Program Overview

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our programs address critical issues affecting Asia in the 21st century—governance and law, economic development, women’s empowerment, environment, and regional cooperation. In addition, our Books for Asia and professional exchange programs are among the ways we encourage Asia’s continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.

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. In 2014, we provided more than $108 million in direct program support and distributed textbooks and other educational materials valued at over $11 million.

The Foundation’s staff of 820 international development professionals are experts on the countries in Asia where they live and work. We focus on country, regional, and cross-border issues through our network of offices in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Through the Foundation’s staff, cooperation with local partners, and a long history in the region, we offer distinctive insight on local issues and have successfully implemented thousands of programs that benefit current and future generations.

Here’s a breakdown of our program areas:

**GOVERNANCE AND LAW**

The Asia Foundation’s Governance and Law programs support Asian initiatives to build more effective and responsive governance in areas that can expand liberty and justice, accelerate sustainable economic and social development, and reduce the incidence of violent subnational conflict. We do this through programming in: governance reform (local/municipal governance, counter corruption, central executive institutions, parliamentary development, constitutional development); law and justice (strengthening and reform of formal and informal law and justice mechanisms, supporting efforts to increased community safety and security, particularly through community-oriented policing, and programs aimed specifically at empowering and protecting the rights of marginalized populations); elections and political process (free and fair elections and democratic practice, open flows of information, and political parties); and conflict and governance (subnational conflict, peacebuilding, and civil military relations).

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Asia Foundation has a decades-long history of supporting broad-based economic growth across Asia through public and private channels. The Economic Development programs support Asian
initiatives to enhance economic governance to accelerate and sustain inclusive economic growth and broaden economic opportunities. Our approaches are scalable from the local to the national levels and are strategically mixed to: (a) increase economic opportunities and expand domestic investment and trade—especially for small- and medium-scale businesses; (b) strengthen partnerships among governments, private enterprise, and civil society to promote broad-based growth; and (c) improve the responsiveness of public authorities to the demand for a more inclusive and supportive business environment, including for women and other vulnerable populations.

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT
For more than half a century, The Asia Foundation has been a leader in helping women to realize their potential. Our Women’s Empowerment program develops women’s leadership, increases women’s rights and ensures their personal security, and creates new political and economic opportunities for women across the Asia-Pacific region. Our operating premise is that improving social, economic, and political opportunities for women improves societies as a whole. Mobilizing and empowering women themselves to challenge the multiple causes and consequences of their subordination and discrimination is a powerful strategy to accelerate progress in each country. Through a coordinated approach that integrates gender into our work in governance, economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment, we recognize the integrated nature of the challenges facing women. Consequently, the Foundation’s expertise and experience in these areas inform stand-alone efforts that directly target women and girls while integrating gender across our programs.

ENVIRONMENT
The Asia Foundation's Environment program supports Asian initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the environment and natural resources critical to Asia's development and future well-being. The Foundation works with a broad range of local stakeholders including civil society, government, and the private sector. We initiate high-impact programs to strengthen the institutions and processes through which environmental resources are managed, and to improve environmental policy. Areas where the Foundation is having an impact in Asia include: advancing responsible mining and natural resource management in Mongolia; increasing public participation and transparency in environmental decision-making in China; and preparing for natural disasters and climate change in the Pacific Islands, among others.

REGIONAL COOPERATION
Asia faces a number of non-traditional security challenges at the subnational level which are closely linked to domestic economic and political issues in different countries, but which have important ramifications beyond national borders: from environmental degradation, natural disasters, and trafficking-in-persons to maritime security, ethnic and religious conflict, and failed systems of governance. The Asia Foundation's Regional Cooperation program works to strengthen relations among Asian nations and their peoples in the effort to foster peace, stability, prosperity, and effective governance. We focus on fostering regional cooperation on critical issues in Southeast, Northeast, and South Asia; foreign policy capacity-building in select countries in developing Asia; providing life-changing opportunities for emerging leaders in the region; and facilitating policy dialogues on Asian affairs and U.S.-Asian relations in Washington.

BOOKS FOR ASIA
One of The Asia Foundation’s best-known and most beloved programs, Books for Asia is the leading provider of donated information resources in the region. The program donates one million books to education institutions in 19 developing countries each year and connects students, educators, and local and national leaders with the knowledge they need to thrive. Our book donations and digital projects help enhance English-language skills, sharpen vocational and research skills, build knowledge in the business, legal, and science professions, and infuse children with an early love of reading that is critical to literacy.

EXCHANGES
Through its Asian American Exchange unit, The Asia Foundation seeks to encourage greater understanding between Asians and Americans with the ultimate aim of contributing toward strengthened U.S.-Asia relations. For over six decades, Foundation grants have provided thousands of participants with opportunities to exchange views, professional perspectives, and gain direct experience with regions other than their own through high-quality tailored fellowships, study tours, workshops, and other programs.