ASIA SOCIETY
SWITZERLAND
Asia Society Switzerland is an independent Swiss nonprofit organization dedicated to Asia. Our mission is to foster Asia Competence and prepare Switzerland for a deeper and more sustainable engagement with Asia.

We are part of the global Asia Society network with 16 offices around the world: Delhi, Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Seattle, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo, Washington, DC, and Zurich.

Asia Society was founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller III. The 9th Asia Society President and CEO is Dr. Kyung-wha Kang, South Korea’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the first woman to hold that position. Our global network gives us unparalleled access to international speakers and experts on a broad range of Asia issues.

Asia Society Switzerland was founded in 2016 and is financed entirely out of Switzerland. We have a dedicated team of seven people in Zurich, ensuring that our programs are relevant and tailored to a Swiss audience. Asia Society Switzerland is committed to connect business, policy, and society, helping Switzerland to understand and engage with Asia and to navigate our shared futures. We provide strategic intelligence and access to experts, offer education and talent development, and build communities and networks.
OUR MISSION: FOSTER ASIA COMPETENCE IN SWITZERLAND

**Asia Matters.** Over the last decades, the geopolitical and economical “center of gravity” of the world has continually shifted east. Asia is no longer just a manufacturing hub, or a market opportunity – it is the world’s most populous and dynamic region. Asia, and what happens in Asia, influences Swiss society and businesses on every level.

To navigate an “Asian Future”, it is crucial to develop Asia Competence. We define Asia Competence not just as knowledge and understanding of Asia, but as an actionable skill including the ability to understand different viewpoints, and to access local and international networks related to Asia. In short, **Asia Competence is the ability to operate in an Asian context.**

**ECONOMIC CENTER OF GRAVITY**
It shifted most rapidly between 2000 and 2010 and it is continuing on its trajectory eastwards.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute, 2012

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

> Asia Competence can no longer only be delegated to a dedicated team, department, or office. Headquarters, leadership, and board of almost every company and organization need **continued Asia Competence to successfully navigate a new world.**

> While not everyone will work on Asia in the future, we all need a **broad understanding of the developments in Asia**, and how they matter to Switzerland and the world.

> Increasing Asia Competence also helps to **keep Switzerland open and connected** to the world, and to make it an attractive place for people from all around the globe to work and live.

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1 Executive Roundtable with former Vice President of the Philippines, Leni Robredo and James Crabtree, former Executive Director of IISS Asia, Zurich, Nov 2022

2 Parag Khanna, author of *The Future Is Asian*, at the Jade Dinner, Zurich, Jun 2022

3 Kaiser Kuo, host of the Sinica Podcast, at a live recording of an episode in Zurich, Oct 2018
1 Kyung-wha Kang, South Korea’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Asia Society President and CEO

2 Suhanya Raffel, Museum Director of Hong Kong’s M+ museum, Zurich, May 2019

3 Executive Director Nico Luchsinger and Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia and CEO of global Asia Society, Zurich, Jun 2022

4 Berliner Salon hosted by the German Embassy to Switzerland in Berne, with Nico Luchsinger, Sebastian Heilmann, Doris Leuthard, Norbert Riedel, Philipp Rösler, Mar 2020

OUR VALUE PROPOSITIONS

We provide strategic intelligence and access to experts, offer education and talent development, and build communities and networks.
Asia Competence requires not just knowledge and information – it requires actionable and usable intelligence. Through our global network across Asia, Europe, and the U.S., we have access to outstanding individuals – world-renowned policy makers, thought leaders, authors, entrepreneurs, and experts from think tanks and academia. The insights we deliver are carefully curated and specifically tailored to business leaders, government officials, academics, and people with a high-level interest in political and economic developments across the region. We provide a global perspective – with a Swiss focus – on geopolitical, economic, business, and social trends and developments across Asia to help and inspire Swiss leaders and organizations to make informed decisions, achieve business outcomes, and engage effectively and sustainably with Asia.

