



### Goals

Girls' and women's increased voice and leadership

Increased opportunities for girls' education and women's employment and entrepreneurship

Improved rights and security, including ending gender-based violence

Greater equity, inclusion, and opportunities for structurally marginalized populations

### The Challenge

Covid-19, conflict, and climate change have dramatically increased gender inequality in Asia and the Pacific, where the World Economic Forum estimates it will take at least 165 years to achieve gender equality. Increased caregiving responsibilities during the pandemic have pushed many women out of the workforce or reduced their paid work hours, expanding the gender wage gap. Meanwhile, gender-based violence (GBV) has skyrocketed amid harmful gender norms, and with the stress of lockdowns, strains on household finances, and the breakdown of support networks. Even before the pandemic, women in the region worked the longest hours globally, with over half their time spent on unpaid care work.

### The Opportunity

The Asia Foundation's decades-long engagement across Asia and the Pacific enables the Foundation to support effective, locally driven strategies to advance women's empowerment, gender equality and social inclusion. Through our permanent country offices across, local partners, and program teams, the Foundation works to engage governments in policy and legal change, and to support diverse women's organizations and networks to advocate for and realize these changes. The Foundation's women's empowerment and gender equality work focuses on women's economic empowerment, women's and girls' rights and security, and women's political voice and leadership.



## Economic Empowerment

The Foundation advances girls' and women's access to education, mentoring, and skills. This includes leveraging technology, digital skill building, and STEM education to position them for the future of work. Since launching the first Women's Business Center in Mongolia, more than 6,000 disadvantaged entrepreneurs have received training and access to markets and networks.

## Voice and Leadership

The Foundation supports women's voice and leadership as voters, candidates, leaders, and activists. This commitment includes advancing the women, peace, and security agenda by increasing women's role in grassroots peacekeeping and peacemaking. In the Philippines, the Foundation supported over 50,000 women working towards peace in Mindanao.

## Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

The Foundation works to ensure structurally disadvantaged groups have access to justice, including those marginalized based on race, class, religion, ability, geography, sexual identity, and orientation. Within marginalized groups, women and girls often experience more pronounced and intersecting forms of discrimination, requiring targeted strategies and advocacy. In Indonesia, the Peduli program addressed stigma and helped disadvantaged groups access social services, and supported people with disabilities to contribute to decision-making. Peduli reached 120,000 people—including 11,758 people with disabilities and 2,408 transgender women.

## Rights and Security

The Foundation works with local partners to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to address GBV, human trafficking, and forced migration and to support access to justice through a trauma-informed and survivor-centered approach. In Timor-Leste, the Nabilan program provides legal aid, shelter, and counseling services to nearly 1,800 survivors annually.

## Cross-Cutting Strategies

In addition to addressing GBV and strengthening feminist networks and movements, the Foundation's cross-cutting strategies focus on engaging men and boys and advancing girls' and women's climate leadership. For example, the Foundation invested in the Shifting the Power Coalition to increase Pacific women's leadership in mitigating climate-induced disasters and rising rates of GBV. The Foundation supports the Gender Lab to transform harmful gender norms by educating and engaging adolescent boys and fostering girls' leadership.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives and expanding opportunities across Asia and the Pacific. Informed by 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.