



# REPORT 20 21



The Asia Foundation



## Our vision is a peaceful, just, and thriving Asia

The Asia Foundation improves lives, expands opportunities, and helps societies flourish across a dynamic and developing Asia. We work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance pathbreaking reforms. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia's continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.

## A Message from the Chairman and President

The past two years have been a period of profound change and disruption across Asia. Throughout the region, countries grappled with adverse public health, economic, and social effects of the global pandemic. The military coup in Myanmar and Taliban takeover in Afghanistan marked major setbacks in the struggle to strengthen democratic governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights in those two countries. In the first months of 2022, we've seen economic melt-down and political protests lead to civil unrest and violence in Sri Lanka, while elections and parliamentary realignments have brought new governments to power in Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, and Timor-Leste. Most recently, the war in Ukraine has reverberated across the globe resulting in food insecurity, energy supply disruptions, transnational tensions, and soaring inflation.

All these developments take place against a backdrop of long-term trends and challenges: structural economic shifts, technological transformation, growing climate change, and increasing geo-political competition. Together, they have major implications for both the operating environment and programmatic context for the work of the Foundation.

The Asia Foundation's adaptive response capabilities were in full supply as frontline leaders and staff in all our offices showed remarkable resiliency, determination, and, in many cases, sheer personal courage in responding to the multiple challenges of these past years. We were buoyed by the unstinting support of our Board of Trustees, partners, and donors. As a result, the Foundation has been able not only to maintain continuity of our operations, but also pivot and adapt our programs to address the changing needs and priorities of the countries where we work.

Our flexibility and strength as an organization have been deeply tested as the countries we work in rose to meet the multiple challenges—both immediate and longer-term—that characterize this pivotal moment in Asia's history. Drawing on the Foundation's experience and strengths, and with a clear focus on the future, we are well-positioned to contribute to Asia's ongoing emergence as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of our interdependent world. Please enjoy some of our stories from across the Foundation.



**S. Timothy Kochis,**  
Chair of the Board and Executive Committee



**David D. Arnold,**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

# 2021 At-a-Glance



## INVESTING IN DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Go Digital ASEAN provided digital literacy training for over 200,000 micro-, small-, and medium-enterprise owners and jobseekers across 10 countries.



## ADDRESSING CONFLICT & EXTREMISM

Overall fatalities through conflict have declined across most of Asia in the past decade. But several emerging trends are of critical concern: we released the second edition of State of Conflict and Violence in Asia, highlighting increased levels of identity-based violence associated with polarizing politics and authoritarian leadership.



## INITIATING CLIMATE ACTION

We launched the Climate Action Initiative with 11 new climate projects to strengthen the Foundation's capacity to respond to diverse climate challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region.



## LET'S READ WITH NO LIMITS

Let's Read, Asia's only free digital children's library, grew rapidly with more than 8,000 inspiring storybooks in 51 languages in 16 countries. Kids read 3.7 million books on the Let's Read platform last year.



## AMBASSADORS FOR A GLOBAL FUTURE

Building on our investment to equip and develop emerging, next-gen leaders in Asia, we launched LeadNext to expand leadership training to include 18–25-year-olds.



## CHANGE STARTS HERE CAMPAIGN

We successfully completed a fundraising effort unlike any in the history of the Foundation: the Change Starts Here campaign raised 50+ million dollars over five years empowering us to activate positive change during a time of growing regional tensions and global disruption.





## VOICES FROM ASIA: *InAsia* Podcast

Hosts Tracie Yang and John Rieger took us on a journey to meet people on the ground shaping Asia's future in their acclaimed *InAsia* podcast, available on Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts. In her piece *Political Unrest Unsettles Myanmar's Borderlands*, Tabea Campbell Pauli of our Conflict and Fragility team explains when the Myanmar military reclaimed power after a decade of democratic government, it upended the delicate peace process with Myanmar's ethnic armed groups. In *Rethinking America's Role in Asia*, leading political, security, economic, and trade specialists share their perspectives on U.S. policies and prospects in Asia, including strategic policy recommendations for the Biden administration; and our *Afghan Survey* director Tabasum Akseer talks candidly about growing up in Afghanistan, leaving the country suddenly, and her doctor father, who worked in the refugee camps, and how all of this led her to devote her career to gathering data on what Afghans think and believe. These stories and more at <https://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/>.





# Afghanistan

## Looking Forward: Data for Humanitarian Assistance

With the end of the Western presence in Afghanistan, the country is facing a crisis. The economy, long dependent on foreign aid, is collapsing, and security issues and future governance are of paramount concern. As the international community formulates a response, reliable data is essential for effective humanitarian relief—to deploy resources where they are needed most and develop risk-reduction strategies.

Since 2004, The Asia Foundation’s annual *Survey of the Afghan People* has gathered first-hand opinions from a nationally representative sample of Afghan citizens, building an unparalleled portrait of the state of the nation. In 2022, as we consider Afghanistan’s future, The Asia Foundation will conduct a series of flash surveys as part of our commitment to collecting data for effective planning, policymaking, and development. These more frequent, streamlined surveys can capture the fast-moving developments in Afghanistan and allow for timely analysis and dissemination of results.

Given the political developments and the challenging security environment in Afghanistan, The Asia Foundation has temporarily suspended most of its activities there for the safety of our staff and their families. With a deep and enduring commitment to that nation’s development, we will continue to seek a positive path forward for the people of Afghanistan.

In Bangladesh, The Asia Foundation works with government, civil society, religious and community leaders, and the private sector to address community challenges, build leadership capacity that reflects the country's diversity, and facilitate broad-based participation in the country's development.

## Apparel Industry's Future Work Collective

The pandemic was devastating for Bangladesh, a powerhouse in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, and over the last two years it lost its position as the world's second-largest apparel exporter. A pilot project with H&M Foundation, Future Work Collective Impact Initiative, addressed vulnerabilities exposed during this difficult period and provided women RMG workers with skills and resources to stay healthy and safeguard their livelihoods.

