SIX DECADES IN ASIA

The Asia Foundation 60 YEARS
Over the past six decades, Asia has undergone an unprecedented transformation. Emerging from the devastation of World War II and the end of the colonial era, undertaking post-war reconstruction and adapting to dramatically changing political landscapes, economic upheavals, rural dislocation, urbanization, and the challenges of globalization, the countries of Asia have made remarkable progress in the face of adversity and profound change.

For these six decades, The Asia Foundation has remained committed to the region and to peace and prosperity for its people. While The Asia Foundation’s programs have evolved with time and place, our guiding principles have remained true to the basic tenets laid down by our founders in 1954.

- A conviction that private international cooperative action can play a crucial role in advancing human progress and fostering greater understanding.

- The premise that the best solutions to Asian problems come from Asians; outside aid and advice can play only a supporting and encouraging role.

- A belief in the right of Asians to shape their own destiny and to develop indigenous social, political, and economic institutions that are consistent with their own traditions, values, and needs.
The Asia Foundation’s unique role in Asia is rooted in our 60-year presence through a network of country offices across the region; our in-depth understanding of local circumstances and people; and distinctive programs designed in close partnership with local communities to address their most critical challenges. Throughout decades of significant change in Asia, and despite its own budgetary challenges, The Asia Foundation’s core program themes, the strength and expertise of its staff, and its fundamental commitment to Asia’s progress have remained constant and enduring. The Foundation has consistently focused on helping Asian communities meet an array of challenges in governance, access to justice, economic reform and foreign policy. Each of the past six decades has formed the basis for the Foundation’s work in later decades, as we have learned from our experiences and partnerships with a broad circle of Asian organizations.

This publication and the online timeline of the Foundation’s institutional history seek to capture and highlight key lessons, achievements, and milestones in the Foundation’s six decades of work across Asia. Our hope is that in sharing this history we will contribute to greater understanding of the role an independent, nongovernmental organization can play in facilitating regional cooperation and development. We also hope that friends, supporters, and alumni of The Asia Foundation will join us in dedicating ourselves to the important work that lies ahead. Working together, history has shown, we truly can improve lives, expand opportunities, and help societies flourish.

David D. Arnold, President
THE 1950s: A WAR-TORN ASIA REBUILDS
As countries in Asia faced the challenges of post-war recovery, The Asia Foundation was founded in 1954 as a private, nonprofit organization, headquartered in San Francisco. Its 21 founding directors had a remarkable collective history of public service and personal accomplishment. They included the presidents of Stanford, UCLA, Columbia, and Brown Universities, heads of six major American corporations, prominent figures in foreign affairs, and a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, James Michener. These founders all believed that the Foundation could play a substantial role in building bridges and contributing to a new era of growth and peace in Asia, in ways that government agencies could not.

From 1954 to 1962, under the leadership of our first president, Dr. Robert Blum, a veteran diplomat with the Department of Defense and State, the Foundation pioneered new ideas. These included expansion of educational opportunities, civil society participation in economic development, promotion of access to justice, and support for peer-to-peer exchanges, which enabled the Foundation to build relationships of trust and goodwill with key individuals and institutions across Asia. Through strategic grant-making, close consultation with local leaders, and respon-
siveness to specific needs on the ground, the Foundation’s support had both imme-
diate and longstanding impact, demonstrating the sensitivity and effectiveness that
would become the hallmarks of our programming. The entrepreneurial spirit of
early Foundation representatives enabled them to be nimble, creative, and identify
and support future leaders who would, over time, lead their countries in addressing
some of Asia’s most difficult challenges.

In our first two decades, The Asia Foundation was at the forefront of promoting strong
long-term U.S.-Asia relations as Asia emerged from colonialism, creating opportunities
through sponsoring education and exchanges for young Asian leaders, exposing them
to liberal political and market economic models in contrast to state planning and one-
party governance. The Foundation introduced an Asian component to many highly
regarded American university programs, such as the Harvard International Seminar led
by Henry Kissinger, the American Political Science Association’s Congressional Fellow-
ship Program, and the Harvard Nieman Journalism Fellowship Program. The first two
Nieman Fellows from Asia were Sharada Prasad of the *Indian Express* in Bombay and
Hisashi Maeda of *Asahi Shimbun* in Tokyo. From the late 1950s through the 1980s,
the Foundation funded graduate study at American universities for hundreds of Asian
students each year, and was unique in promoting continuing education and exchanges
within Asia through our field network.

