Books for Asia

The Asia Foundation’s Books for Asia program envisions a world where every student has access to books that inspire them to develop to their full potential and where every community leader has access to up-to-date information to inform his or her decisions. An educated population is a powerful tool to combat poverty and promote stability. Many students study English as a way to access greater opportunities and information about the world around them. In Indonesia alone, Books for Asia has distributed over 2.5 million English-language books and contemporary academic journals to Indonesian schools, higher education institutions, ministries and commissions, and professional and civic organizations since 1955.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Indonesia has made significant progress in improving access to education and is close to achieving universal basic education. The government is now focusing on rolling out a plan to implement 12 years of free compulsory schooling and efforts to improve the quality of education. But despite this progress, large discrepancies exist between the wealthy and poor – only around half of the poorest Indonesian students complete junior high school. Libraries remain underfunded despite their crucial role in strengthening the communities in which they are located.

Recognizing the broad and varying needs of the country, Books for Asia annually supplies more than 35,000 books to the education sector in Indonesia, through to the tertiary level. Working with partners across the archipelago, the program now reaches nearly all of Indonesia’s 33 provinces. The program has paid particular attention to extending its reach to Eastern Indonesia, where resources are limited and educational attainment levels are significantly lower than Java and Sumatra. Our donations are comprised of brand-new, high-quality English-language books and contemporary academic journals donated by leading publishers.

STRENGTHENING HIGHER LEARNING

Universities across Indonesia suffer from a critical need for quality and current higher education resources. The Books for Asia program helps to address this need, supplying texts from disciplines including economics, finance, law, environmental science, political science, and anthropology to state and private tertiary institutions across Indonesia. For example, since 2006, the Foundation has packed and shipped more than 60,000 books to Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University and its network of institutes and colleges across the country. To further strengthen the Foundation’s justice sector program, the Books for Asia program has also donated legal education textbooks to the libraries of eight of the country’s top law faculties. And over the past few years, the Books for Asia program has embarked on a partnership with the Eastern Indonesia Knowledge Exchange (Bakti), which utilizes its broad network of academics and researchers to distribute books to universities in Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara.

REJUVENATING PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Asia Foundation believes libraries can play a vital role in developing Indonesia’s human capital. While the government is committed to revitaliz-
ing public libraries, budget restrictions mean that many Indonesian libraries have not been able to add to their collections for years. The Foundation is partnering with the Association of Indonesian Municipalities (Apeksti) to supply books to public libraries in 36 cities across Java, Sumatra, and West Nusa Tenggara. To back up this support, Books for Asia is also collaborating with the Indonesian Library Development Institute (YPPI), which runs a broad range of activities to strengthen and establish public libraries, school libraries, mobile libraries, and community reading spaces. YPPI’s strong ties to the public library system helps Books for Asia donate books targeted to the needs of Indonesian communities. Further, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Books for Asia program is supporting the development of libraries in Community Learning Centers (PKBM) in Jakarta. The program has already provided more than 3,000 books to the centers, which are part of the informal education system and reach some of Indonesia’s neediest children and youth.

**COLLECTIONS ON WHEELS**
In line with support to Community Learning Centers, Books for Asia is partnering with the Wandering Books Foundation (Yayasan Pustaka Kelana), an organization that provides quality Indonesian and English-language books to disadvantaged schools around Jakarta. Books for Asia is supporting the operation of Wandering Books’ mobile library, as well as donating reading materials to the organization’s small rotating collections, which are loaned without charge to schools in the capital. Books for Asia’s contribution also complements Wandering Books Foundation’s English-language volunteer program, providing much-needed teaching materials for its volunteer teachers.

**REACHING EDUCATION OUTPOSTS**

### INDONESIA MENGAJAR

The Asia Foundation has recently begun an exciting new partnership with the *Indonesia Mengajar* (Teach for Indonesia) program, which recruits top young university graduates to work as volunteer teachers in remote underprivileged schools. The Books for Asia program is contributing to the program’s *Indonesia Menyala* (Indonesia Lights Up) library development program, which supplies books directly to schools, or to the volunteers, who act as mobile libraries in the community. Books for Asia has distributed books to more than 100 of the schools reached by the *Indonesia Mengajar* program.

### DOMPET DHUAF

The largest recipient of our primary and secondary school books over recent years has been the Islamic charity organization *Dompet Dhuafa*. In 2011, Books for Asia contributed more than 13,000 books to the organization’s educational assistance program, which focuses on improving the quality of education and teaching in remote and low-income schools. Through its collaboration with *Dompet Dhuafa*, the Foundation is able to capitalize on the organization’s extensive network, reaching schools in the remote corners of the Indonesian archipelago. Books for Asia is also providing mentoring and training support for teachers, maximizing the impact of donated materials.