The first component focused on disaster relief and directly served more than 130,000 workers. The Future of Work component provided upskilling to equip women workers for more senior roles in the workplace. We trained 650 women RMG workers and 234 supervisors and managers. We also partnered with BBC Media Action on a perception change program to shift pervasive biases against women workers.

The pilot was a success, and H&M Foundation selected the Foundation as a "Backbone Organization" for the next 3-year project phase to equip women RMG workers for a digitalized work environment.

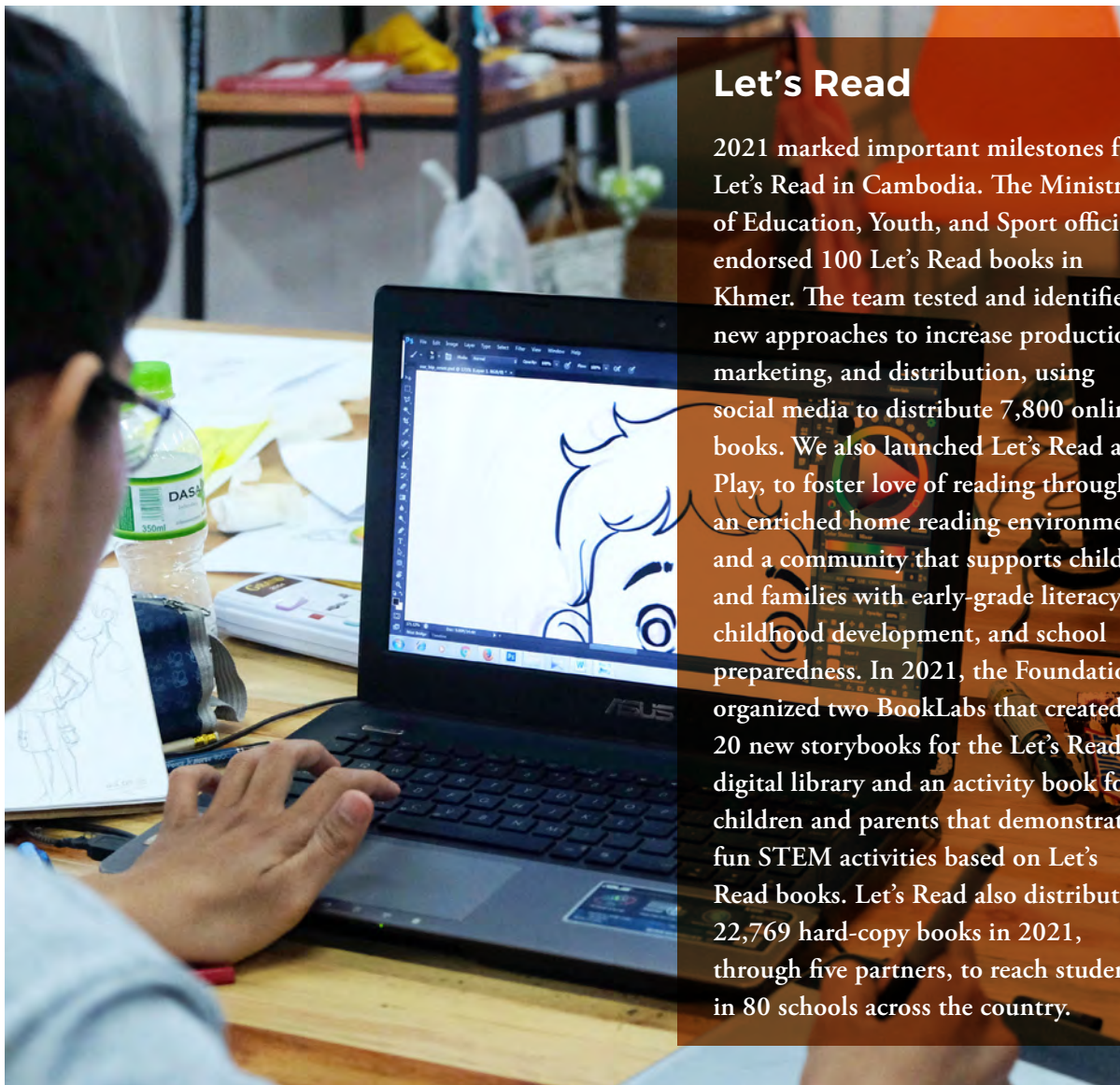
Bangladesh



MARCEL CROZET / ILO (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



In Cambodia, we are equipping young people for success in the future digital economy and expanding economic opportunities through access to education and learning. Our focus is on ensuring women’s safety and access to justice while providing women with growth opportunities. We also support Cambodia’s role in regional development and promote the knowledge sector through evidence-based policy formulation. At the subnational level, we engage with stakeholders on citizen engagement, solid waste management, and building inclusive and environmentally sustainable cities.



## Let's Read

2021 marked important milestones for Let's Read in Cambodia. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport officially endorsed 100 Let's Read books in Khmer. The team tested and identified new approaches to increase production, marketing, and distribution, using social media to distribute 7,800 online books. We also launched Let's Read and Play, to foster love of reading through an enriched home reading environment, and a community that supports children and families with early-grade literacy, childhood development, and school preparedness. In 2021, the Foundation organized two BookLabs that created 20 new storybooks for the Let's Read digital library and an activity book for children and parents that demonstrates fun STEM activities based on Let's Read books. Let's Read also distributed 22,769 hard-copy books in 2021, through five partners, to reach students in 80 schools across the country.

Cambodia



In China, the Foundation focuses on developing the charitable sector, disaster management, gender equality and women's development, child welfare, regional cooperation, and constructive U.S.-China relations. By contributing technical expertise and the Foundation's well-established network in the United States and Asia, we work closely with local partners to improve stakeholders' understanding of China's development strategy, development assistance, and overseas investment. We also seek to strengthen the capacity of Chinese civil society organizations (CSOs) to tackle the intersection of these issues with disaster relief and assistance, environmental resilience, and gender equality.