At a time when news of Asia was far less accessible, the Foundation supported
*The Asian Student*, a popular bi-weekly newsletter distributed to over 25,000 Asian
students studying in the U.S. and foreign student advisors to help students stay
abreast of developments in their home countries while helping them adjust in
the U.S. *The Asian Student* reached hundreds of thousands of students over its
25 years. At the same time, the Foundation bolstered the development of Asian
universities by providing books, journals, reference guides, and exchange opportu-
nities for instructors in English-language teaching, the law, and other social
sciences. An early supporter of an independent press in Asia, the Foundation
purchased and distributed newsprint in war-torn and developing countries including
the Philippines, Burma, Korea, and Pakistan, and supported printing presses in
many countries.
In keeping with a desire to support national identity, peace, and reconciliation within divided societies in Asia, The Asia Foundation became well known for its efforts to preserve and promote Asian culture, supporting writers, artists, painters, and intellectuals, as well as the development of museums and cultural preservation societies. Prominent early Foundation grantees included the National Museum in Seoul, Korea; the Museum of Modern Art in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia; and the National Museum of Kabul, in Afghanistan. By the end of the 1950s the Foundation had programs in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, West and East Pakistan (Bangladesh), the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

**BOOKS FOR ASIA**

A signature program, Books for Asia began as Books for Asian Students, sparked by a Fulbright professor in Japan who lacked English-language textbooks and turned to the Foundation. This initial collaboration led The Asia Foundation to solicit large donations from American publishers to complement book drives by student groups at several hundred U.S. colleges and universities. The first donations were distributed in the Philippines and Japan. Today the Foundation’s longest-running program, Books for Asia now puts one million brand-new books each year into the hands of students, educators, and leaders in 19 Asian countries, now approaching a total of nearly 50 million books. In 2013, the Foundation joined together with Beyond Access, an international coalition of organizations including the Gates Foundation and IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board) to enlist public libraries as agents of development, and train librarians to use technology to serve their communities.

**THE 1960s: A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The 1960s were characterized by impressive economic growth in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore; the “Green Revolution” in South and Southeast Asia; and growing bonds of intra-Asian cooperation. During this time, the Foundation’s work focused on law, education and human resources, social and cultural development,
economic and rural development, mass media and communications, and international cooperation and exchanges. Programs continued to reflect the unique needs of each country, such as dorms for university students in Burma, legal texts for Pakistan Law Institute, and agricultural experts to boost Afghanistan's exports of fruits and nuts.

As one means to encourage and support Asian leadership development, the Foundation supported higher education for decades, including the modernization of Seoul National University and the University of the Philippines; the establishment of the printing press, the student recreation center, and student services at the University of Rangoon; faculty development for Nanyang University in Singapore; Tokyo, Keio, Koto, and Doshisha universities in Japan; and teacher training and library assistance at Kabul University in Afghanistan.

Most noteworthy was the founding of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. While still a British territory in the 1960s, Hong Kong’s population was predominantly Chinese. The Chinese University of Hong Kong was dedicated on October 17, 1963, with special mention of The Asia Foundation’s assistance. At the time, it was the sole university in Hong Kong to teach in Chinese. We continued our institutional support over many years, including for the establishment of its translation center, and assistance for its new campus in the late 1960s.

A major focus of the Foundation during the 1960s was promotion of the rule of law, access to justice, and the development of legal education through strategic support to law schools, libraries, legal training, law student associations, and the training of law faculty throughout the region.

