

When the Open Society Foundations began work in Nepal in 2007, the country was emerging from a decade-long Maoist insurgency. Society was deeply polarized. The monarchy had just been abolished, and the country needed to elect a constituent assembly in order to draw up a permanent constitution.

In an effort to stabilize the volatile political landscape, the Open Society Foundations founded a new locally-led initiative, the Alliance for Social Dialogue (ASD), which brought the feuding groups together to renounce violence and discuss constitutional and public policy issues. We also supported education reform, independent media and investigative journalists, human rights activists and lawyers fighting for justice for conflict victims.

Today, Nepal has a functioning constitution. In 2017, Nepal held the first local elections in twenty years, a move ASD had long campaigned for. ASD now works to ensure promises in the constitution are fulfilled, such as empowering local communities by creating a federal structure of government. We continue to support independent journalism, initiatives to improve education, community activism and provide justice for marginalized communities. We also help groups to bring women and youth into public policy debate and political decision-making.

NEPAL: 2020 BUDGET BY THEME



Total Budget for
Nepal in 2020:

\$2.3M

2020 Budget
for Asia Pacific:

\$53.5M

9 FACTS ABOUT NEPAL AND THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

- 1** In 2012, the assembly tasked with introducing Nepal's constitution was dissolved, leaving the country without elected representatives or an electoral process. We gave \$221,268 to groups campaigning for free and fair elections. They were held in November 2013.
- 2** From 2013 to 2015, we gave \$128,300 to lawyers and groups advocating for the protection of fundamental rights. In September 2015 a new constitution was adopted, enshrining those rights for everyone.
- 3** A 2015 earthquake killed 9,000 people, injured around 22,000 and left 744,620 homeless. We funded a six-month course for 25 local leaders to prepare for future disasters, including healthcare staff, police and headteachers.
- 4** We also worked with the government to train 110 first responders. They have now gone on to become trainers in their own communities, passing their knowledge on to dozens more people.
- 5** Since 2007, we have devoted \$1,390,000 to supporting independent journalism and local community radio stations.
- 6** Although we administer international funds, ASD's board and staff are all from Nepal, applying years of experience in the field to deciding which issues and organisations we should fund.
- 7** After 20 years without local elections, local authorities were plagued by corruption; resulting in unclean water supplies, poorly equipped hospitals and bad public transportation. So we funded groups educating communities about the importance of their vote and the pledges of their local candidates. Voter turnout was more than 70% in 2017.
- 8** Our grantees also campaigned for women and Dalit (people considered to be at the bottom of the caste system) to be included as candidates for local authority positions. From 36,639 representatives to be elected, 13,360 must be women and 1,751 from minorities.
- 9** In 2015 and 2016, we gave \$224,352 to lawyers and activists advocating for laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities. In August 2017 a Disability Rights Act was passed, which also included a provision to protect women's reproductive health.