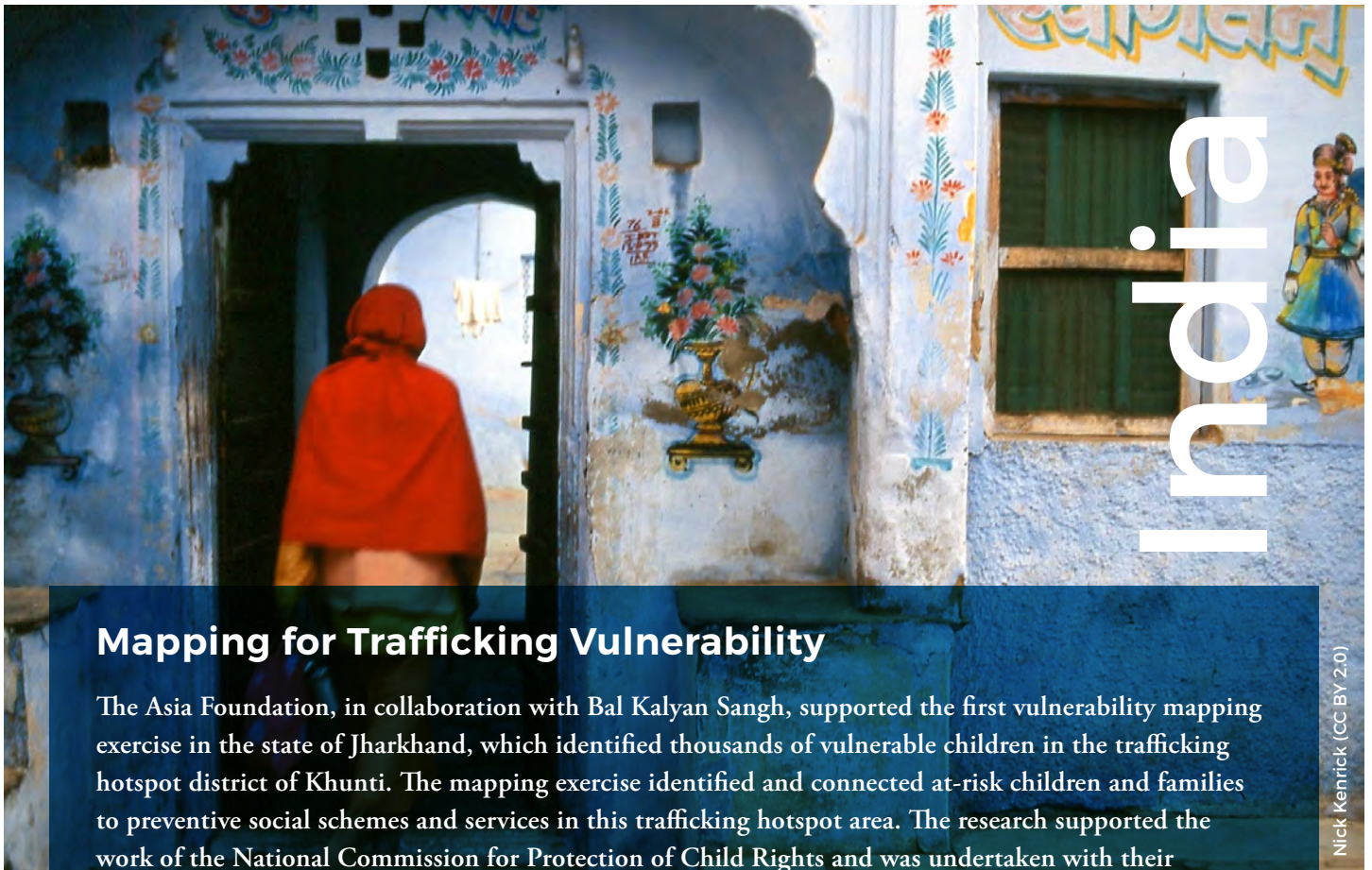
## Shared Global Challenges

Bilateral relations between China and the United States have seen escalating strategic competition, but shared global challenges such as climate change require cooperation, and the economies of the two countries remain deeply interconnected. In July 2021, the Foundation supported the Centre for China and Globalization (CCG) to hold a virtual China-U.S. Think Tank Dialogue during the Seventh China and Globalization Forum. "Balancing Competition and Cooperation Amid Global Challenges: What's Next for U.S.-China Relations?" was hosted by CCG president Wang Huitao and featured distinguished panelists including Stapleton Roy, Foundation trustee emeritus and former U.S. ambassador to China; Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics; John L. Thornton, chair emeritus at the Brookings Institution and cochair of the Asia Society; and Zhu Guangyao, CCG advisor and former Chinese vice minister of finance. The livestreamed event reached an audience of approximately 300,000 viewers, received in-depth coverage in mainstream Chinese media, and resulted in a summary report by CCG distributed to several Chinese government ministries.

# China



Our New Delhi office supports local initiatives to enhance women's safety, security, and economic empowerment and initiatives that facilitate India's engagement in regional and global affairs. The office also serves as a focal point for the Foundation's regional programs in South Asia, including transboundary water governance and intraregional trade.



## Mapping for Trafficking Vulnerability

The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with Bal Kalyan Sangh, supported the first vulnerability mapping exercise in the state of Jharkhand, which identified thousands of vulnerable children in the trafficking hotspot district of Khunti. The mapping exercise identified and connected at-risk children and families to preventive social schemes and services in this trafficking hotspot area. The research supported the work of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and was undertaken with their guidance. Research findings were adopted by the district administration in its digital vulnerability tracking application, Yuva Chetna.

To further inform and strengthen our work on trafficking in persons, we carried out a multi-country research project: *Optimizing Screening and Support Services for Victims of Trafficking and Gender-based Violence in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka*. The research provides an informed framework for policymakers, law enforcement officers, and service providers to make their approach more victim-centric, and to address the abuses these victims experience.