Our annual flagship conference **STATE OF ASIA** provides an overview of the key developments in Asia and their global implications.

STATE OF ASIA features a broad selection of leading experts from across Asia, Europe, and the U.S. Their diverse perspectives and in-depth expertise foster dialogue and discussion, making STATE OF ASIA a premier platform to get an update on global issues from an Asian perspective.

Both at the conference and throughout the year, we host **Executive Roundtables** for a select group of people. We invite experts on current topics and developments in the fields of geopolitics, diplomacy, economy, environment, technology, and innovation. In an intimate setting, they share their unique insights and expertise and engage with our audience in active dialogue.

Access our growing library of insightful videos, produced by us in Switzerland, and globally:

**Switzerland Videos on YouTube**

**Global Asia Society YouTube Channel**

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1. C. Raja Mohan, Senior Fellow with the Asia Society Policy Institute in New Delhi, Nov 2022
2. Keyu Jin, author of *The New China Playbook: Beyond Socialism and Capitalism,* and Jörg Wuttke, President Emeritus of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, Nov 2023
3. Agatha Kratz, Director at Rhodium Group, and Markus Herrmann, China Macro Group, Nov 2022
4. Commentator-in-Chief Bruno Maçães, Nov 2022
In our popular Oxford Debate series, we address the big questions that have no one answer or solution, but invite many conflicting views. Four renowned experts form teams of two, one team arguing for the motion, the other against it. This format provides the audience with different perspectives on a contested issue in a short, structured, and often entertaining way.

To foster Asia Competence in Switzerland, Asia Society Switzerland nominated Dr. Simona Grano, a leading China and Taiwan specialist, as TOY Senior Fellow at Asia Society Policy Institute’s Center for China Analysis (CCA). As part of the inaugural Senior Fellowship, she provided insights and analysis on the Taiwanese presidential election of January 2024. Her research focus was both on the domestic policy issues shaping the electoral contest as well as on the geopolitical dimension of the election.

Each year, we host 100+ speakers from Asia, Europe, and the U.S. We provide world-class expertise, a region-wide perspective and a global outlook. We are a champion of diversity—of regional outlook, of culture, and of opinion.
Competence-building requires long-term talent development. We develop Switzerland’s capability to engage with Asia, to strengthen our prosperity and security, and to enable greater contribution of our communities to Switzerland’s shared future with Asia for the long term. Our educational programs are designed to foster Asia Competence in young talents and rising leaders. We provide them with the insights and tools they need to analyze developments in Asia and identify opportunities for successful collaboration with the region. Throughout the programs and beyond, participants are encouraged to maintain a global mindset and commit to lifelong learning.

Asia Society Switzerland is committed to empowering young voices in the dialogue with Asia, recognizing youth as a key driver of Switzerland’s future success in the region. Since 2020, 25 students and young professionals are selected each year to become Fellows of the Gen A – Young Leadership Program. Within this program, we host roundtables with diverse experts from different regions and disciplines to inform and inspire them on topics that matter. Fellows also work on individual projects which showcase their curiosity, talent and ambition. Three of these are selected to be presented at our flagship STATE OF ASIA conference.

Gen A enables the next generation to directly engage with Asia and builds a community of young Asia-curious people in Switzerland.

To navigate the Asian Future, which is increasingly becoming the Asian Present, it is crucial to develop Asia Competence. That is why, since 2021, Asia Society Switzerland together with the prestigious business school IMD, offers Asia NEXT, an Executive Education Program specifically designed for rising executives and leaders. The program aims to advance understanding of important developments and issues in Asia, and how these impact Switzerland and the world, to engage with high-level experts from across the globe, and to provide the opportunity to join an active community of like-minded professionals with an interest in and curiosity for Asia.

