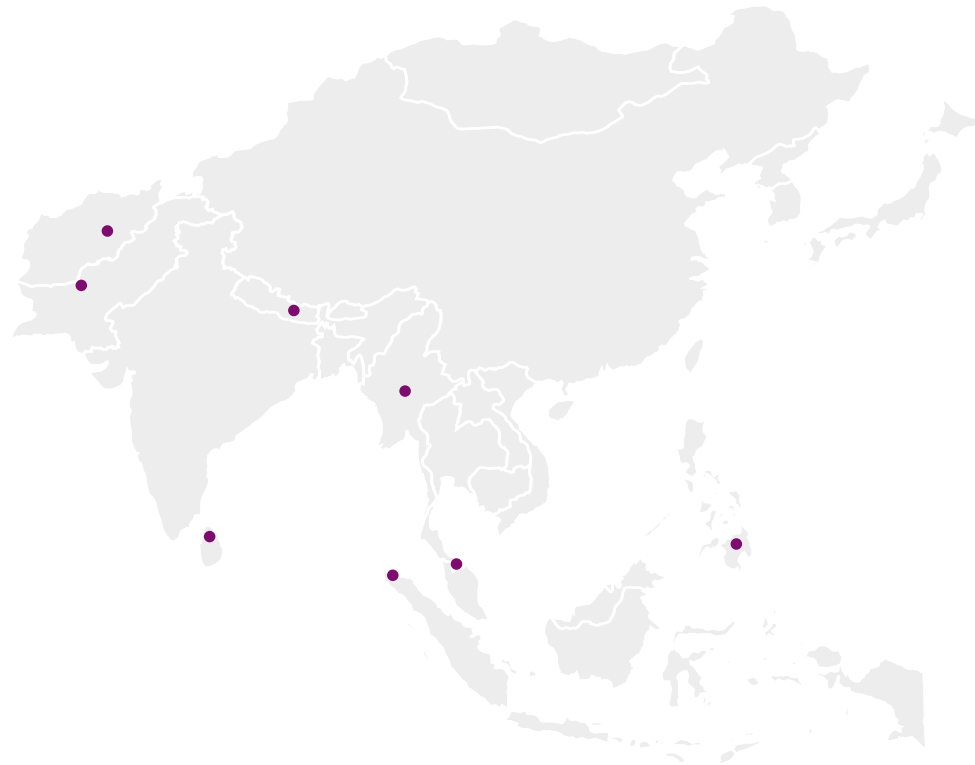


Supporting Peace Processes in Asia



The Asia Foundation
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

The Asia Foundation is a leader in supporting peace processes in politically astute ways. We work at multiple levels—from elites to communities—to end violent conflicts across Asia. Our staff provide technical advice to peace negotiators, while working to strengthen incentives for peace. Our local networks help us understand and respond to realities on the ground and identify the right entry points.



More than two-thirds of people in Asia live in countries that are experiencing or have experienced armed conflicts. Although more than 10 major peace agreements have been signed in the past three decades, many countries continue to face large-scale nationwide or subnational conflicts. Peace processes have successfully ended insurgencies such as in Aceh, Indonesia, while in others sustainable peace has been elusive. Even after peace deals have been reached, 'post-conflict' violence often leaves communities scarred.

OUR PROGRAMMING

The Foundation has worked to support peace processes in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Our work has three objectives:

- To ensure peace processes involve key actors whose support is necessary for lasting peace, and that all sides have access to the expertise they need.

- To promote mechanisms for engaging broader groups within society, including marginalized communities, who may not be involved in formal negotiations.
- To embed changes agreed at the negotiating table in transitional or new institutions to help peace agreements endure.

We adopt a different, locally informed approach in each place depending on needs and opportunities. The Foundation does not assume that countries experience conflicts because of weak institutions and capacity, or that international actors play an important role in conflict resolution. In Asia, peace agreements hinge on domestic political will and elite interests. Instead, the Foundation 'works politically' to bolster incentives for peace. This often involves a combination of research, network building, policy and technical advice, capacity building, and on-the-ground service delivery.

THE PHILIPPINES

The conflict in the southern Philippines has pitted different Muslim separatist groups against security forces, killing 153,000 people since 1972. The Foundation has played an active role in peace processes to end violence. Work is founded on our local knowledge and connections with stakeholders, including armed actors, and our reputation as a credible and independent source of information.

Following the collapse of peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2008, we were able to conduct a rapid survey and provide grants to local organizations equipped to address the fallout. The Asia Foundation was invited to be part of the International Contact Group supporting the peace negotiations, which culminated in the Comprehensive Agreements on the Bangsamoro. In 2013, The Foundation joined the Third Party Monitoring Team, which oversees the implementation of the peace deal. Our seat at the peace table and our work on conflict management gave us better information and the space to work on security sector reform and political party support, as well as to engage religious leaders to support dialogue.

NEPAL

Nepal's civil war lasted for a decade from 1996. Since a Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed between the insurgent Maoists and the new democratic government, political instability has led to new forms of violence, as different ethnic and regional groups have asserted their influence and anxiety through localized campaigns of intimidation and criminality.

The Foundation has supported peace – both formally and informally. At the national level, we provided safe space for dialogue among political parties during 2009-2015. We facilitated back-room discussions among party leaders during periods when they publicly could not be seen to engage with each other. We placed our partners in charge of the proceedings, while supporting the process from behind the scenes. We identified key international resources and carefully matched those

to local needs. We developed a subnational layer of political dialogue with a violence prevention focus. This has become increasingly important since the promulgation of the 2015 constitution, which will create new federal governance structures. As this will likely create tensions along new provincial, municipal, and village borders, as well as disputes over common resources, we have prepared a cadre of influential dialogue facilitators and mediators to defuse these tensions and resolve disputes. At the local level, the Foundation supports community mediation to improve access to justice, establish a culture of conflict resolution, and enhance the relationship between state and society.

THAILAND

Subnational conflict in Thailand's predominantly Malay-Muslim southern border provinces has simmered for decades. Since the resumption of the conflict in 2004, acts of violence targeting civilians, security personnel, and officials have claimed over 6,500 lives, making the conflict one of the deadliest in Southeast Asia.

In 2013, the Government of Thailand and representatives of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) movement agreed to engage in a peace dialogue. In response, the Foundation supported activities that strengthened the capacity of local groups to contribute to the peace effort, encouraged leaders on both sides to support talks, and tempered expectations.

While the 2013 peace process was abandoned, Thailand's military government is publicly committed to continue negotiations. While a credible peace process remains elusive, the Foundation's comprehensive program continues to support good faith state responses to Malay-Muslim grievances and individual and institutional capacity development initiatives to ensure that key local stakeholders are equipped to engage in peace efforts when circumstances permit. Over 1,000 people have attended peacebuilding trainings, while 2,000 have attended community fora aimed at motivating active citizens and peace advocates.

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.

A DISTINCTIVE APPROACH

The Asia Foundation supports peace processes over the long term – fostering capacity in advance of formal negotiations and staying engaged after the ink on peace agreements has dried. Often we engage through our governance programming in addition to or instead of working directly with parties to the conflict. This has allowed us to build relationships and prove we are a reliable source of information and technical expertise on issues being negotiated at the peace table. We invest in understanding the interests of key actors involved in conflicts and emphasize homegrown solutions rather than international 'best practice' to ensure sustainable peace.

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