Nick Kenrick (CC BY 2.0)



## Empowering Access to Justice

Indonesia's recently adopted human rights framework still faces implementation obstacles. The Foundation's eMpowering Access to Justice (MAJu) program is bridging those gaps. MAJu cultivates relationships between the government and civil society organizations to break down discrimination towards marginalized groups—for example, by helping minorities secure identity cards from the Civil Registry Office or get access to services from the Healthcare and Social Security Agency. In another example, an instruction was issued to Civil Registry offices to provide identity cards and other documents for transgender individuals, a breakthrough for the transgender community. During the pandemic, MAJu partners successfully advocated for restarting suspended HIV/AIDS services. Today, testing is running smoothly at 10 designated clinics. MAJu also supports legal aid programs, including paralegals from marginalized communities. From 2016 to 2021, MAJu supported 716 paralegals who, together with legal aid organizations, addressed 16,715 cases, serving more than 20,000 people from MAJu target communities.

# Indonesia

In Indonesia, we advance reforms that improve Indonesia's environmental governance, increase social inclusion, strengthen justice systems, protect human rights, and promote tolerance and equitable economic growth.







# Korea

Our office in Seoul partners with South Korean government agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations involved in international development, and facilitates regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. Entrepreneurship development and a sustainable finance ecosystem play a key role in promoting inclusive economic growth for South Korea.

## Survey of North Korean Entrepreneurs

More than 33,000 North Korean refugees live in South Korea today, and roughly half of them say they aspire to become entrepreneurs. A Foundation report, *North Korean Refugee Entrepreneurs in South Korea: Unveiling Korea's Hidden Potential*, surveyed refugee entrepreneurs to explore their aspirations, opportunities, and challenges as they face life in a radically different society. A partnership with Korean NGO Woorion, the study found significant gaps between aspirations and reality. Coping with a market-based economy and a competitive society, barriers of culture and language, and unfamiliarity with the tools and practices of business all pose serious challenges. The report recommended measures to support North Korean entrepreneurs and to celebrate refugee entrepreneurial success. The findings were made public at events cohosted by the Korea Economic Institute in Washington D.C., U.C. Berkeley's Institute of East Asian Studies, and the KDI School in Korea. They were also used to inform the Foundation's Personal Initiative Training Program for North Korean entrepreneurs.





## Encouraging Citizen Engagement

In advance of the 2021 elections, the membership of Laos's National Assembly (NA) and the 18 Provincial People's Assemblies (PPAs) convened to assess the 2016 elections in which the PPAs were first elected. To enhance citizen engagement, the NA leadership asked the Foundation to support an election workshop in the capital city to train members to advise their constituents on the importance of elections, reinforce participation in elections as a constitutional right, and promote grassroots engagement with government policymaking. In addition to the NA and PPA membership, the workshop involved the NA Standing Committee, the National Election Committee, election subcommittees, and representatives from other organizations.

In Laos, we work with local partners and the Lao government to improve governance and access to justice for all citizens, advance women's rights and opportunities, help communities manage development and safeguard their natural environment, increase access to information, and promote Laos's international cooperation.



In Malaysia, we focus on strengthening the inclusivity and sustainability of Malaysia's economic growth as an Advanced Middle-Income Country (AMIC), and on building its high-skilled workforce; we provide opportunities for women and girls, and future skills training to enable young Malaysians to succeed in the new economy.



## Digital Literacy Becomes Essential

Digital literacy and online safety grew in importance during the pandemic, when so many small businesses and job seekers were driven online. Our Go Digital ASEAN project equipped more than 200,000 small-business owners and jobseekers in online skills across all the ASEAN countries, with a special emphasis on women, youth, and people with disabilities. In Malaysia, the Foundation mobilized 102 trainers to teach digital literacy to more than 16,742 jobseekers and entrepreneurs from marginalized communities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development, we provided training-of-trainers to managers of 177 rural internet centers. The Foundation also partnered with the Sarawak State Library to feature a Go Digital ASEAN module as part of its statewide digital literacy campaign.



# Mongolia

## Podcast Increases Understanding of Environmental Threats

Mongolia's environment faces multiple threats: mining, infrastructure development, overgrazing, fossil fuel exploitation, desertification, and climate change. These threats deeply and personally affect Mongolians. One example is the increasingly frequent brutal winters known as *dzuds*. These natural disasters have changed a herding country's way of life: millions of animals have been lost in these extreme weather events, which are caused by overgrazing, deforestation, and climate change. Some herders just can't go on. *Dzuds* are among the many forces driving the migration of Mongolians to the capital of Ulaanbaatar, whose population has tripled in the past 30 years.

To support Mongolia's efforts to broaden public awareness of climate change and science-based conservation, the Foundation has supported the first Mongolian language podcast series focused on climate change, covering greenhouse gases, emission sources, temperature and precipitation changes, youth climate activism, desertification, land degradation, permafrost, and sustainable fashion. Episodes are produced in collaboration with the Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre, under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and are available on YouTube, Google Podcasts, and Apple Podcasts. On social media, episodes have been streamed approximately 100,000 times.

In Mongolia, we strengthen anticorruption efforts, improve urban governance, support justice- sector development, increase gender equality, and advance climate change mitigation efforts through increased attention to the environment and climate change in national and local development strategies.







## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has drawn increasing international attention in recent years, but for decades it's been central to the work of The Asia Foundation. Our support to partners in government, civil society, and the private sector encourages diversity of identity, thought, equality of opportunity, and inclusivity in public affairs—regardless of status or relative power. Across our core program areas, the Foundation supports the efforts of elected officials, national and local governments, civil society organizations, media, the business community, and other partners to raise awareness of DEI principles and practices, facilitate thoughtful debate, elevate citizens' voices, protect rights, eliminate discrimination, and promote opportunities for marginalized populations. In 2021, the Foundation supported 10 new projects to address DEI issues, including: psychosocial support the LGBTIQ community in Timor-Leste; a Let's Read program to create and disseminate stories for children with disabilities in Indonesia and Pacific Island countries; and a study on the role of language in value chain upgrading for ethnically diverse agriculture and handicraft producers in remote provinces of Laos.





