

# Malaysia



Since 1954, The Asia Foundation has supported Malaysia's aspiration to achieve equitable and inclusive economic growth. The Foundation works with governments, the private sector, and local communities to create access to the digital economy for all, strengthen Malaysia's future-oriented workforce, upskill local talent, strengthen women's economic participation, and catalyze climate action.

## Project Highlights

### Increasing opportunities for women's employment and entrepreneurship

Trained over 5,000 Malaysian women MSME owners over one year in skills needed to grow their businesses online and provided mentorship to 500 of these women and e-commerce training to 70 others.

### Narrowing the digital divide

Reached over 16,000 Malaysians from marginalized communities in two years—unemployed youth, women, rural and disabled communities—and equipped them with essential digital skills, enabling them to safely access the growing digital economy.

### Supporting more high-skilled women in the workforce

Conducted research for evidence-based development of a childcare policy at both state and federal levels in the country from 2021-22; and supported a childcare bill in the state of Selangor.

### Improving the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) ecosystem

Mapped out bottlenecks and inefficiencies across the 11 ministries that comprise the TVET ecosystem in Malaysia and provided recommendations for enabling more future-ready, industry-aligned TVET graduates in 2022.

## 2022 Snapshot



6,000 women entrepreneurs trained from Malaysia & Indonesia



100 early-career women in STEM connected with mentors



225,000 women, youth, and MSMEs across ASEAN trained in digital skills



16 youth from the Philippines CX certified



## Flagship Initiatives



### Hub for digital skilling in Asia-Pacific

The Foundation's Future Skills Alliance (FSA) is a broad coalition of partners from the public and private sectors working together to deliver future skills at scale to the region's most marginalized. Drawing on a collective impact model, the FSA creates a pathway for businesses to contribute to environmental, social, and governance efforts that transform access to and participation in the digital economy across Asia and the Pacific. We developed and maintain partnerships with leading tech and IT companies, including Google.org, AT&T, Visa, Cisco, Zendesk, and others.

The Go Digital ASEAN initiative, endorsed by the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), and funded by Google.org, broadens digital skills participation across the region. The project's first phase exceeded its target and trained over 220,000 individuals from underserved communities in ASEAN, 60 percent women. The second phase (2022-2024) expands the project's reach. It provides fit-for-purpose training on business and financial literacy, digital marketing, cybersecurity, and carbon footprint reduction to 200,000 MSME owners and employees.

### Policy reforms for a future-ready workforce

Supporting Malaysia's ambition to build a future-ready workforce, the Foundation contributes to policy reforms to build quality talent and provide equitable economic opportunities locally. The Foundation engages with key government and private sector stakeholders to provide evidence-based policy recommendations focused on retaining high-skilled women in the workforce and supporting the national TVET system. Our work supports innovative sectors such as the creative economy, the care economy, and the green economy.

### Sustainable growth and climate action

The Foundation's programming includes reinforcement of climate resiliency through Malaysia's climate change ambitions, convening experts to gather regional perspectives on the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and sharing views on the economic case for environmental conservation. As Malaysia begins implementing a national carbon pricing policy, carbon pricing instruments, and the voluntary carbon market, the Foundation's report on the economic costs and returns of emissions reductions and carbon sink conservation strengthens the business case for conservation and climate action. With carbon pricing, the business case for the conservation and protection of environmental goods and climate action will have a greater foundation in Malaysia.

The Foundation is also working on a Green Economy initiative in the state of Sabah to support the state government's plan to steer economic growth and development locally. The Foundation convenes consultative discussions with local experts and community members to inform its research work and understand the various challenges and best practices in building community-based industries that are resilient and sustainable.

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 is focused on good governance, women's empowerment and gender equality, inclusive economic growth, environment, and climate action, and regional and international relations.