The Foundation’s initial efforts in Korea to promote the rule of law began and continued through decades of cooperation with the Korean public and private sector to advance access to justice and law reform. This included building university law libraries, the Supreme Court law library, legal curricula and later support for judicial education, training, court administration and study tours for judges, court officials and government lawyers, and law faculty. For more than 30 years we worked closely with the Korean National Assembly to enhance its legislative capacity.
To advance regional understanding, and create opportunities for peer learning and sharing among the nascent legal profession, the Foundation was an early supporter of LAWASIA in 1966, an international organization of law associations, judges, lawyers, legal faculty and others in the Asia-Pacific, which eventually led to the first Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific in 1985.

In 1962, Russell G. Smith became the second president of The Asia Foundation. Smith, a former Bank of America executive, was a founding member of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees, on which he served until 1990. He was succeeded in 1964 by Haydn Williams, the former assistant dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a veteran of the Departments of Defense and State, and President Truman’s ambassador to the Micronesian Status Negotiations. During Williams’ 25-year tenure, the Foundation sought to improve U.S.-Asian relations by supporting enduring programs that bolstered Asian governments’ foreign affairs capacity and regional economic cooperation, a new concept at that time.

Toward this end, from the 1960s onward, the Foundation supported young diplomats in academic programs, fellowships, and study tours to help build a professional foreign
service in Thailand, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Pacific Islands, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines. To fill Korea’s growing need for professional foreign service officers, The Asia Foundation helped build and equip the Korean Foreign Service Training Institute, dedicated in 1963. We have also supported academic programs and study tours for dozens of Thai diplomats, including as participants in the prestigious American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellowship Program, where young Asian diplomats gain an in-depth understanding of the U.S. Congress through a yearlong placement.

Immediately after normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979, in his first trip to China, President Haydn Williams launched the Foundation’s special fellowship program to provide advanced degrees for Chinese diplomats. That program, with funding from the Luce Foundation and now spanning more than 30 years, has yielded an alumni network of Chinese diplomats, all of whom have risen in the ranks of the foreign service. Many have been ambassadors; the most senior, a vice minister in the Chinese government. The Foundation annually supports three to four young diplomats from China to attend the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
A recognized pioneer in supporting Pacific economic cooperation, in 1968 the Foundation was a founding supporter of the Pacific Asia Forum for Trade and Development (PAFTAD), among the first organizations to bring together Asians and Americans in an informal series of private academic conferences, to discuss shared economic and trade issues. This effort paved the way for the U.S. National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation and comparable national committees in Asia. For many years, the Foundation led the publication of the *Pacific Economic Outlook*. Early Foundation work with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum led to regional efforts in 1997 to review APEC’s individual and collective action plans, and for the APEC Business Advisory Council to make recommendations to national governments on the pace of trade and investment liberalization.
**THE 1970s: CHANGING WITH A CHANGING ASIA**

In the 1970s, the U.S., United Nations, and other donors concentrated their strategies on large-scale projects to help the poorest of the poor in agriculture, health, and community development. While the Foundation supported many projects in community development tied to these priorities, we continued to focus on governance and equity, increasing programming in rural and provincial areas in Asia that were not reached by national development programs, and prioritizing support for Asian leadership development and capacity building for civic institutions. In this context, the Foundation also sought to increase attention on the role of women in society and the economies of the region.

The Foundation has always recognized the crucial need to empower women to play an essential role in the development process. Foundation programs not only recognized women’s roles in organization-building in “traditional areas” of social work, but also encouraged women to take on management and professional roles in education, health care, and legal services, to overcome discriminatory practices and increase women’s economic opportunities. These early programs included support to non-governmental organizations in Aceh for training to help women gain employment, and to the Womens Lawyers’ Circle of the Philippines for its free legal aid program.
Foundation efforts in Korea demonstrate a long-term commitment to women’s organizations, including early assistance to the Women Lawyers Association, Korea’s oldest women’s law organization, and to the Korean League of Women Voters, founded in 1969, which became one of the most significant advocacy groups of its time in Korea’s rigid political climate.