## Let's Read

Let's Read helps children of all backgrounds and abilities develop reading fluency, critical thinking and problem-solving skills with local language storybooks in digital and print formats. It prepares children for future work in rapidly changing economies, and equips them to rise to the critical challenges facing Asia. This past year, we redesigned the Let's Read platform to increase usability, engagement, and accessibility. The platform increases engagement with an entirely localized language experience and includes accessibility features. Let's Read grew by 97 percent and expanded to 16 countries. This dramatic increase was fueled by herculean efforts of our staff. During 2021, the number of books accessed through the storybook platform grew from 2.2 million to 5.58 million and the number of languages on the platform grew to 51.



**16**  
COUNTRIES



**7,400**  
DIGITAL BOOKS



**51**  
LANGUAGES



The military coup severely affected Asia Foundation operations in Myanmar in 2021. While instability and uncertainty continue, we have initiated crucial projects supporting children, girls, and women, which are essential, less politically sensitive, feasible to implement with modest funding, and able to keep our team engaged on the ground as we examine strategies to move forward in a positive way for the people of Myanmar.

## Essential Support for Girls and Women

Covid-19 left many families in Myanmar jobless, malnourished, and struggling. Many pregnant women cannot access public hospitals or afford private facilities, and single mothers need support. In 2021, we partnered with the Women's Organization Network of Myanmar (WON) to implement the Emergency Response for Vulnerable Women in Myanmar project in Yangon and Shan State, providing micro-nutrient supplements, necessity kits, and hospital fees. Our project with Girl Determined, Essential Support for Girls Affected by Humanitarian Crisis, reached 425 adolescent girls with basic needs packages and informational materials, and another 620 adolescent girls through Essential Support for Girls Affected by Covid-19.



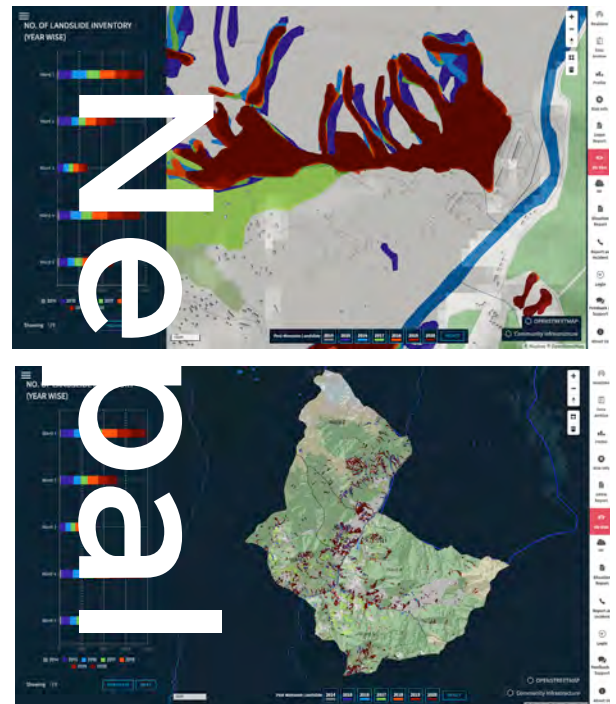
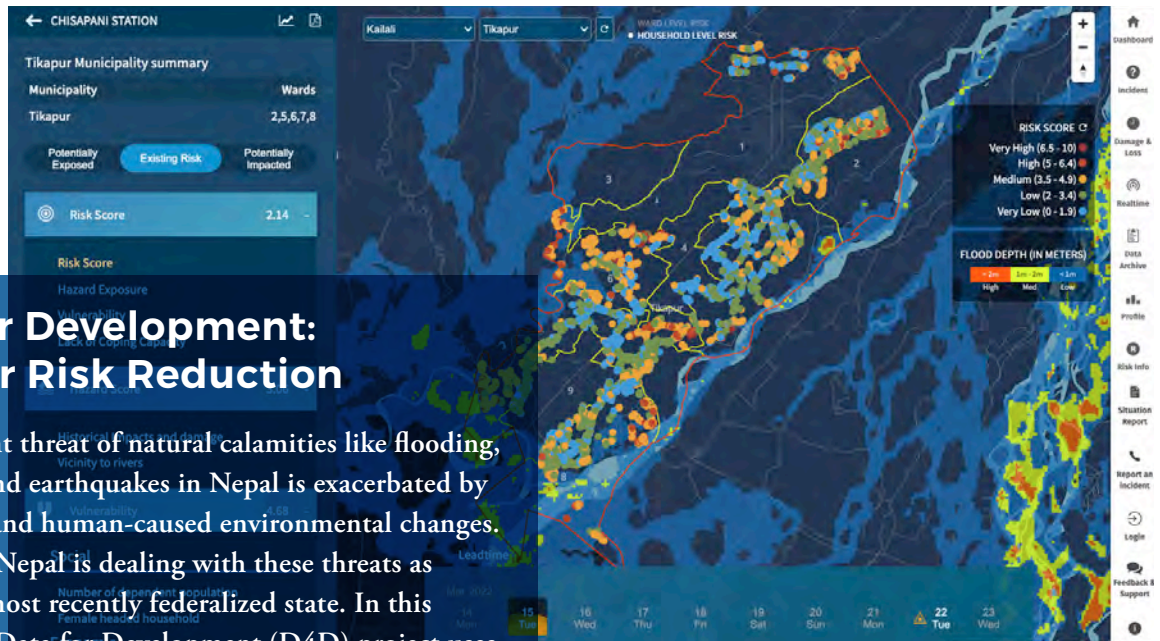


