

# Pakistan



A continuous presence in Pakistan since 1954, The Asia Foundation has developed deep ties and valuable expertise on local, regional and international issues in this important Asian nation. With a national staff that is almost entirely Pakistani, and an extensive network of local and regional partners in both government and civil society, the Foundation's projects reach throughout the country, and range from large, nationwide programs to very small, local initiatives. With major programs in governance and women's empowerment, the Foundation also supports valuable new research and encourages innovative approaches to old problems.



## GOVERNANCE, LAW, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the critical challenges facing Pakistan today is to strengthen governance at both the national and local levels.

### SUPPORTING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN PAKISTAN (STAEP)

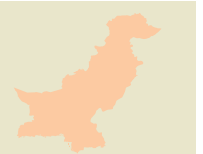
In 2006, The Asia Foundation facilitated the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), a consortium which now has over 40 Pakistani civil society organizations, to observe all aspects of the 2008 general elections. FAFEN was the first Pakistani election observer group to use a long-term, nationwide, systematic, statistically-driven methodology, following international standards and best practices.

Building on its success as an effective watchdog, FAFEN works today under The Asia Foundation's STAEP program to build trust and credibility between citizens and the state. The purpose of the STAEP program is that democratic processes in Pakistan are more open, inclusive, efficient and accountable to citizens. STAEP works to monitor public institutions and improve communication

between elected representatives and their constituents. STAEP has monitored or observed twelve National Assembly sessions and 22 by-elections, published 20 monitoring reports on governance, and formed 150 Constituency Relation Groups. In an important recent success, critical election reforms advocated by STAEP were incorporated in the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment. STAEP is working to increase its outreach to 200 constituencies in 120 districts, and to extend its scope by building media capacity to report on democracy and governance issues, working with political parties, and promoting civic education, especially for disenfranchised groups and religious leaders.

### DEMOCRACY MEDIA PROJECT

In 2010, The Asia Foundation launched a documentary competition in collaboration with DawnNews, a leading television news channel in Pakistan. Promoted through social networking sites, TV, radio, print, and direct outreach, the contest attracted nearly 200 entries. Each short documentary film addressed the question, "Why is democracy necessary for Pakistan?" The top three films were broadcast on national television.



## PAKISTAN

The Asia Foundation has worked continuously in Pakistan since 1954.

The Gender Equity Program provides grants to advance women's rights and empowerment.

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## LEGAL REFORM

The Foundation's recent work on justice issues includes an assessment of major obstacles to judicial efficiency across Pakistan's four provinces. Last year, the Foundation also convened district and high court judges, lawyers, police, academics, and civil society activists to identify priorities for reform at the district level. To lay a foundation for future work, the Foundation commissioned a review of the main legal reform initiatives of the past decade, identifying and analyzing their successes and failures. The Asia Foundation coordinates closely with donor agencies active in the justice sector to identify areas of potential cooperation, avoid duplication of effort, and share lessons learned.

## EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Asia Foundation commissioned Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Pakistan to conduct a mapping study of professional associations and assess their potential as development partners. The study found that these organic social organizations tend to lack formal structure but have extensive local knowledge and close connections to their communities. They exist without outside support, unlike more formal organizations, which often cannot continue without funding. Barbers' associations get special attention in the study, because barbers often serve as hubs of information within their communities. The Foundation then worked with another local partner, the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, to test how effectively barbers could disseminate basic legal information to the community. Although this approach needs to be refined, the preliminary results of these experiments have been encouraging.

## ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Last year, in seven districts of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, The Asia Foundation worked with communities, the police, and local dispute resolution bodies to resolve largely minor disputes. The project aimed to lessen the caseload of the courts and administrative burden on the police force, and help resolve disputes more quickly.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

### GENDER EQUITY PROGRAM (GEP)

In collaboration with the Aurat Foundation, Pakistan's leading women's rights organization ("aurat" means "woman" in Urdu), The Asia Foundation is undertaking a new, five-year, nationwide initiative to advance women's human rights and empowerment in Pakistan. The program engages a wide range of NGOs, universities, think tanks, community-based organizations, media, government and other partners to support initiatives to improve the status of women. GEP will combat gender-based violence, and improve women's access to justice, education, transport, employment opportunities, and property rights. It will also strengthen Pakistani organizations that promote gender equity.

## MAPPING HEALTH MARKET INNOVATIONS IN PAKISTAN

In recent years, the potential role of the private sector in improving the delivery of health care services, especially for the poor, has received growing recognition. As the Pakistan based partner of the global Center for Health Market Innovations, The Asia Foundation identifies and documents innovative, market-oriented health programs and policies, and works to publicize this material to policymakers, researchers, and others who can benefit from it.

## BOOKS FOR ASIA

Since the 1950s, The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia program has provided more than 3 million books to Pakistani organizations including those serving students and marginalized groups, as well as many other nonprofit organizations. In recent years, Books for Asia has provided Pakistan with up to 90,000 books each year, donated by American publishers. The program aims to distribute at least 40 percent of all donated books to institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

In Pakistan, The Asia Foundation's recent donors include the Australian High Commission, the British High Commission, the Department for International Development (DFID), Give2Asia, The Rockefeller Foundation, Kingdom of the Netherlands, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

*The Asia Foundation is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization. Through its programs, the Foundation builds leadership, improves policies, and strengthens institutions to foster greater openness and shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. It is funded by contributions from corporations, foundations, individuals, and governmental organizations in the U.S., Europe, Canada, Australia, and Asia, and an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress.*

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