To further advance regional cooperation, we supported both regional and country-specific research on key issues, particularly for organizations that would eventually form the intellectual base for ASEAN (Association for South East Asian Nations) regional cooperation. Strategic grants to the Institute for Southeast Asia Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore in 1976, and later to the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) in Thailand focused on security and economic issues. The Foundation played a key role in bringing the five ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies together, leading to the formation of ASEAN-ISIS in 1988, which developed into a major vehicle for “track two” dialogue, exchanges, and research in the region. Other Asian institutes and universities received substantial Foundation support, including the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka, and the Ilmin International Relations Institute in Korea.

One of the most important events of the 1970s was the Sino-American Rapprochement, culminating in President Richard Nixon’s historic trip to the People’s Republic of China in 1972. This created an historic opportunity for the Foundation, which had only assisted non-Communist states up to that time.

Immediately following the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979, the Foundation was approached by China’s Ministry of Science and Technology to provide a grant for nine eminent computer scientists to travel to Beijing for a seminar on information technology and economic development. This first project opened the door to Foundation programming in China. In 1980, President Haydn Williams inaugurated a new program with the Institute of Foreign Trade to train its faculty members in the United States, to provide American faculty advisors to the Institute, to train its librarians and to build up the library’s Western collection in business, law, international finance, trade, and management science.
THE LUCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM
In 1974, the Henry Luce Foundation launched the Luce Scholars Program, and sought out The Asia Foundation as a partner, in recognition of its presence and vast contacts with organizations and individuals across Asia. This cooperation continues to this day, and we celebrated the 40th class of Scholars in 2014. From its inception, the program has given highly qualified young Americans with no previous exposure to Asia an opportunity for firsthand experience in Asia for one year, by living and working in Asia. The Luce Scholars, all under the age of 29, represent a wide variety of professional fields, including the arts, journalism, law, medicine, science, public health, environmental studies, and international relations. Alumni include: Terrence B. Adamson, executive vice president of the National Geographic Society; J. Brady Lum, president of the Special Olympics; Dr. Diana Farmer, the world’s first female fetal surgeon; Paul A. Gigot, Pulitzer Prize-winning political commentator and editorial page editor of the *Wall Street Journal*; and the Honorable David Huebner, U.S. ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa.

THE 1980s: OPEN, JUST, AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES
Asia’s democratic movements gained momentum in the 1980s. Demonstrating its core commitment to support open, just, and democratic societies, The Asia Foundation supported a wide range of local organizations and leaders who contributed to historic change in Asia. Among the most profound changes in the Asian political landscape were: the fall of the Marcos regime in the Philippines after 20 years, and the election of Corazón Aquino in 1986; the 1987 transition to democracy after 37 years of martial law in Taiwan; and the peaceful democratic revolution in Mongolia in 1990.

On November 3, 1985, President Marcos announced the snap elections that ultimately ended his dictatorship and in 1986, elected Corazón Aquino the new
president of the Philippines. The Asia Foundation, already a trusted partner of civil society organizations in the Philippines, worked to ensure that the elections were peaceful, free, and fair, printing election handbooks, distributing radios and computers, and responding quickly to the changing needs of a country in the midst of a tumultuous transition.

At this time Foundation offices across Asia began supporting comprehensive election programs by providing technical assistance to election commissions, and supporting civic education, media, and domestic election observation. Over the years The Asia Foundation became one of the world’s most experienced organizations working on elections in Asia. In 1997, the Foundation undertook survey research to deepen its election programming, starting with voter knowledge surveys in Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand to better inform our programs in civic and voter education. As a barometer of voter knowledge and opinion, these surveys provided important data for other organizations and donors working on elections.

In Taiwan, the 1980s saw the rise of a new generation of politicians and citizen activists pressing for change from the one-party rule of the Kuomintang, which
governed by martial law until 1987. As political liberalization began, The Asia Foundation responded with programs supporting parliamentary development, civil society organizations, and an independent press.

