

Human Trafficking



The Asia Foundation

Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

Human trafficking is one of the most serious human rights challenges confronting the world today. The Asia Foundation's engagement across the Asia-Pacific region for more than 60 years has uniquely positioned us to respond with locally driven, gender-sensitive, and durable strategies to challenge the quickly evolving dynamics of human trafficking within and across borders in Asia.



OUR APPROACH

Global best practices and lessons learned from the past two decades have affirmed the efficacy of The Asia Foundation's three-pronged strategy to combating trafficking in persons (TIP), which includes prevention, protection, and prosecution measures. We coordinate across these three areas to create an integrated response that improves the ability of law enforcement, justice officials, social service providers, community leaders, and policymakers to collaborate, and to effectively prevent and respond to TIP. The Foundation's approach considers the distinct ways in which women, men, girls, and boys are vulnerable to and experience different forms of trafficking, and advocates for strategies to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Because a thriving trafficking trade is linked to breakdowns in the legal, economic, and social fabric of a society, we take a governance approach as we make long-term strategic investments that promote legal and structural reform and strengthen government anti-TIP leadership and coordination, comprehensively address the needs of trafficking survivors, reduce TIP risks, and challenge attitudes and beliefs that condone these abuses.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

As a leader in the fight against human trafficking for almost two decades, we have successfully implemented innovative programs to combat TIP in source, transit, and destination

countries, including Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. Together with our local partners, we have achieved groundbreaking results, including:

PREVENTION

- In Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam, the Foundation's cutting-edge research informed evidence-based public awareness campaigns and anti-trafficking policies. In Mongolia, we conducted the first nationwide survey on the incidence of domestic sex trafficking.
- Through creative uses of media such as television shows, street theater, and documentaries, our public awareness campaigns have increased understanding of trafficking prevention strategies across the region.
- In Laos and Vietnam, the Foundation's "safe migration" campaigns provided essential information to at-risk communities and youth about the dangers of trafficking, labor laws, and strategies for assessing the credibility of employment offers.

PROTECTION

- Across Asia, the Foundation has convened government officials, NGOs, social workers, lawyers, religious leaders, and health professionals to build anti-TIP networks, improve rights-based responses, and strengthen capacities for multi-disciplinary, inter-agency coordination.

- Comprehensive services—including shelter, psychosocial counseling, medical assistance, legal aid, reintegration, and market-driven vocational training—were provided to thousands of trafficking survivors.
- In Laos, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand, we helped establish and enhance legal frameworks to combat trafficking and protect victims' rights. For example, in Cambodia, the Foundation helped establish a Policy on National Minimum Standards for the Protection of Human trafficking Victims. In Thailand, years of advocacy work with our anti-trafficking partners resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children in Northern Thailand that reached 18 provinces.
- The Foundation invested in the long-term sustainability and institutionalization of counter-trafficking efforts by supporting new local anti-trafficking structures in Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In Laos, we helped establish Village Project Committees to monitor trafficking incidents and raise awareness in seven villages.

PROSECUTION

- Throughout Asia we trained judges, prosecutors and police on effective investigation and prosecution for trafficking cases. In Thailand, we partnered with the Office of the Attorney General to facilitate the first-ever workshop on trafficking legislation for 67 provincial attorneys.
- Local and national government officials and anti-trafficking advocates in the Philippines, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand improved their ability to coordinate and effectively use the law to combat trafficking in persons. In Vietnam, we supported legal experts to devise a training that reached nearly 400 local Women's Union staff and provincial Department of Justice officials in high-risk areas.
- Direct legal services to survivors of trafficking provided by the Foundation and our anti-trafficking partners resulted in increases in requests for legal representation, as well as more robust prosecutions and enforcement of TIP laws in Cambodia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

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.

CURRENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In Nepal, The Asia Foundation works with government ministries, NGOs, health professionals and justice sector representatives to implement the USAID-funded Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) program. The program promotes the rights of survivors, builds stakeholder capacities to improve protection services, and empowers local communities to play a key role in preventing trafficking. We supported the establishment of a national-level Anti-Human Trafficking Unit and institutionalized anti-TIP policies such as national minimum standards of care for victims of trafficking, and standard operating procedures for rehabilitation homes. With the Foundation's training assistance, public prosecutors have increased capacities to effectively apply existing laws to prevent TIP, and health professionals have strengthened knowledge on how to implement psychosocial support services for TIP survivors. More than 250 Safe Migration Networks (SMN) have been formed in six program districts to serve as support units at the local level, and a curriculum on TIP and safe migration has been introduced across schools in the program districts, reaching over 63,000 beneficiaries.

In Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos, the Foundation implements the Countering Trafficking in Southeast Asia program, supported by Dr. Chong Moon Lee. In Cambodia, the Foundation conducts trainings on safe migration and anti-trafficking strategies for Community Youth-Based Networks in high-risk provinces, and works to improve the capacities of Commune Councils to develop and implement policies that better protect communities from unsafe labor migration. In Myanmar, we established a counseling center as a safe and confidential space for TIP survivors and their families to access lawyers, counselors, volunteers, and caregivers. In Laos, the Foundation works with local partners to provide vocational training support for TIP survivors and to help connect them with local employment opportunities. In addition, we led awareness-raising activities about safe migration that reached 2,400 students in secondary schools, technical schools, and universities, as well as 400 workers in four factories.



HEADQUARTERS
465 California Street,
9th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104 USA
Tel: (415) 982-4640
Fax: (415) 392-8863
sf.general@asiafoundation.org

WASHINGTON, DC
1779 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 815
Washington, D.C. 20036 USA
Tel: (202) 588-9420
Fax: (202) 588-9409
dc.general@asiafoundation.org

www.asiafoundation.org
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