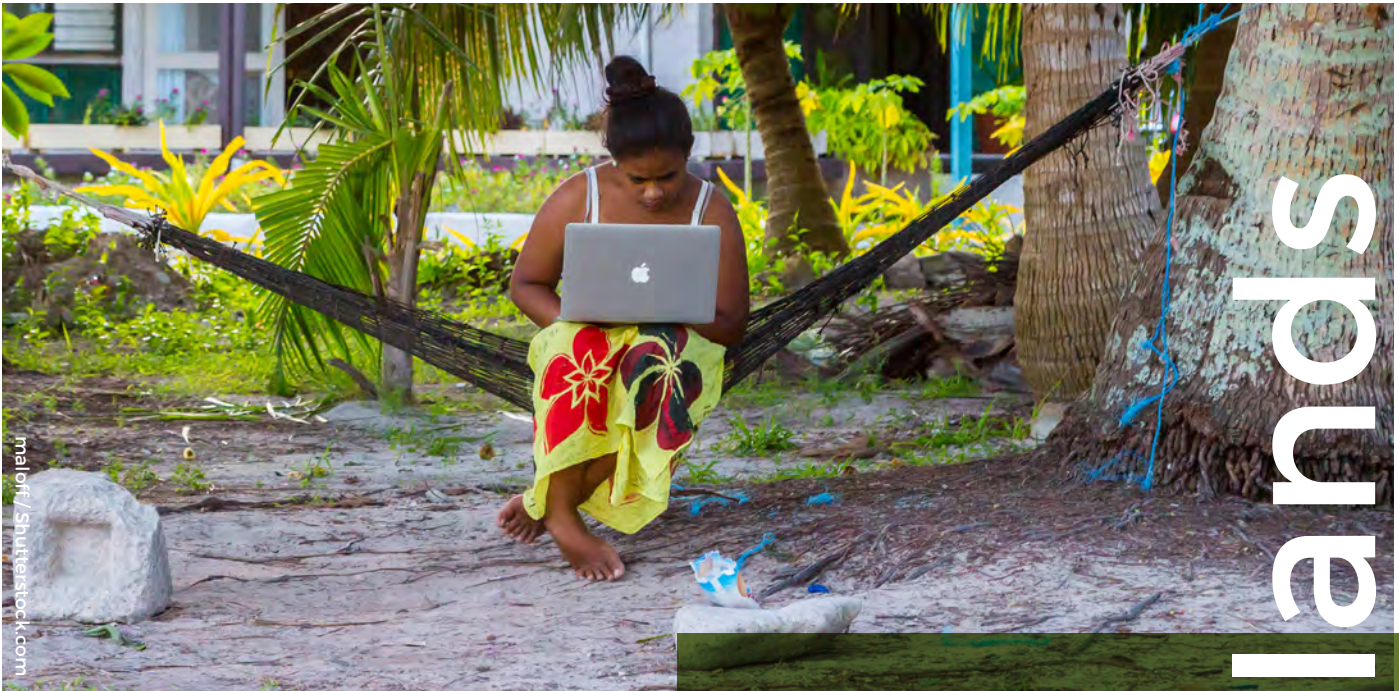
In Nepal, the Foundation supports efforts to strengthen subnational governance, mitigate conflict, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation.

## Data for Development: Disaster Risk Reduction

The persistent threat of natural calamities like flooding, landslides, and earthquakes in Nepal is exacerbated by topography and human-caused environmental changes. In addition, Nepal is dealing with these threats as the world's most recently federalized state. In this context, the Data for Development (D4D) project uses data-based approaches to address these development challenges.

In 2021, with partner Youth Innovation Lab, D4D helped the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) further develop its integrated disaster information management system. The Building an Information Platform Against Disaster project (BIPAD) integrated datasets from three sources, developed new risk visualization modules for six municipalities, and created an archive on the data portal for air pollution, rainfall, and river flow, among other improvements. D4D also produced technical manuals for designated user groups and trained 329 participants from all seven provincial governments to use data for monsoon preparedness. The data portal is currently used by disaster managers and planners across the country.





# Pacific Islands

As we expand our programs in Pacific Island countries and reestablish an office in Suva, Fiji, The Asia Foundation is building on decades of on-the-ground experience in the region. Areas of focus include supporting Pacific solutions to Pacific challenges—working with respected leaders, local NGOs, and government agencies and officials to amplify voice and accountability in decision-making; advancing women’s leadership and agency on climate action and disaster management; enhancing digital economic opportunities and cybersecurity; and countering trafficking in persons.

## The Future of Work

Across the Pacific there are pronounced gender disparities in labor market participation and the types and level of work women and men perform. Pacific women are overwhelmingly employed in the informal economy. In 2021, the Foundation published *The Future of Work for Women in the Pacific Islands*, a study investigating women’s labor force participation amid the challenges of Covid-19, climate change, and disruptive technology. It analyzed emerging opportunities for Pacific women both locally and abroad and concluded with recommendations for moving forward towards a greener, more resilient economy and a more inclusive labor force. The Foundation will work with the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement in 2022 to expand this research to include the future of work for older Pacific women.



In Pakistan, we work with local partners to meet the needs of citizens for inclusive economic growth, education reform, and workforce development.



# Pakistan

## Built by Her

The Asia Foundation

Women comprise just 17 percent of the workforce in all fields of science and technology in Pakistan, and just 4.8 percent in research and development, among the lowest rates in Asia. In FY21, in partnership with the National Incubation Center Karachi, we organized Built by Her, a hackathon for female programmers nationwide, part of our continuing STEM Hackathon project. More than 700 contestants in 200 teams participated from 28 cities, raising awareness of women's opportunities in STEM across Pakistan. Twenty teams were chosen to present their ideas to a jury. Two teams each won \$5,000 in seed funding to implement their proposals, and all teams received continued mentorship support. One of the winning teams created an attendance management system to encourage classroom participation, while the other team demonstrated a one-stop-shop concept for training and supporting female entrepreneurs.



## A Fairer, More Accessible Legal System

The Philippines suffers from significant inequities in access to justice. One key obstacle to access is availability of affordable legal advice. In response, over the last few years The Asia Foundation started an online Clinical Legal Education Program (CLEP) for law schools making it much easier to access legal education; established partnerships with law clinics and local chapters of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, along with other legal services providers; and welcomed the first cohort of trainees to a new mentorship program with partner law schools. Our Strengthening Rule of Law through Legal Aid Clinics project is helping participating schools establish their own CLEPs and law clinics. The Foundation also enlisted U.S.-based institutions to conduct executive courses for the law schools. Some 238 judges, prosecutors, public attorneys, and other members of the Bar enrolled in the courses, along with representatives from 66 of the nation's 124 law schools. Through its Partnership with Law Schools for the Establishment of Law Clinics, the Foundation helped establish a legal aid helpdesk and hotline for the law clinics and also provided mentors.