The 1990 Mongolian revolution created momentum for building a democracy and a market economy, and led to a unique partnership between Mongolia and The Asia Foundation. Mongolian leaders began early consultations with the Foundation on the revision of their constitution, and the resulting framework for new, multi-party elections. We supported many Mongolian institutions, including the parliament, courts, Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, and dozens of fellowships, exchanges, and study tours. Many of the early participants in these programs went on to hold key roles throughout the government and civil society organizations, including current and former ambassadors, senior advisors to the president, Members of Parliament and President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj himself, as well as leaders of environmental, women’s, and other civil society organizations.

Parliamentary development has always been a major focus for the Foundation, as a key institution of democratic governance. We supported the development of parliamentary research services in Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Thailand; professional staff and committee development in Thailand, Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan; and opportunities for parliamentarians from Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines to exchange views with their counterparts in the United States and other parts of Asia. By 1993, the Foundation had provided assistance to 15 national parliaments in Asia.

The Foundation was also an early supporter of judicial reform, through training of judges, streamlining court administration to reduce court backlogs, improve access to justice, and build more accountable judicial systems. Programs included exchanges, expert assistance and court computerization in Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

In keeping with a long tradition of supporting education initiatives and women’s opportunities, the Foundation pioneered scholarship programs for girls beginning in Bangladesh in 1985, establishing a model for future programs. By providing
uniforms, school fees, and other incentives to families, girls from disadvantaged communities were able to stay in school. In 2000, The Asia Foundation, with the Cambodian organization Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE), started a scholarship program to help rural girls bridge the gap between primary and secondary school, when girls are most likely to drop out of school to find paying jobs. The scholarships have helped nearly 3,000 girls finish secondary school. In Afghanistan, the Foundation supported remedial training scholarships for girls who were prevented from attending school under the Taliban, and university scholarships for women. In 2012, The Asia Foundation announced the Carnegie Corporation Scholarships for Afghan Women, a special initiative to provide university scholarships to disadvantaged women in Afghanistan.

In 1989, William P. Fuller, previously with the World Bank, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), succeeded Haydn Williams as the fourth president of The Asia Foundation.

ASIA FOUNDATION FUNDING
The U.S. Congress examined the programs of the Foundation through the State Department/USAID-appointed 1975 Canham Commission study, led by Erwin Canham of the Christian Science Monitor and several former U.S. Ambassadors, as well as a 1983 Congressional Research Service report, The Asia Foundation: Past, Present and Future. Congress acknowledged the Foundation’s important contribution to U.S. foreign policy interests, and that the Foundation required a dedicated, regular source of public funding. In recognition of contributions to U.S. interests in Asia and the importance of ongoing programs, Congress passed The Asia Foundation Act to provide ongoing, appropriated core funding for the Foundation. From 1954 until 1967, The Asia Foundation had been supported by covert funding from the U.S. government, as were many universities, nonprofit organizations, and civic associations in the post-war era. A State Department commission led by then Secretary of State Rusk reaffirmed that the Foundation’s nongovernmental status enabled it to operate effectively and should be preserved and strengthened, with reliable funding from public sources.
Today, the Foundation has a robust and diversified funding base. In addition to federally appropriated U.S. funding, the Foundation receives nearly half its support from a wide range of private and corporate philanthropies, and the international development agencies of more than a dozen nations, including partnerships with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), as well as multilateral institutions like the World Bank.

THE 1990s: GOVERNANCE, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND WOMEN IN POLITICS

In the new democracies of Asia, many countries took the crucial step of developing a constitution to provide a framework for the basic organization of state administrative functions and defining the relationship between the citizens and the state. Over the decades, the Foundation played a major role in providing assistance for constitution drafting, through exchanges and access to legal experts. In 1990, within a few weeks of the democratic transitions in Mongolia and Nepal, and in 1993 in Cambodia, the Foundation responded to requests for expert advice to revise their constitutions.
In 1997, in Thailand, our support for the Women's Network on the Constitution, representing over 40 leading women's NGOs, enabled them to provide input to the most participatory drafting process of a constitution in Thai history. An impressive 6,744 women filed as candidates for the provincial round of elections for the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) and six won seats. The network conducted a nationwide campaign to educate Thai citizens on the drafting process and gathered public support for a constitution that would reflect accountable, transparent government and gender equity. These efforts were central to securing gender equality and women's rights in the new constitution. Along these lines, from 2002 and 2004 the Foundation provided major support to the Afghan interim government and the U.N. in the development and ratification of the Constitution of Afghanistan. The Foundation is contributing to constitutional development in Nepal as the country emerges from political stalemate.

