



**Global Fund for Children  
– Asia Overview**

# Global Fund for Children in Asia

Global Fund for Children (GFC) partners with grassroots organizations around the world to help children and youth reach their full potential and advance their rights. By pairing flexible funding with targeted capacity development services, we support community-led groups to shift social norms, policies, and practices to foster lasting change for children and youth. Since 1997, GFC has supported over 280 local organizations in Asia, working across issues such as youth entrepreneurship, girls' education, integration of displaced children, health education, and climate change.

The below map indicates where our former and current partners in South Asia and Southeast Asia are located:



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# Current Initiatives

## Fostering Youth Leadership in Thailand

This three-year initiative is a partnership between the Algot Enevoldsen Foundation and GFC. It aims to foster youth involvement in governance, programming, and elevating youth voices in local communities and organizations as well as to empower local organizations to create sustainable change.



*School girls walking together in Thailand. © The Freedom Story*

The goal of this initiative is to support youth leadership in community-based organizations in Thailand. GFC is committed to advancing meaningful youth engagement and to promoting the sharing of decision-making power with young people, who are often excluded from formal leadership positions. Our local partners in this initiative receive capacity development that empowers them to foster youth leadership and that supports innovation in methodology, participation, programming, and relationships

within the cohort and individual organizations. This initiative also helps the partners connect with one another, share their knowledge and resources, and develop collective impacts in Thailand.

## Increasing Opportunities for Children with Disabilities

In partnership between the Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation, GFC supports four community-based organizations in India and Thailand which are advocating for greater inclusion for children and youth with disabilities and ensuring they have access to quality education and medical care. Our partners empower children and youth with disabilities by meeting their educational needs and promoting inclusive and accessible learning environments; ensuring they have access to quality health care, including therapies and technology solutions; and advocating for their inclusion and changing mindsets that limit their opportunities.

## Preventing Child Trafficking in Asia and Eurasia

GFC's local partners in this initiative are preventing the exploitation of children and youth and helping trafficking survivors to rebuild their lives with dignity. They are located in India, Kyrgyzstan, and Thailand. These organizations are preventing and responding to child trafficking by empowering children and youth – particularly girls – to defend their rights through education and leadership programs; advocating for new legislation and public policies that protect and

promote the rights of girls; working to reduce gender-based violence, child marriage, and bride kidnapping through community outreach and public awareness campaigns; and promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking survivors. This initiative is in collaboration with the Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation.

## Addressing Root Causes (ARC)

The South Asian nations of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are collectively home to the largest youth population in the world, with more than 600 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24. According to UNICEF, the region has both the highest number of child laborers (with an estimated 80 million children impacted by various forms of labor-based exploitation) and the highest number of children on the move - the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) reports that there were over 7 million people displaced by conflict in South Asia as of 2021, a significant proportion of whom are under the age of 18.

Global Fund for Children [GFC] launched the Addressing Root Causes [ARC] initiative in February 2023. The development of this new initiative was directly informed by learnings from GFC's pilot of a participatory design and assessment framework with community-based organizations in India which was funded by Seamont Foundation from 2018-2023.

With seed funding from We Trust Foundation, the primary objective of the ARC Initiative is to address the root causes of exploitation – especially those that affect children and youth – throughout five South Asia countries: India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.



ARC partners attending the introductory convening with GFC staff in Dhaka, Bangladesh. © GFC

Using an approach that centers both community participation and youth leadership, the initiative which began in Bangladesh, will now be expanded to India to Nepal in 2024, leveraging additional funding from the PPL foundation and Seamont Foundation.

## Partnership to Educate All Kids (PEAK)

Global Fund for Children supports local organizations in South Asia that are helping kids who have experienced pandemic-related education disruptions access and thrive in learning environments that prepare them for future success. The Partnership to Educate All Kids (PEAK) initiative is supported by the LEGO Foundation. It fosters the learning and development of children aged 6 to 12 by:

- Enabling local organizations to sustain or expand their work ensuring children are able to access education and return to classrooms, while addressing learning gaps
- Developing capacity to integrate learning through play into educational activities so that children can engage in playful learning that sparks creativity and instills a love of education Strengthening networks for advocacy and learning

- Strengthening networks for advocacy and learning so that community-based organizations can connect, exchange learnings, and share innovations.



*A group of children engaged in a learning activity. © Suchana*

## Spark Fund Climate Change Resilience Fund

Climate change disproportionately impacts children and youth, yet they are often excluded from efforts to address it. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, one of the world’s most at-risk regions for the impacts of climate change, where extreme weather events are already fuelling internal displacement, food shortages, and other problems.

In February 2023, GFC launched a participatory grantmaking initiative to support youth-led climate action in Southeast Asia. This two-year initiative – which is supported by generous contributions from Porticus, the Avery Dennison Foundation, RS Group, and Lien Aid – will provide flexible funding, capacity development, and networking opportunities to youth-led climate resilience efforts and place key funding decisions in the hands of young people across Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.



*The SEA Spark Fund panelists. © GFC*

## Looking Ahead: Strategic Directions for the Future

Global Fund for Children is committed to continuing our support to locally led, innovative, and strategically aligned child- and youth-centered organizations that work on the intersections of education, gender equity, youth empowerment, and freedom from violence and exploitation. We seek to expand and deepen our impact in the following areas across Asia:

1. Achieving climate justice
2. Addressing the root causes of exploitation for children and young people by advancing community and youth-led change
3. Youth leadership and empowerment in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam)
4. Youth-led change in South Asia and Southeast Asia
5. Advancing Girls’ Education and Leadership in South Asia



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