# Philippines

The Asia Foundation in the Philippines works with government, civil society, and the private sector to strengthen democratic institutions, support economic growth, strengthen the rule of law, improve education, and foster peace and development in Mindanao.





The Asia Foundation programs in Sri Lanka strengthen subnational governance, increase access to justice, build community security, support mental health for victims of trauma, and foster localized, inter-ethnic social cohesion through values education and inclusive economic growth.



## Building Community and Jump-starting Businesses

A history of ethnic and religious tensions in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province has often led to devastating communal violence. At the same time, the country is experiencing its worst economic crisis since independence in 1948. How to bring communities together that normally don't get along? Figure out what they have in common, including difficulty in making a living and running their businesses. The Foundation's INSPIRED project (Initiative for Sustained Peaceful Inter-Ethnic Relations through Economic Development) organized 20 public-private dialogues and a province-wide meeting in FY21 to find areas for these communities to connect rather than disagree. Participants raised 282 issues concerning regulations, infrastructure, and finance with local authorities. Networking through these shared concerns and activities measurably strengthened inter- and intra-community trust. Surveys and follow-up discussions confirmed participants had made new efforts to embrace diversity in their values and business operations. The Foundation invested 92 seed grants into 167 MSMEs, 72 percent of them female-owned, to give them a jump start and improve financial literacy.



Sri Lanka



## Women Learning and Leading in Tech in Thailand

Thailand is ahead of the pack in closing the career-path gender gap: 53 percent of Thai students in STEM fields are women. But women make up less than 24 percent of students in engineering, manufacturing, and construction studies in Thailand. The workforce of the future will need women with these skills, but how to forge new pathways? The answer is investing in young women's education and skills development. Our Women Learning and Leading in Tech in Thailand program partners with universities to equip young women to enter these growing fields and align their educational goals with real-world needs and, hence, good jobs. Workshops, paid internships, and teacher training help shift the idea of what a career path might look like. Students who participate in these internships share their experiences with their professors, who are then better able to prepare their students for the world of work. For many of these teachers, it's the first time they have received direct feedback about their students' experiences in the workplace.

Over the next decade, technological advances will significantly change the job market and business opportunities in Thailand, but critics say the national education curriculum fails to promote skills like collaboration and critical thinking that students will need to meet this challenge. In 2021, The Asia Foundation launched the Women Learning and Leading in Tech in Thailand project and continued to develop its Thailand Learning web portal to help both students and teachers prepare for the future of work.

# Thailand





The Asia Foundation in Timor-Leste works to streamline this young country's new institutions, increase citizen engagement with their democratic government, diversify the oil-based economy, and ensure public safety for all, especially women.



## Environmental Action and Crisis Response

When Typhoon Seroja caused catastrophic flooding that damaged more than 28,000 households in Timor-Leste and left thousands without shelter in April 2021, The Asia Foundation mobilized its existing programs and networks to deliver desperately needed relief. With funding from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we distributed emergency aid to the remote regions of Aileu and Maubisse. Our Nabilan project worked with vulnerable citizens in evacuation centers and collaborated with the LGBTI organization CODIVA to support marginalized communities during the crisis. Our Community Policing Support Program provided food, clothing, bedding, kitchen supplies, and sanitary necessities to remote communities in the Manatuto municipality. We also provided replacement computers to the national police to allow them to continue their vital work. Our Let's Read team focused on developing educational packages for displaced children in evacuation centers. Months after the flooding, the Foundation used its partnership with the national police to distribute much-needed household items in remote, rural areas, where agricultural livelihoods are still recovering.

