The Asia Foundation supports Korea’s efforts to expand and deepen international development cooperation and knowledge-sharing within the Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation’s Korea programs also facilitate Northeast Asian regional cooperation, including exchanges with North Korea.

Since 1954, The Asia Foundation’s programs in Korea have responded to a rapidly changing economic and political environment. Korea has undergone a dramatic transition, developing into an advanced economy and robust democracy that is considered a model for others. Ready to share the lessons of its own development experience, Korea has now transformed from aid recipient to donor. The Foundation, with its 17 Asian offices, is uniquely positioned to cooperate with Korea as it expands its development assistance programs. The Foundation partners with Korean non-governmental organizations and the Korean government to expand its official development assistance and to strengthen their development capacity through joint development projects, training, and knowledge exchanges.

The Foundation’s Korea office serves as the hub for regional cooperation initiatives in Northeast Asia, and aims to strengthen Korea’s relations with its Asian neighbors. Building on a long and successful track record, the Foundation works with Korean partners to help meet the challenges and opportunities associated with Korea’s expanding role as a democratic and economic leader throughout the region.

**ENHANCING KOREA’S ROLE AS A GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER**

Since 2010, The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute (KDI) have collaborated to enhance development effectiveness by facilitating mutual learning among emerging development and traditional donors. In anticipation of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan in 2011, the Foundation and KDI established a platform for research seminars among experts in the region to compare strategies in development assistance and evaluate aid effectiveness. As a result, the Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation (AADC) dialogue series was established, convening development cooperation experts from ‘non-traditional’ Asian donor countries and aid recipient countries, as well as selected traditional development partners. Together these experts examined Asian aid approaches, provided critiques on conventional aid architecture, and shared perspectives on emerging Asian donor approaches. A report summarizing their findings, entitled “Emerging Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation,” served as the basis for a widely acclaimed side event at the HLF-4, which the Foundation, KDI, and Vietnam’s
Ministry of Planning and Investment jointly hosted, reaching an audience of some 3,000 international aid and development delegates.

Building on this successful collaboration, the AADC program held in 2012 focused on the theme of “Pro-Poor Growth and Development Cooperation.” The dialogue articulated how development cooperation agencies are rethinking their approaches in the face of widening income disparities, how employment can be expanded, how to evaluate the impact of projects focused on inclusive growth, and how civil society can contribute to the pro-poor agenda. In 2013, KDI and the Foundation are also jointly focusing on green growth by holding research seminars in Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**COOPERATION WITH KOREA’S DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS**

In partnership with the KDI School of Public Policy and Management (KDI School), The Asia Foundation has sponsored training programs to strengthen the capacity of government aid workers, NGO leaders, and post-graduate students of international studies to plan and carry out effective development projects. This includes a fellowship program for Korean development specialists, to introduce them to development issues and strategies in developing countries. An exchange fellowship enables international development specialists to visit Korea to study Korea’s economic development experience, work on projects with local experts and conduct research on development issues. The Foundation also holds an annual public conference in Seoul on development cooperation.

In 2011, the Foundation and KOICA agreed to launch a collaborative three-year project focused on local economic governance in Sri Lanka, to be implemented in four eastern cities that have been hard hit by civil war and natural disasters. The program focuses on rehabilitating infrastructure to encourage economic growth, including improving public facilities for tourists, upgrading a solid waste disposal site, and installing a new parking garage. This cooperation includes Foundation oversight of project implementation, KOICA technical assistance, and provides education programs for Sri Lankan citizens.

**PARTNERING WITH KOREA IN DEVELOPING ASIA**

The Asia Foundation has a strong relationship and cooperates with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the official Korean aid agency, in regional development projects.

**PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION**

The Asia Foundation’s Korea office serves as a regional hub for Northeast Asian regional cooperation. This includes
support for Korea’s efforts to maintain its alliance with the U.S. while facilitating regional cooperation and integration. Toward this end, the Foundation in Korea has organized dialogues to address security challenges and debate solutions.

The Foundation provides for selective engagement with North Korea that includes constructive dialogue between the North and the outside world, and concrete cooperation on projects to expose North Koreans to professional contacts and best practices in the U.S. and Asia region. Over the past 15 years, when diplomatic circumstances have permitted, the Foundation has brought North Korean delegations to the United States and facilitated opportunities for North Koreans to participate in regional exchange activities through educational programs and workshops in the fields of international law and economics, agricultural science, and English teaching.

In South Korea, the Foundation has facilitated access to educational opportunities for young people of North Korean origin. Working with the British Council, the Foundation supported 10 students for enrollment in the Council’s English-language program. The Foundation also administers a program funded by the Coalition for North Korean Women’s Rights designed to help North Korean women in South Korea find employment, and gain vocational, entrepreneurial, and leadership training through three-month classroom and placement sessions.

Since 1996, The Asia Foundation’s Books for Asia program has donated more than 170,000 books and printed materials to North Korean institutions, the national library of North Korea, the Grand People’s Study House, and various university libraries including the South Korea-funded Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies, Kim Chaek University of Science and Technology, and Kim Il Sung University. The majority of the donated books are in the areas of science, technology, medicine, economics, and English, and other topics include art, history, international relations, and law. The major donors include McGraw Hill, Lynne Rienner, and W.W. Norton & Company.

**FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**

The Asia Foundation has historically supported a modest program of fellowships and scholarships for both Americans and Koreans to increase mutual U.S.-Korea understanding.

**Luce Scholars Program:** Since 1976, in partnership with the Henry Luce Foundation, the Korea office has helped place more than 20 young Americans as Luce Scholars at various institutions in Korea. For example, a 2011-12 Luce Scholar was placed at the National Library to help develop their English-language resources, while a 2012-13 Luce Scholar is conducting research on Oriental Medicine at Daejeon University.

**Harvard Nieman Fellowship:** This fellowship, considered one of the most prestigious in Korea, is offered every two years and aims to promote and elevate the standard of journalism in Korea by supporting a promising Korean journalist to attend classes for one year at Harvard University. Since 1963, a total of 26 Korean journalists from the leading newspapers and broadcasting companies have been selected as Nieman Fellows.

**Kahng Foundation Scholarships for North Korean Women:** With generous funding from the Kahng Foundation, The Asia Foundation is providing scholarship opportunities for eight North Korean women living in South Korea to attend Ewha Womans University in Seoul, one of South Korea’s top universities.

**FRIENDS OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION KOREA**

The Friends of The Asia Foundation Korea is a nonprofit organization created in 2004 to support the efforts of The Asia Foundation in Korea. The board of directors is comprised of some of Korea’s most distinguished statesmen and business people, including former Prime Minister Lee Hong-koo, former Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo, and
JoongAng Media Network Chairman Hong Seok-hyun. It offers advisory and financial support, particularly focusing on Korea’s international relations, its role in regional development, and programs that support constructive engagement with North Korea. Over the years, Friends of The Asia Foundation Korea has collaborated with public and private Korean partners to support institutional development, educational exchanges and research and training in support of good governance and development.

Friends of The Asia Foundation Korea have also provided educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in developing Asia. Since 2009, they have provided scholarships for 50 female students annually in the Mekong Delta region, one of Vietnam’s most vulnerable areas for trafficking of women.

JOIN US

The Korea office and programs are supported by international public and private donors. We invite you to join this partnership for supporting peace on the Korean Peninsula, development cooperation in Asia, and strong Korea-U.S. relations. For more information, visit our website (www.asiafoundation.or.kr/) or contact our External Relations & Resource Development Officer by phone at 82-2-732-2044.

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