



The Asia Foundation



Welcome to The Asia Foundation's Washington, D.C. April newsletter. In honor of Earth Day later this month, this special issue focuses on the work The Asia Foundation and its partners across Asia are doing to address climate challenges. This month's newsletter includes an announcement for our **upcoming event on women climate leaders and forest defenders in Indonesia**, the **recording of our recent event celebrating 190 years of U.S. - Thailand relations**, InAsia blog posts on **carbon pricing in Malaysia**, **Bhutan's work on advancing environmental law**, and **climate-smart agricultural solutions in India**, and the Foundation's most recent **publication on civic space and contestation in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal**.

Events

Upcoming in-person event – [Indonesia’s Success in Environmental Governance: Engaging Women Climate Leaders and Forest Defenders](#)



Source: HAKA Foundation

April 28, 10:00 – 11:30 am – Between 2001 and 2021, Indonesia lost more than 28 million hectares of forest (an area larger than New Zealand), according to Global Forest Watch. This impacts traditional communities and falls particularly hard on women, who suffer disproportionately from displacement, disempowerment, and loss of land and livelihoods. Fostering women’s climate leadership is critical to addressing the climate crisis. The Asia Foundation’s [environmental governance program](#) in [Indonesia](#) invests in providing women with the tools and resources to [assume forest defender roles](#) traditionally given to men and facilitating communities’ governance and protection of their forests. Join us for an in-person event to discuss environmental governance, social forestry, and the work of the Foundation’s local partners, HAKA and the Aceh Women Forest Defenders Movement, in Indonesia. RSVP to the event [here](#).

Recent Hybrid Event – [U.S. - Thailand Relations at 190 Years: Past, Present, Future](#)



March 20 – The Asia Foundation and the Royal Thai Embassy joined together to commemorate 190 years of U.S. - Thailand relations with a panel that addressed the accomplishments, challenges, and future of U.S. - Thai relations, as well as prospects for the alliance in the 21st century. Video remarks were provided by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and panelists included Thai Ambassador H.E. Tanee Sangrat, U.S. State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Melissa Brown, Professor Pongphisoot Busbarat, and The Asia Foundation's John Brandon. A video recording of the event can be found [here](#). Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Thailand](#) and its [International Relations program](#).

Voices from the Field



[Looking Ahead in Malaysia's Carbon-Pricing Journey](#)

In the race against climate change, global attention is turning to carbon pricing as an effective policy to support the low-carbon transition and meet the targets of the Paris Agreement. Carbon pricing places the cost burden of greenhouse gas emissions on emitters themselves, forcing them to internalize what were previously externalized costs, thus creating a powerful incentive to find low-carbon

alternatives and cut emissions. At present, more than 70 national and subnational carbon pricing instruments have been implemented or are scheduled for implementation globally. This [InAsia blog post](#) dives into how Malaysia is assessing the feasibility of designing and implementing its own carbon pricing policy. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Malaysia](#) and its [environment and climate action programs](#).



[No Happiness without the Trees: Bhutan's Trailblazing Environmental Law](#)

While Bhutan emits 2.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, the vast forests that cover nearly three-quarters of the country absorb more than four million tons. Bhutan has embraced the preservation of this natural inheritance. Its constitution mandates that forest cover be maintained at no less than 60 percent. But climate change does not respect national borders. Bhutan's growing urban populations remain vulnerable to landslides and flooding from glacial lake outbursts. In February, Bhutan's Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law welcomed nearly four dozen legal and environmental experts from around the world to the inaugural Paro Forum to examine how South Asia's youngest national law school, known as JSW Law, can draw on Bhutan's unique resources and experience to help fight climate change and advance environmental law. Check out the latest episode of the [InAsia podcast](#) to learn more about the Paro Forum, the Foundation's work with JSW Law, and how Bhutan is working to address global climate change.



[Towards a Climate-Smart Tomorrow: Solutions for Transforming Asia's Agriculture Sector](#)

For years, climate negotiations have been unable to address the numerous challenges facing developing countries. The costs of climate adaptation will be immense, and the gap between the estimated costs and the available financing is rapidly widening for developing countries, leading to significant disparities. The data also shows, however, that transforming food systems could free up close to \$12 trillion that the world now spends on agriculture. Climate-smart agriculture, which combines adaptation and mitigation measures, has emerged as a promising solution to address three critical challenges by (1) enhancing agricultural productivity and incomes, (2) making agriculture resilient, and (3) contributing to climate change mitigation. Check out this [InAsia blogpost](#) to learn about how [India](#) is advancing climate-smart agricultural solutions.

Recent Publications



[GovAsia – Glass Half Full: Civic Space and Contestation in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal](#)

The past decade has witnessed a surge of interest in and concern over the global trend toward democratic regression. In South Asia, regulatory and institutional frameworks have become increasingly restrictive, curbing the ability of citizens and civil society organizations to occupy and use civic spaces to organize, express themselves, and participate in decisions that affect the lives of people whose interests they serve. However, this is only one half of the story. The other half is how citizens, collectives, and organizations adapt by

carving out spaces where they can maintain—or even expand—the boundaries of their engagement in local and national civic spaces. In this paper, the Foundation’s experts examine how civic spaces are evolving in three South Asian countries—Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal—drawing on the experiences and perspectives of civil society representatives. Learn more about the Foundation’s [governance programs](#).



The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation