

Engaging Asia's Diverse Development Actors

SHARING ASIAN PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

The Asia Foundation facilitates mutual learning among diverse development actors, contributes Asian views to the global development agenda, and supports capacity development and South-South knowledge exchange and cooperation.



The international development landscape has changed dramatically in the last decade in response to new global challenges and emerging development actors. The current aid architecture is largely a product of the consensus among the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors around the purposes of aid, where it should be directed, and how it should be managed. The DAC consensus is being challenged, however, by the increasing presence of non-Western development actors which, in fact, have contributed to international development cooperation for decades but have remained under the radar of traditional aid frameworks. Taken together, these "new" actors, often emerging economies, are contributing major resources to development efforts in partner countries.

While some observers fear that the emergence of new actors may undermine DAC-led efforts to promote aid transparency and harmonization for greater development effectiveness, others see opportunities for innovative and responsive modalities such as South-South and triangular cooperation. The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4), held in Busan, Korea, in November 2011, launched a more inclusive development compact in recognition of these diverse actors and approaches. Reflecting these changes, The Asia Foundation implements several complementary programs to enhance development dialogue and cooperation in the region.

ASIAN APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (AADC) DIALOGUES

Since late 2010, The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute (KDI) have jointly organized a dialogue series that brings together leading experts and practitioners from China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as partner countries and "traditional" donors, to share and contribute their perspectives on development cooperation.

Meetings have been convened in various Asian capitals, including Beijing, Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, and Seoul. Sessions have examined commonalities and differences among Asian development cooperation approaches, provided critiques from Asia on conventional aid architecture, and shared DAC perspectives on "emerging" approaches. Exposure visits have included a discussion with South-South cooperation implementing partners in Malaysia and a visit to a Chinese-supported highway construction project in Sri Lanka.

The 2011 dialogues culminated at the HLF-4, the world's largest and most important gathering for discussing issues of international development. Along with Vietnam's Ministry of Planning & Investment, The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute hosted one of the best attended panels at the forum on the theme of Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation. Peter Baxter, Director General of AusAID, served as key discussant for the panel. A publication

AADC DIALOGUE SERIES

A partnership between The Asia Foundation and KDI, the AADC dialogue series supports knowledge-sharing and cooperation among diverse development actors in the region.

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authored by participants of the 2011 dialogues was also shared at the HLF-4.

In 2012, AADC dialogues focused more specifically on the theme of development cooperation and pro-poor, inclusive growth. Participating countries included Australia, Cambodia, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The 2013 dialogue series will examine climate change and low carbon development, highlighting Asian expertise, strategies, and development cooperation approaches and providing an opportunity for South-South knowledge exchange. Building on the successes of the dialogue series and the growing interest in Asian perspectives on development and aid effectiveness, The Asia Foundation partnered with the Australian National University, AusAID, and the Lowy Institute for International Policy to convene high-level public events in Canberra and Sydney in November 2012. Issues discussed included the intersection of foreign policy and development cooperation and the post-2015 global development agenda.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

As growing development cooperation partners, Asian countries also face capacity challenges as they diversify and expand their assistance, participate more actively in international development fora, and streamline the management of their development cooperation. In response to this need, The Asia Foundation provides customized training and exposure visits for officials, facilitates dialogue and reviews of Asian development strategies, and helps to document and catalogue Asian cooperation experience.

For example, since 2008, The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management have worked together to organize study tours and fellowships for Korean government officials and advanced development studies students. Partner countries include Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

Building on Thailand's participation in the AADC dialogues, The Asia Foundation is supporting the Faculty of Political Science of Thammasat University to conduct a comparative study of Japan's and Thailand's respective development assistance policies and practical experience in Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam that will yield concrete guidelines for future refinement

and exchange of experience. In order to enhance transparency and understanding of India's development cooperation, The Asia Foundation and the New Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research are creating a comprehensive database of outgoing development assistance that will be provided to the Development Partnership Administration, India's newly launched agency, and also made available to the public. In Malaysia, The Asia Foundation is collaborating with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies to support strengthened efficiency and outcomes for Malaysia's development cooperation programs.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Recently endorsed at the HLF-4 as a key component of promoting local-level ownership and development effectiveness, South-South cooperation has been a longstanding modality of Asian development cooperation. The Asia Foundation's extensive regional networks, practical understanding of capacity needs and strengths, and track record of facilitating horizontal partnerships offer a viable, convenient platform for South-South knowledge exchange. For more than a decade, the Foundation has established itself as a facilitator of South-South partnerships in critical areas such as central and local governance capacity building, security and justice reform, women's and minority rights, leadership development, and disaster management.

With support from USAID, the Foundation is working with the National Institute of Emergency Management, housed under the Chinese Academy of Governance, to strengthen disaster management in China. A core element includes experience-sharing via study programs to Indonesia and Thailand. Through partnership with AusAID, the Foundation is organizing additional exchanges between China and its ASEAN partners focusing on foreign disaster assistance.

As part of The Asia Foundation's Leaders of Influence program, religious leaders from the Maldives and Bangladesh have participated in knowledge exchange and learning visits to Malaysia and Indonesia. The visits provide exposure to the roles that Islamic leaders in other countries play in addressing critical development challenges such as education, health, and community empowerment, and in promoting women's rights within an Islamic framework. These opportunities for dialogue aim to contribute to a dynamic and evolving global discourse on practical development effectiveness issues involving development actors of all kinds.

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 17 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.



HEADQUARTERS

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

WASHINGTON, DC

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

www.asiafoundation.org

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