The Asia Foundation has long seen women's political participation as both a means of advancing women's rights and status, and as an essential component of the Foundation's broader goal to promote democratic governance. In 1993, even before the 1995 U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing's global women's rights agenda, The Asia Foundation launched a Women in Politics (WIP) program to increase women's participation in and access to decision-making bodies in Asia, helping to create the Asia-Pacific Women in Politics Network as a central contact point and information clearinghouse to link individuals and organizations to empower women. Since that time, the Foundation has broadened program support to address gender-based violence and trafficking in many countries across Asia.

In 1999, The Asia Foundation began a 15-year partnership with the Levi Strauss Foundation to support Social Justice for Migrant Women Workers in Guangdong, the pilot province of China's open-door economic policy, serving one of China's most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The program provided services to more than one million workers in more than 20 provinces and municipalities, including counseling, legal aid services, training on labor rights, occupational safety, hygiene and healthcare, reproductive health and HIV prevention, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships. This program was followed in 2003 by the Scholarship Program for Chinese Women Factory Workers in the Pearl River Delta, focusing on vocational
In 1995, with USAID support, The Asia Foundation launched the Pakistan NGO Initiative Program (PNI) to strengthen Pakistan’s nongovernmental organizational capacity to work with local communities to access and deliver improved social services, particularly in maternal health, child survival, girls’ education, and microfinance. To address the need for improved services and to increase participation, especially for women, the goals of PNI were women’s empowerment and strengthening civil society advocacy.

By 1990, the Foundation was making nearly 800 grants a year to a wide range of government and civil society organizations to further their efforts in policy advocacy, women’s rights, legal reform, and human rights. The Foundation supported efforts to promote human rights throughout the region by consistently supporting awareness raising and advocacy in Cambodia and Indonesia; promoting greater understanding of forensic investigation and community policing in Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka; mitigating conflict in minority communities in Indonesia and the Philippines; and providing early backing for ASEAN’s Human Rights Working Group to address human rights violations in ASEAN member states in 1997.

ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN DEVELOPMENT

Early on, in the 1960s, the Foundation recognized the important role of religious leaders in programs that addressed a broad range of rural development needs. In Thailand, where Buddhist temples are central to village life, the Sangha Social Service Program worked with the Sangha—the Buddhist ecclesiastical hierarchy—to add secular and scientific subjects to the curriculum of Buddhist universities. Graduates then returned to their home provinces, primarily in the rural north and northeast, to train village monk leaders in nutrition, sanitation, agricultural development, natural resources management, and vocational education. They became known as “development monks.” In the 1970s, religious leaders, who played influential roles in local communities, were regular participants in the Foundation’s early social services programs at the village level. This included a pilot program in 1979 with Indonesia’s rural Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, to expand their curricula to include agricultural and other rural
development instruction, using teaching materials provided by The Asia Foundation. The Foundation also provided small libraries, trained librarians, and funds to publish newsletters on community development activities.

Muslim minority communities in southern Philippines also received support to improve colleges on the Philippine islands of Mindanao and Basilan, specifically to include more practical skills training to improve opportunities for students to gain employment. Muslim schools in Thailand also received support to incorporate math and science into their regular curriculum.

On May 21, 1998, amid escalating social unrest, the resignation of Indonesia’s longtime leader, President Suharto, created an opportunity to expand civil society’s role in governance. The Asia Foundation supported the founding of People’s Voter Education Network (JPPR), which brought together a coalition of dozens of Islamic organizations, inter-faith groups, and secular media to support Indonesia’s first free and fair election in over 44 years. The Network trained 120,000 volunteers to distribute civic and voter education materials in virtually every village in Indonesia for the 1999 election, and mounted a huge national election monitoring campaign, including 20 million leaflets, one million posters, over two million books and pamphlets, and hours of election-related programming on television and radio.

