Books for Asia Bangladesh

The Asia Foundation’s Books for Asia program is the only regular book donation program in Bangladesh, and has provided more than 2 million books since the country’s independence in 1971. Books for Asia donates more than 50,000 new books annually to approximately 500 institutions in all of Bangladesh’s seven divisions, including schools, colleges, medical institutes, and public libraries. The program has recently focused on assisting institutions and programs that promote educational opportunities for girls and women.

Since 1954, Books for Asia has met a vital need in a country where poverty and illiteracy are continuing problems. The program improves public access to information, human resource development through education and training, and the advancement of disadvantaged populations who would otherwise have little access to quality books. The Asia Foundation welcomes prospective, qualified organizations as recipient partners in its Books for Asia program, which distributes English-language and Bangla-language books to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions and grantees.

SUPPORTING GIRLS’ EDUCATION

Books for Asia Bangladesh’s donations inspire girls to be educated, empowered, and well-prepared to face global challenges. We aim to reach every girls’ school and college in the country. We support a network of 75 girls’ schools and colleges each year with donations of up to 8,000 books. Books for Asia Bangladesh also encourages girls’ and female teachers’ participation in different events organized by the program. For example, The Asia Foundation partnered with a renowned female madrassa in Sylhet to train a group of young female students to develop their English skills through a digital library and toolkit. The program continues to reach more female beneficiaries and support women’s access to information by providing more opportunities through such initiatives.

CELEBRATING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Books for Asia supports special events by celebrating or being part of different international days, such as International Literacy Day, International Teachers’ Day, International Women’s Day, and many more. On International Literacy Day in 2013, for example, The Asia Foundation donated 4,000 books to 20 local schools of Rayer Bazar (renowned for the country’s leather processing industry) and organized a children’s book fair to promote reading habits and literacy among primary school students, underprivileged children, and teachers. This event was a gathering of young readers, publishers, and national and international organizations to celebrate the transformative power of children’s books with The Asia Foundation Bangladesh.

In addition to donating English-language publications, Books for Asia donates books written in Bangla. Children learn best in their mother tongue but many children in Bangladesh, especially those in rural areas, lack access to high-quality, age-appropriate reading material in Bangla. To meet this need, Books for Asia partners with respected organizations, such as Room to Read, to make these local-language books available to our network.
From 2012 to 2013, Books for Asia has reached 150 girls’ schools, colleges and madrassas, and donated 16,467 books, benefiting 16,1796 women.

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
Through Books for Asia, The Asia Foundation works across Bangladesh to increase the professional efficiency of government organizations, as well as to strengthen micro, small and medium enterprises and the public and private sector organizations that assist them. Our book donations provide practical, business-relevant information to enhance the capacity of a wide range of program beneficiaries, such as nongovernmental organizations, chambers of commerce, and governmental secretariats, including the libraries of several ministries, the National Parliament, the Law Commission, the Judicial Service Commission, the Foreign Service Academy, and police departments and other prominent offices.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES
Books for Asia is exploring ways to expand access to digital resources. Bangladesh is well behind other South Asian countries in terms of using the internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) as learning and communication tools (World Wide Web Foundation, 2012). One example is the Access4Asia pilot conducted by The Asia Foundation in partnership with the Department of Youth Development (DYD) of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and BBC Media Action in four districts – Mymensingh, Rangpur, Khulna and Chittagong. The Asia Foundation supported the establishment of four resource centers, which are managed by the DYD, within existing youth centers set up under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project trained youth on how to use the internet as an educational resource and provided an English learning toolkit developed by The Asia Foundation. By the end of the program, the majority of participants had improved their English-language skills and considered the internet as an enduring source of information.
Book Distribution by Books for Asia in Bangladesh

- Area covered in 2011-2012
- Area covered in 2012-2013

* Size of the circle indicates the amount of books donated to the particular area.
PARTNER WITH US
Books for Asia welcomes partnerships for:
- Sponsoring book donation events;
- International celebratory events, such as International Literacy Day, Women’s Day, Children’s Day, Youth Day, and World Teachers’ Day;
- Book shipments;
- Book fairs in academic institutions;
- Mobile libraries and book corners in hard-to-reach areas;
- Purchase of Bangla books for donation to complement the existing reserve of English-language books.

Partners and sponsors receive media outreach at events organized by Books for Asia Bangladesh.

WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE
Books are available for students at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education in many subject areas, including History, Government and Politics, Mass Communications, Law and Justice, Business, Management, Marketing, Accounting, Geography, Economics, Social Science, Computer Science, Math, Biology, Engineering, Arts, English Language and Literature, Psychology, and Medical Science.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR BOOK DONATIONS
- Public Libraries
- Universities, Colleges and Schools
- Government Agencies
- Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) with education programs.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR RECEIVING BOOK DONATIONS
- Prospective recipients should send a letter of request on their official letterhead introducing the organization and specifying its government or educational affiliation and registration information.
- The letter should describe the mission and principal activities of the organization.
- Recipients should call The Asia Foundation at (02) 882-6941 to confirm their application status and for an appointment.
- Once approved, the recipient organization can nominate a maximum of two representatives to select books.
- The standard interval for book selection and distribution is four months.
- Regular book selection hours are 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m., from Sunday to Wednesday.
- Individuals who come to select books should bring a photo ID and an authorization letter signed by the head of the organization and printed on organization letterhead.
- For NGOs, the nominated person(s) must bring the original copy of the NGO’s registration certificate.
- The recipient institution must send The Asia Foundation a library monitoring form within 20 days of receipt.
- Recipients are asked to maintain a detailed record of their distribution of BFA donated books.

For more information or if your organization qualifies and is interested in becoming a Books for Asia recipient, please contact:

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OUR DONORS
Pubali Bank Ltd., one of the major financial institutions in Bangladesh, supports various philanthropic, charitable, and development activities under its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, with a particular focus on education, youth development, and the arts. Pubali Bank’s generous support for Books for Asia has covered the cost of book shipments to Bangladesh every year since 2010.

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 18 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.

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