Members of our Gen A Alumni Community actively contribute to our mission by regularly serving as experts in our programs. Like: Gen A Fellow and Senior Researcher at ETH’s Center for Security Studies, Boas Lieberherr, who presented a talk on the rules-based order at our STATE OF ASIA conference and Gen A Alumna and foraus President, Elisa Cadelli, who hosted our prestigious Jade Dinner.
COMMUNITIES AND NETWORKS

At the heart of Asia Society Switzerland are our diverse communities and extensive network. We are committed to fostering meaningful exchanges among individuals as well as between organizations across various sectors and backgrounds. We connect Swiss leaders, organizations, and communities with each other, with their peers in Asia and across the Asia Society’s global network, to build relationships, share insights, and develop understanding. Continuous exchange and experience serve as the context for future engagement in and with Asia.

Our cosmopolitan Passport Community is made up of over 20 Asia-connected individuals who are passionate about Asia and recognize the need for enhanced Asia Competence in Switzerland. Our Passport Members receive regular invitations to exclusive gatherings, such as our Executive Roundtable series, unique Art Tours, as well as special events; like the cooking demo with British star chef Fuchsia Dunlop, who specializes in Sichuanese cuisine and took us (and our tastebuds) on a culinary trip to the southwest of China.

Arts and culture are an important pillar of our work fostering Asia Competence in Switzerland. With the Big Picture event series, we celebrate art in all its forms and shapes: Be it food, movies, museums or literature. We invite artists, curators, and experts to talk about their practices and share their work for our audiences to experience it first-hand. The public event series allows for meaningful conversations and encounters, both off and on stage, as seen here in pictures from the event ‘Big Picture: Kimono – Unwrapping A Living Thing’.

Whether it’s during a Talk at the Library, in our Book Salon, or over drinks at a Members Get-Together, our interactive members-only events offer opportunities to meet other Asia-minded individuals, forge friendships, and engage in informal discussions with peers and experts.
OUR PARTNERS

Our work would not be possible without the generous contributions from our Corporate Members and Patrons, as well as the invaluable support from our diverse Partners. We firmly believe that collaboration is essential for achieving our mission to foster Asia Competence in Switzerland. That’s why we are proud to collaborate with organizations, companies, and stakeholders across a broad spectrum of sectors.

Many of our Corporate Members support our work not only financially and idealistically but also with expertise and skill. Bergos AG’s Art Consultant, Aurelia Rauch, is a regular host of our event series Big Picture.

1 Aurelia Rauch of Bergos AG, here with architect Yuichi Kodai and writer Sophie Richard, Zurich, Apr 2022
In July 2023 we had the honor of welcoming legendary Chinese author Yan Lianke to Zurich. An event made possible through cooperation with Partners such as Karl der Grosse, Zentrum für literarische Gegenwart, sinokultur, and Money Museum.

Sergio Ermotti, then Chairman of the Board of Directors at Swiss Re, delivered the opening remarks at our flagship conference, STATE OF ASIA in 2022. Thanks to the support from our Corporate Member Swiss Re, STATE OF ASIA takes place at the magnificent Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue.

Since 2023, we are hosting the State of Asia Address in collaboration with the University of Zurich. The prestigious Aula where Winston Churchill gave his famous “Let Europe Arise” lecture in 1946 serves as the fitting backdrop for today’s leading thinkers from Asia delivering an address on the eve of the STATE OF ASIA conference.

We are an independent Swiss non-profit organization, financed entirely out of Switzerland. We are supported by generous donations from our Corporate Members, Patrons, as well as our Passport and General Members. A small amount of funds originates from event revenues.

Asia Society Switzerland dedicates these funds to further our critical mission of increasing Asia Competence in Switzerland. They are used to host 50+ events each year, to produce and publish videos and podcasts, to educate leaders as well as the next generation, and to connect our 500+ members, over 20 partners of leading companies and universities, government entities, foreign diplomats, think tanks, industry associations, NGOs and media.
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1 Uli Sigg, Zurich, May 2019
2 Eunice Zehnder-Lai, Zurich, Nov 2022
3 Adrian T. Keller, Zurich, Jun 2022
4 Nicola Forster, Jun 2023
5 Raymond J. Baer, Jun 2023
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