Muslim groups were also engaged in disaster preparedness and relief in Aceh, post-tsunami, in the 1990s. The Foundation extended this work with Muslim religious leaders of influence in Bangladesh through a training program in community development, and the Traditional Leaders Discovery Program in Afghanistan, introducing community development and women’s rights issues, while exposing Muslim leaders to other modern Muslim societies, such as Turkey, Malaysia, and Egypt.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
The Foundation’s environment programs began with the U.S.-Asia Environmental Partnership, a coalition of Asian and American community groups, government agencies, and businesses formed in 1992 to address growing environmental concerns. The Foundation supported an Environmental Fellowship Program for senior Asian and American professionals, and also established the NGO-Business Environmental
Partnership to encourage cooperation between NGOs, businesses, and local government to reduce negative environmental impacts. Today, the Foundation’s environmental programs emphasize natural resource management and sustainable growth, from responsible mining in Mongolia, to water management in Laos and trans-border water governance in South Asia.

The Asia Foundation was also beginning working to improve the business climate for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which employ nearly 90 percent of all Asians, by removing structural and systemic impediments for local entrepreneurs. In Indonesia, with USAID funding, the Foundation increased private sector participation in government policymaking, improved access to credit, and made information and technology available to SMEs. These lessons later influenced the Foundation’s small business strategy in Vietnam, Mongolia, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

AMERICA’S ROLE IN ASIA
In 1992, the Foundation convened the first of a series of influential conferences bringing together leading Asian and American experts to address vital issues in U.S.-Asian relations and developing recommendations to the incoming U.S. administration. The resulting reports, America’s Role in Asia, were widely distributed in policy, business, and academic circles in Asia and the United States, including to the incoming administration and members of Congress. In all, there were four in this prominent series of conferences and reports, in 1992, 2000, 2004, and 2008.

THE 2000s: NEW EMPIRICAL TOOLS FOR ASIAN DEVELOPMENT
The devastating terrorist attacks in September 2001 dramatically changed the global political landscape and drew the attention of governments worldwide to the threat of global terrorism. In Asia, the threat continued, with bombings in
Bali in 2002 and 2005, and terrorist attacks on hotels in India and Pakistan in 2008. Amid these challenges, the region also faced an economic downturn and ongoing insurgencies in Mindanao, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

During this period of rising tension, the Foundation continued to be a trusted partner in Asia, working with government institutions and civil society, including religious organizations, to promote peace and justice in communities across the region. The Foundation’s Afghanistan office, originally opened in 1954, relocated to Peshawar due to the Soviet invasion in 1979. The 2000s saw the reopening of the office in Kabul in 2002, as well as the reopening of the India office in 2009. The Foundation also worked toward peace in intra-Asia conflict. The Asia Foundation conducted a groundbreaking household survey of attitudes toward conflict in the Philippine region of Mindanao in 2002. The survey revealed that while Muslim separatist conflict dominated the media, clan violence, or *rido*, is actually a bigger factor in people’s daily lives. When *rido* is then mixed with separatism, banditry, and military involvement, violence inevitably escalates. An edited volume, *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*, was published in late 2007.
(updated in 2014). Using conflict management strategies, by 2012 the Foundation and its local partners settled a total of 204 rido conflicts, which had left 604 dead and 231 injured.

In 2004, Douglas Bereuter became the fifth president of The Asia Foundation after 26 years as a U.S. congressman where he served as vice chairman and chairman of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee in the House of Representatives. Under his leadership, the Foundation significantly diversified funding sources, including signing its first major institutional partnership agreement with the Australian Agency for International Development. This unique partnership enabled the Foundation to more flexibly and rapidly respond to critical challenges on the ground and deliver innovative programs. He also created the unique Douglas K. Bereuter Program for Junior Associates in Asian Affairs program, an opportunity for recent post-graduates to work at The Asia Foundation, further their professional development, and gain knowledge of and an understanding of the Foundation’s work.

