



The Asia Foundation

70 Celebrating
Seventy
Years



Welcome to The Asia Foundation’s Washington, D.C. September newsletter. This issue features upcoming events on **U.S.-China-Southeast Asia Relations: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Cooperation** and **Local Solutions to Judicial Reform and Access to Justice**, 70th anniversary impact highlights on **transforming community mediation in Bangladesh** and **multi-stakeholder dialogue programs in Nepal**, an InAsia post about **restorative justice in Indonesia**, and a new publication on **the challenges faced by Malaysian women entrepreneurs**.

Upcoming Events

U.S.-China-Southeast Asia Relations: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Cooperation

Monday, October 7, 12:00 - 1:45 pm ET



Please join The Asia Foundation for the release of the report, "U.S.-China-Southeast Asia Relations: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Cooperation." This report is based on a two-day workshop held in Bangkok in May that brought together 21 scholars and foreign policy practitioners from the U.S., China, and Southeast Asia to explore the central question - "What are the top priorities and concerns of the United States, China, and Southeast Asia in the coming decades?" The report's authors, Dr. David M. Lampton, Dr. Da Wei, and Dr. Kuik Cheng-Chwee, will be discussing the report's findings and recommendations. Space is limited and if you would like to join us, please email vanessa.crawford@asiafoundation.org.

Local Solutions to Judicial Reform and Access to Justice

Monday, October 28, 9:00 - 11:00 am ET



This year, The Asia Foundation is celebrating its 70th anniversary. To mark this occasion, the Washington office will host a series of targeted events to highlight the depth, scope, and impact of Foundation programs and underscore our commitment to build on these achievements in the decades ahead.

Please join The Asia Foundation for the first event in our anniversary series on *Local Solutions to Judicial Reform and Access to Justice*. This panel discussion will feature highlights of our law and justice program experience and learning across multiple countries and subregions. RSVP to the in-person event [here](#).

70th Anniversary Impact Highlights



Podcast: [Transforming a Time-Honored Tradition of Community Mediation](#)

As in many countries, seeking justice in a court of law can be too costly and time-consuming for ordinary citizens of Bangladesh. The time-honored *shalish* system of informal community mediation offers an alternative with deep roots in Bangladeshi tradition. But tradition can harbor injustices of its own for the powerless and the marginalized. This week, we look back three decades to a program that has transformed the delivery of justice in Bangladesh by making the *shalish* system more inclusive, more equitable, and more sensitive to the rights and interests of women and vulnerable groups. Listen to this InAsia podcast to hear more from The Asia Foundation's [Kim McQuay](#), who was closely involved in the Foundation's law and justice programs in Bangladesh in the mid-1990s and early 2000s. Learn more about the Foundation's [Access to Justice](#) program.



[The Legacy of Civil War and the Power of Dialogue in Nepal](#)

After a decade of simmering conflict and open civil war, the Comprehensive Peace Accord of 2006 brought formal peace to Nepal, but it would take years to draft a new constitution that decentralized government and acknowledged the diversity of the Nepali people. The Foundation played a key role during this delicate process, through programs that facilitated community mediation, Track 1.5 diplomacy, and all-important dialogue. Drawing on the conflict-mitigation efforts of the Nepal Peace Support Project since 2009, the Foundation's Regional Program Partnership Arrangement launched a subnational dialogue program in three districts in 2012 and provided strategic direction, coaching, and mentoring to the local facilitators. Since the introduction of federalism in 2015, this informal-dialogue model has evolved into the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Program, and

by 2022, the program operated in five of Nepal's seven provinces, helping to build trust among wary stakeholders and develop skills and resources within the local communities to resolve conflict constructively. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Nepal](#).

Voices from the Field



[Indonesia: The Road to Restorative Justice](#)

According to the Directorate General of Corrections, Indonesia's prison population overcrowding rate reached an astronomical 91% in August. This surge can be attributed to Indonesia's traditional reliance on imprisonment of convicted criminals, in correctional facilities where living conditions are often inhumane and essential prison services like healthcare and educational opportunities are stretched to the breaking point. Criminologists and legal experts are therefore warming to the idea of "restorative justice" to help deliver justice for both victims and perpetrators. The Asia Foundation, with support from the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice, Phase 2, is working with the Makassar Legal Aid Institution (MLAI) and city government to develop a policy framework for restorative justice services to help strengthen communities, promote healing and reconciliation, reduce crime, and prevent recidivism. This partnership has established a legal foundation for restorative justice in Makassar that could become a model for South Sulawesi and other regions of Indonesia. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Indonesia](#).

Recent Publication



[Striving Digitally: Understanding the Challenges of Malaysian Women Entrepreneurs](#)

This report assesses the digitalization challenges and limitations faced by women operating micro and small enterprises in Malaysia. The insights gained will inform the design of the Mastercard Strive Malaysia program, a collaborative effort between the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and The Asia Foundation. This program aims to elevate micro, small, and medium entrepreneurs, with a specific focus on women entrepreneurs, through skills development initiatives, facilitation of digitization, and support for their growth via the Strivers' Hub, a one-stop-shop digital platform. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Malaysia](#).



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