's literacy, and supported important research, conferences, and publications on Covid-19, cybersecurity issues, and the future of work for women.



In Pacific Island kitchens, a food revolution

Over the last 50 years, there has been a dramatic shift in the diet of Pacific Islanders, from traditional seafood, coconut, and green vegetables, to imported, processed foods and sugary drinks. This displacement of the traditional food system has been accompanied by a catastrophic increase in diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, which now account for 75% of all deaths in the Pacific. The World Health Organization estimates 43% of adults in Pacific Island countries are obese. This is an economic disaster for the Pacific Islands, in addition to devasting families and communities' livelihoods.

The Foundation has joined forces with the *Pacific Island Food Revolution* (PIFR), a runaway hit reality TV cooking competition that's putting traditional ingredients and local produce first. PIFR pits teams of "food warriors" from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and Vanuatu against one another to champion their country's cuisine. But the goal is to empower a social movement embracing good food. It's a fight for a healthy, wealthy, and sustainable future,

The partnership includes a "solutions incubator" that develops ideas like supporting Chef Primrose Siri and surgeon Dr. Basil Leodoro to promote local produce and traditional recipes through Sanma Food Revolution with a team of 350 volunteers, who deliver recipes and nutritional information to households so they'll recognize the benefits, physical and economic, of fresh, local, island products.

An impact assessment by the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics shows the extraordinary impact of the *Pacific Island Food Revolution* in the Pacific: 83% of the general population are tuning in to watch, and 42% of viewers report a positive change in their diets.

EXPLORE OUR STORIES





MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, we focus on strengthening the inclusivity and sustainability of Malaysia's economic growth as an Advanced Middle-Income Country and on building its high-skilled workforce. We provide opportunities for women and girls and future skills training to enable young Malaysians to succeed in the new economy. Our Malaysia office is a regional hub for both the Future Skills Alliance (FSA) and Go Digital ASEAN initiatives (supported by Google. org). Under the FSA, we have completed the Accelerate My Business program (funded by AT&T and Visa) and designed two new digital skilling programs, Skills2Work and STEMConnectHer.

The Future of Work and Future Skills Alliance

We are collaborating with businesses and governments to future-proof and reskill people for new opportunities in the digital economy. Together with rapid digitalization and changes in the job market, Covid-19 created "double disruption" for workers across the region, with women, youth, and other marginalized groups disproportionally impacted. The Asia Foundation has activated the Future Skills Alliance (FSA), a collective impact platform for private and public sector partners to deliver future skills at scale to the region's underserved groups. The FSA creates a pathway for businesses to contribute to environmental, social, and governance efforts across Asia and the Pacific.

The Foundation is partnering with leading businesses on an up-skilling program that combines industry curriculum, certifications, technology, and expertise to provide professional, technical, and business skills needed for entry-level roles, and return-to-work roles across a variety of sectors. Skills2Work targets women, unemployed youth, and marginalized groups, to start, restart, or transition their careers. The first learning pathway—Customer Experience (CX), was piloted in Malaysia and the Philippines with sponsorship and industry certification provided by Zendesk. Currently, a Skills2Work Foundations program is being provided to 5,000 women in India, with sponsorship by Visa. A new learning pathway on cloud computing is being designed in Vietnam, with industry certification provided by Amazon Web Services (AWS).



EXPLORE OUR STORIES

BLOG

Helping an Unlikely Entrepreneur to Keep Safe and Prosper



BANGLADESH

The Asia Foundation works with government, civil society, community and religious leaders, and the private sector in Bangladesh to address community challenges, build leadership capacity that reflects the country's diversity, and facilitate broad-based participation in the country's development.

Boosting female participation in Bangladesh's labor market

Marjina Begum runs a factory in Kurigram, in northern Bangladesh. Starting with just five employees, she now has 360 employees in the workplace, and another 200 based at home, making nakshi kantha, highly coveted, ornately embroidered quilted clothing that is a centuries-old tradition. Despite a village culture that discourages women, from going into business, Marjina built her successful company, Tobokpur Mohila Unnayan Shangshta, from the ground up. But she faced challenges: as a woman, it was often hard to meet with buyers and suppliers, conduct normal business activities, or gain access to markets, information, or new technology. Then she heard about Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems, or WEESMS. The Asia Foundation program provides growth-oriented business development services to female entrepreneurs and employees. It links entrepreneurs to some of the country's bestknown online marketplaces and connects them with higher-level financial services and business tools. WEESMS helped Marjina reach out to new buyers who were interested in placing larger orders and introduced her to local government agencies that could help her promote her products to new markets. Data showed 67% of women-led SMEs profited from e-commerce platforms as alternative sales channels; 46% of participating SMEs received loans to expand their business; and 91% of them reported increased income as a result.

Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthing Market Systems

46%

of participating SMEs received loans to expand their buisness

91%

of SMEs report increased income from launching new products

EXPLORE OUR STORIES

BLOG

Helping an Unlikely Entrepreneur to Keep Safe and Prosper

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In a flourishing society, increased cooperation on critical issues reduces conflicts and sustains peace.

KOREA

Our office in Seoul tackles key development issues in Korea and Asia and the Pacific, including inclusive growth, gender equality, and climate actions in partnership with South Korean government agencies, the private sector, and civil society. The Korea office also facilitates regional cooperation in Northeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific.



EXPLORE OUR STORIES

REPORTS

Firm Partners In An Unstable Region: Prospects for Trilateral Cooperation between the Republic of Korea, the United States, and Australia

What a Clean Energy Future Demands: Massive Shift in Critical Materials and Global Supply Chains

Firm partners in an unstable region

Republic of Korea-Australia-United States Trilateral cooperation is ripe for expansion. With converging interests, these three countries are drawn increasingly closer by shared challenges including supply chain, energy security, Covid-19 recovery needs, and benefits of enhanced economic coordination. The Asia Foundation convened a series of trilateral dialogues, facilitating an exchange of national positions and mutual understanding. One focused on energy cooperation, including critical needs to revamp energy systems, industrial processes, and transportation networks to incorporate renewable and zerocarbon technologies. For example, strategies to secure future energy resources, including batteries; collaborative efforts to support the development and supply of critical materials such as lithium and hydrogen; and the challenges and risks of supply chain disruptions. What a Clean Energy Future Demands: Massive Shift in Critical Materials and Global Supply Chains summarizes those findings, a set of clear recommendations, and highlights areas in which the three nations can cooperate.

WASHINGTON, DC

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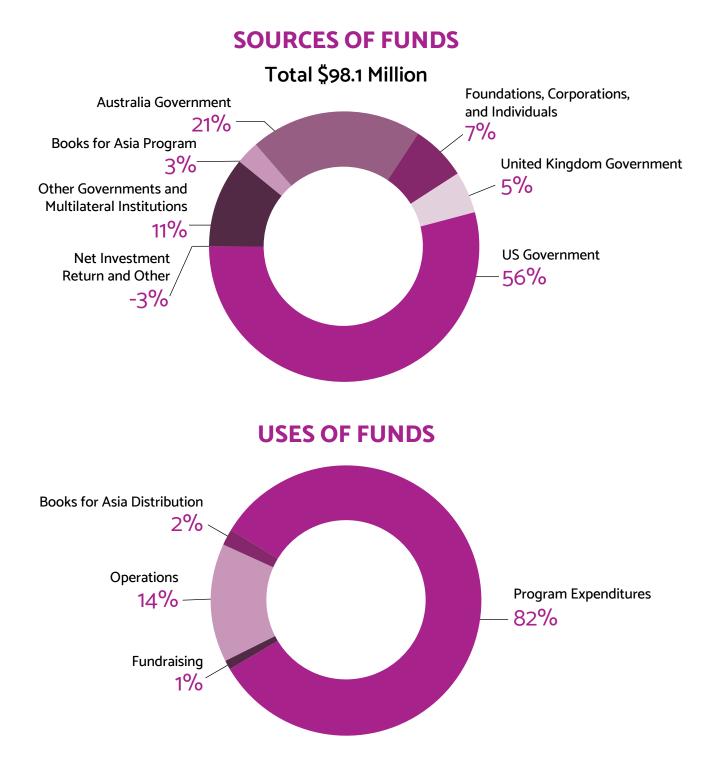
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