

# The Maldives



## Project Highlights

### Adapting to rapidly changing social and economic development needs

TAF has provided scholarships and training opportunities, mainly in human resource development, and has helped strengthen legal systems for international trade and investment.

### Strengthening civil society engagement in policy, governance, and development

TAF trained community leaders to convey community needs and priorities to decision-makers for conflict resolution, human rights, public security, anticorruption, and democratic values. With EU funding through 2027, TAF will also strengthen civil society organizations to engage in policy-making and local governance through inclusive dialogue and gender-sensitive, rights-based approaches.

### Expanding and supporting knowledge and research

Since its 2012 study of gangs, TAF has continued to invest in local research, including studies on civil society in governance (2023), women in tourism (2024), and mapping of mental health services (2024).

### Supporting rehabilitative justice

TAF ran a vocational training program for prison inmates alongside a values education program to enable their reintegration into society.

### Increasing community engagement in local affairs

TAF supported the Maldives Police Service in

The Asia Foundation (TAF) has been active in the Maldives since the early 1980s, supporting inclusive governance, civil society, and justice. Responding to the country's evolving needs, its work addresses island-specific challenges through local research and community engagement, while also tackling emerging issues like mental health and regional labor migration. TAF continues to promote women's leadership, economic empowerment, and youth participation across the islands.

integrating neighborhood policing approaches, surveying community perceptions of policing, and developing a communication strategy.

## 2024 Snapshot



More than 91,000 book reads and downloads by 8,000+ readers via the Let's Read digital library.



Partnered with 35+ civil society organizations across 15 atolls to strengthen civic space and community-local council dialogue.



Engaged strategically with key government bodies to enhance service delivery.



# Flagship Initiatives



## Strengthening civil society

From 2020 to 2024, TAF worked with 35+ civil society organizations (CSOs) across the islands and atolls of the Maldives to enhance engagement with local councils and women's development committees in advancing local island development priorities. TAF partnered with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Information, and Arts to build staff capacity to broaden their outreach for CSO capacity development. TAF also collaborated with the Local Government Authority to develop a handbook on CSO engagement to support local councils and women's development committees in strengthening community engagement efforts.

## Regional Initiative

In 2023, through a regional South Asia initiative, TAF supported the Public Interest Law Center to partner with the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit in Bangladesh to organize a track 1.5 dialogue between governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders to promote safe and legal labor migration.

## Supporting women's rights organizations

TAF worked with women's rights organizations such as Hope for Women to support women's development

committees in promoting women's socioeconomic and political participation at the local level. TAF also supported the Maldivian Women's Association to explore barriers to women's participation in community-based tourism. In 2024, we helped establish the country's first community of practice for gender equality and social inclusion trainers through comprehensive training and mentorship.

## Bringing digital books to young readers

Launched in 2020 in Maldives, the Let's Read digital library has been widely popular with books read and downloaded more than 91,000 times in 2024. To date, 197 books have been translated into Dhivehi, and in 2023, a series of original financial literacy books by local authors and illustrators was added to the platform. Let's Read works with the Maldives National Library, Maldives Library Association, and colleges and schools through the Ministry of Education and private education institutions.

## Enhancing mental health service delivery

In 2024, TAF collaborated with the Maldivian Nurses Association to conduct a mapping study to identify service gaps and inform potential program interventions to strengthen government mental health and psychosocial support services provision. The initiative also enhanced individual and institutional capacities to better serve those in need.

## Future outlook

TAF seeks to expand programming in the Maldives in areas such as women's voice and participation, youth leadership, community mediation, mental health, labor migration, and local economic governance based on our deep experience of working on these critical issues throughout Asia and the Pacific.

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 to improve lives and expand opportunities.