Also in 2004, in response to the dearth of information about Afghanistan, The Asia Foundation conducted the first-ever comprehensive perception survey since the fall of the Taliban to measure knowledge and attitudes of Afghan citizens regarding their country’s first national elections. The Foundation’s Survey of the Afghan People is now conducted annually and provides the most comprehensive, longitudinal insight available into the views of the Afghan people.

In 2005, building on the Foundation’s earlier experience with SMEs and survey research, the Foundation pioneered the Economic Governance Index (EGI), using survey methodology to assess the business climate in Vietnam. The EGI measures the business-friendliness of local governments, identifying and recognizing those provinces most open to private enterprise and least encumbered by corruption and bureaucratic delays, enabling small businesses with empirical data needed to advocate for change. This successful approach was expanded to Cambodia in 2006, and afterward to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the Philippines.
GIVE2ASIA

In 2001, The Asia Foundation created Give2Asia to facilitate private philanthropic giving in Asia. Between 2001 and 2014, Give2Asia attracted more than 8,500 donors, and awarded more than US$206 million in grants to more than 20 Asian countries. When a powerful tsunami devastated South and Southeast Asia in December 2004, The Asia Foundation responded quickly in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, with both short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term programs for recovery and reconstruction, including with funding from Give2Asia. Disaster preparedness, risk management, and fostering resilient communities has been an important part of The Asia Foundation’s work since the start of the Pacific Islands disaster preparedness training program in 1996. Give2Asia has responded to disasters in Asia, including China’s 2008 Sichuan earthquake, Japan’s 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and Thailand’s 2011 flood disaster, with ongoing programs in China and Vietnam.

THE 2010s: BUILDING PEACE AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In January 2011, David D. Arnold succeeded Douglas Bereuter to become the sixth president of The Asia Foundation. An experienced development professional, Arnold represented the Ford Foundation in South Asia, was a senior executive with the Institute of International Education, and was president of the American University in Cairo.

Together with strengthening governance across the region, in the 2010s the Foundation increased its attention on conflict resolution. In 2010, the Foundation and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) joined together in a partnership to support peace and stability in Asia through improved state-society
relations. The partnership covers programs in fragile states and conflict-affected areas of Asia, including Afghanistan, Nepal, southern Philippines, Sri Lanka, southern Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Pakistan. In 2012, the Foundation undertook a groundbreaking, major study on subnational conflict: *The Contested Corners of Asia*, which examined the most effective approaches to international development and conflict resolution in subnational conflict areas. During that year, the Foundation was invited by the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to join the International Contact Group, as the only American organization to assist in monitoring the peace negotiations.

The Asia Foundation also initiated an ongoing dialogue series organized jointly by the Korea Development Institute and The Asia Foundation, under the theme of Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation. The initiative included bringing together both emerging and traditional development actors in Asia to share perspectives on global challenges and international cooperation.

Continuing a long tradition of supporting Asian leadership, in 2014 the Foundation inaugurated Asia Foundation Development Fellows, to identify and nurture the next generation of Asian leaders with shared interests in Asia’s social and economic development. In its initial year, the Foundation sought out 10 outstanding young
Asian professionals to participate in the leadership program, broadening their knowledge of Asia’s critical development challenges through unique experiences in Singapore, the Philippines, and the U.S.

In a 2013 strategic review, Foundation staff and the Board of Trustees concluded that The Asia Foundation’s mission—to improve lives, expand opportunities, and help societies flourish across a dynamic and developing Asia—is as relevant today as it was 60 years ago. The Foundation will continue to work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance path-breaking reforms in governance, economic development, women’s empowerment, environmental management, and regional cooperation. These core values guide this mission: deep respect for local context; inclusion of differing views; innovative, agile thinking; trust, accountability, and partnership; and longstanding presence and commitment.

To learn more about our milestones and programs in the countries we work in, explore our interactive online timeline with archival video, audio interviews, oral histories, photographs, and documents, at asiafoundation.org/timeline.
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