

Advancing Gender Equality & Social Inclusion in India



The Asia Foundation

Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

The Asia Foundation opened a resident office in India in 2008. The Foundation collaborates with communities, government, civil society, and other development partners to implement evidence-based programs to advance gender equality and social inclusion and to expand women's rights, security, and economic opportunities in India. This includes a focus on changing attitudes and social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence, and specifically human trafficking.



INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE URBAN SPACES

The Asia Foundation pursues gender-equitable and inclusive governance, including in transport, mobility, and infrastructure, by forging partnerships with a diverse set of stakeholders. For example, in India, The Foundation highlighted concerns around women's safety in three Indian cities: Bhopal, Gwalior, and Jodhpur through the [Making Cities Safe for Women in India](#) project, supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The project developed a baseline, providing evidence to support equitable and inclusive urban governance through targeted policymaking in India's rapidly expanding metropolitan areas. For example, 3548 safety audits were completed using My Safetipin and Safetipin Nite apps in the city of Jodhpur. The issue gained traction through the hashtag #SafetyforShe which was amplified in print, digital, and social media.

In collaboration with SafetiPin, the Foundation used crowdsourced data mapping to measure women's perceptions of safety and identify neighbourhoods and public spaces that felt unsafe for women, such as bus stops. This data was shared with key

government and non-government stakeholders to implement targeted structural improvements in the city and to inform policymaking on inclusive and equitable urban governance. Furthermore, working with frontline law enforcement officers, the Foundation partnered with the Centre for Social Research to develop and deliver a training program on gender-sensitive policing. This training program was later included as a part of the state police training academy's resources.

COMBATting STEREOTYPES OF MASCULINITY

Since 2011, an integral part of the Foundation's programming in India has been working with men and boys from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to promote gender equality and to reduce gender-based violence (GBV). The Foundation is also exploring gender norms and stereotypes through a multi-country research project to strengthen our understanding of masculinity in contemporary Asia. In addition, the Foundation supports local partners working with men and boys to understand their own lived experiences of masculinity and promote more equitable relationships. To this

The Foundation has tested and incubated programs that restructure gender norms and challenge gender stereotypes by engaging men and boys, to create equal and inclusive communities.

Leveraging mobile technology, the Foundation has developed a user-generated baseline to measure women's perceptions of safety across Indian cities.

end, the Foundation supported the Blue Ribbon Movement’s “Gender Lab for Boys Program,” which addresses stereotypes about men and boys and their role in society. To date, the project has worked with more than 1,800 boys across India. The Foundation has also supported YP Foundation’s “Mardon Waali Baat” and PRIA’s “Kadam Badhate Chalo.” Recently, UNESCO has identified The Asia Foundation as one of the 20 key pioneers in this program area in India.

ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Understanding how source, transit, and destination countries in South Asia address challenges related to trafficking in persons (TIP) and GBV is a key area of programming for the Foundation. Our objective is to provide support and solutions to civil society organizations, the police, service providers, and the government. In partnership with Women Power Connect, the Foundation created an open-access online database of the services available to TIP victims in India and Nepal. At the Indo-Nepal border, the Foundation supported its local partner Jan Jagran Sansthan to improve the repatriation of trafficking survivors. In New Delhi, we provided support to Shakti Shalini’s Crisis Intervention and Counselling Center for victims.

With support from the U.S. State Department (TIP Office), the Foundation is conducting research on “Optimizing Screening and Support Services for GBV and TIP” across India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. This qualitative research seeks to understand the difference, if any, in support services provided to and required by TIP and GBV victims, the opportunities and challenges of integrating these services, and the potential impact of these services on the reintegration of victims into their communities. This research will create opportunities to provide more effective and efficient services to TIP and GBV victims.

GENDER & THE FUTURE OF WORK

As technology-driven economic opportunities increase in the digital era, women must adapt to the changing nature of work and be able to access emerging economic opportunities. To support women’s economic empowerment while still ensuring principles of safety and equity in the workplace, in 2020 the Foundation partnered

with the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy to publish [India’s Emerging Gig Economy: The Future of Work for Women Workers](#). The report is a political economy study on the growth of the mobile-based platform economy in India and its engagement of the female workforce in gig work in Indian cities. The Foundation will continue to work on this issue as women’s participation in gig economy and e-commerce platforms expand in India and across the Asia-Pacific.

GENDER & TRADE FACILITATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Despite enhanced regional cooperation and integration in South Asia, these benefits have often bypassed women. To address this, the Foundation has initiated research and convened stakeholders to understand how trade facilitation programs can be designed and implemented to include and benefit women. In 2017, the Foundation published research on [Expanding the Benefits of Trade to Women in the BBIN Region: A Program Design Primer](#), which examines the various socioeconomic constraints faced by women entrepreneurs engaged in trade in the region, assesses the programming climate for gender-responsive trade facilitation interventions and identifies key program strategies that may improve gender outcomes of such programs. The main feature of this research is a matrix of illustrative program activities targeted at civil society, the government, and the private sector. These activities are likely to expand the benefits of trade to women more effectively in the region, going beyond port-level facilitation measures to capture opportunities before, at, and beyond border points and ports. The focus will in four thematic intervention areas: to address gaps in infrastructure; build the capacity of key stakeholders; generate and share knowledge; and design supportive activities to promote the participation of women in trade facilitation related activities.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.



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