# Timor-Leste

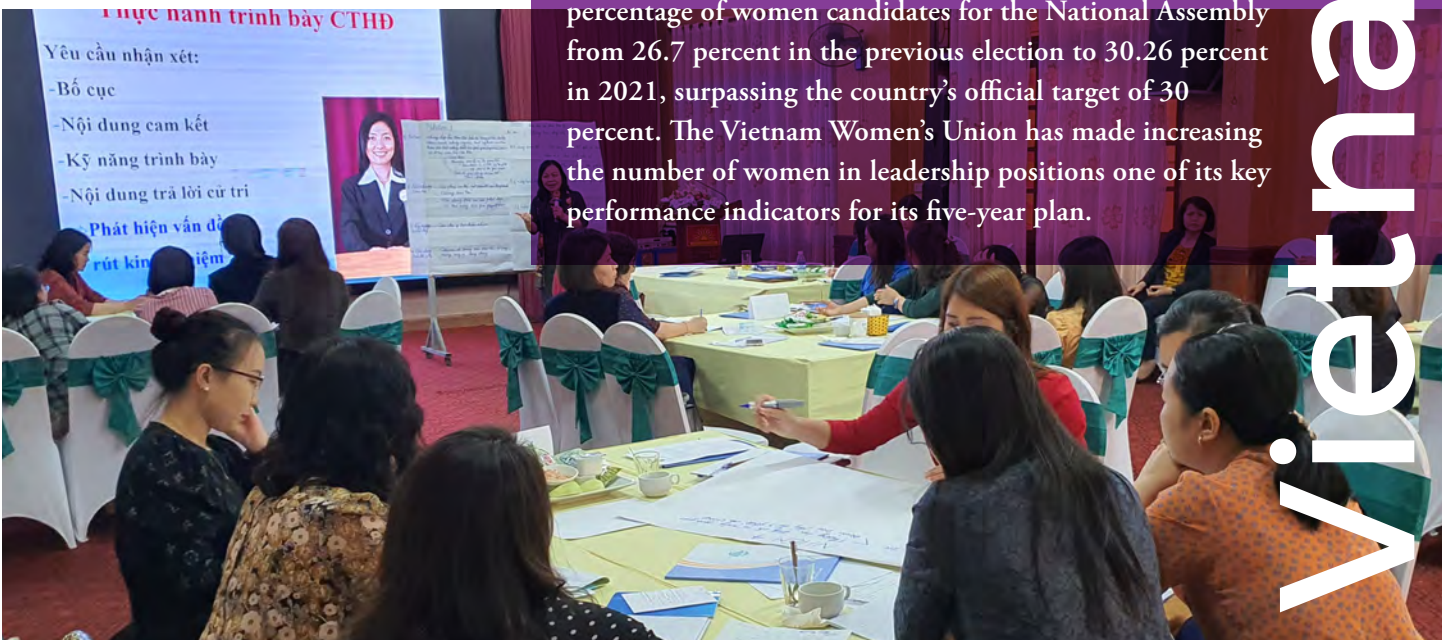




## Women's Voice and Leadership

Vietnam's legal framework supports women's participation in politics. Communist Party committees, People's Councils, and the National Assembly all have significant female representation. Yet, compared to the health, education, and economic sectors, women in politics and public administration are rare. Since 2015, the Foundation has partnered with the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) to support the Women's Participation in Political and Public Leadership project. One notable result of this partnership is the Women Leaders Network, a coalition of women in various positions of national leadership. In 2021, the VWU and The Asia Foundation activated a capacity building and support program for 100 first-time female candidates from provincial and district levels of two provinces. Later, VWU used this experience to partner with the Committee for Social Affairs of the National Assembly to train female candidates in all 63 provinces, with funds from the National Assembly and local governments. This helped increase the percentage of women candidates for the National Assembly from 26.7 percent in the previous election to 30.26 percent in 2021, surpassing the country's official target of 30 percent. The Vietnam Women's Union has made increasing the number of women in leadership positions one of its key performance indicators for its five-year plan.

Our office in Hanoi promotes fair, inclusive, and transparent governance; economic resilience; climate change mitigation; educational achievement; women's empowerment; and regional and international cooperation for peace and prosperity.



Vietnam



# Washington, DC



The Asia Foundation's Washington D.C. office provides a view of the Foundation's programs for policymakers through a series of seminars, webinars, and events on the Foundation's core areas of good governance, women's empowerment and gender equality, environment and climate action, inclusive economic growth, and regional and international relations. Our activities specifically focus on bringing Asian perspectives to the policy community, often featuring the Foundation's Asia country representatives, program directors, and local partners. This year, despite the interruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic and shutdown of activities in Washington, several virtual events took place including on Myanmar, Laos, women's empowerment, and the launch of the three waves of *Flash Surveys in Afghanistan*. The Foundation continues its monthly Southeast Asia Roundtable series, and released a Task Force Report *Urgent Issues in U.S. Southeast Asian Relations for 2021*. The Foundation also released *Asian Voices on the Future of U.S. Asian Relations* for the Biden Administration and Congress, and two reports on Trilateral dialogues, *Firm Partners In An Unstable Region: Prospects for Trilateral Cooperation between the Republic of Korea, the United States, and Australia* and *Deepening Ties: Prospects for Trilateral Cooperation between Korea, the U.S., and Vietnam*.

# LeadNext

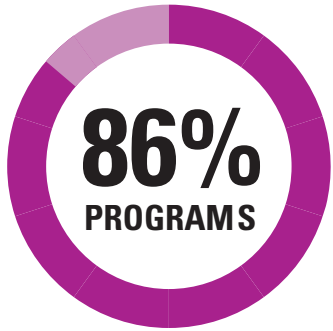
# 2022



## Ambassadors for a Global Future

Solving critical development challenges relies on people. The Asia Foundation invests in the human capital needed for societies to flourish including equipping the next generation of transformational leaders. This past year, we launched a dynamic new program called LeadNext: Ambassadors for a Global Future, focused on global citizenship for the 21st century. LeadNext is focused on building a vibrant network of future leaders aged 18-25 from across Asia and the United State and supports their growth, impact, and capacity to address today's greatest challenges. LeadNext Fellows are dynamic emerging leaders from diverse sectors with a commitment to addressing issues such as climate change, inequality, injustice, poverty, and other pressing 21st century issues. The LeadNext program equips these emerging leaders across cultures and disciplines with strong international networks, exposure to wide-ranging experiences, and leadership tools to thoughtfully steer the future. Fellows participate in a rigorous Leadership Training Intensive, take monthly Master classes with leaders from diverse sectors addressing global and social issues, and convene for a Global Leaders Summit to build upon learning and gain exposure to cutting-edge approaches to tackling 21st century challenges. Each emerging leader is also paired with an accomplished and dedicated mentor.





- 178** Strengthen Good Governance
- 139** Advance Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality
- 96** Expand Inclusive Economic Growth
- 61** Increase Environment and Climate Action
- 75** Promote Regional and International Relations

## 2021 FINANCIAL CONDENSED HIGHLIGHTS (in thousands)

### REVENUE, SUPPORT, AND INCOME

Government: Bilateral & Multilateral Institutions	87,472
Foundations, Corporations, and Individuals	6,152
	93,624

### EXPENDITURES

Programs, Grants, and Related Services	82,708
General Administration	12,373
Fundraising	649
	95,730

Change in Net Assets from Operations	-2,106
Non-operating Income	3,189

### BOOKS IN-KIND

Donated Books and Related Services	2,495
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**FRONT COVER:** In Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi, displaced rice farmers are learning about market demands and sustainable agriculture methods for fruits and vegetables, allowing them to pursue alternative livelihoods and meet the needs of nearby consumers. The Asia Foundation partners with the G-Star RAW/GSRD Foundation on Sustainable Livelihoods, a project to improve the lives of low-income farmers in Hanoi and increase food security for urbanizing areas through the cultivation and marketing of safe fruits and vegetables.

**BACK COVER:** A market vendor in Phuket Town, Thailand. Micro-, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) account for 99% of businesses in key sectors of most ASEAN economies. Targeting disadvantaged communities across ASEAN, the Go Digital ASEAN initiative is equipping MSMEs, particularly those in rural and isolated areas, with digital skills and tools to expand economic opportunity across ASEAN countries and minimize the negative impact from the Covid-19 crisis.







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