

# Philippines

The Asia Foundation's programs in the Philippines promote better governance to support economic growth, strengthen the rule of law, and foster peace and development in Mindanao. Building on its wide network of partners, the Foundation is helping government, local NGOs, and the private sector to strengthen democratic institutions and create sustainable economic growth.



## ECONOMIC REFORM

The Asia Foundation supports Philippine competitiveness in key sectors such as agribusiness, tourism, and manufacturing through better infrastructure and improved access to credit. Foundation programs have boosted the exportability of high-value crops such as cacao, coffee, and seaweed. The Foundation supports tourism and market access for manufacturers through priority infrastructure programs with the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Tourism, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Foundation's successful advocacy of the Visa-Upon-Arrival policy for cruises and the liberalization of flights for ASEAN country carriers is expected to improve the competitiveness of Philippine tourism.

The Foundation also contributed policy assistance to the ASEAN RORO (roll-on roll-off) Network. The first route (Davao–General Santos–Bitung) opened in April 2017. And the Foundation is implementing USAID's Advancing Philippine Competitiveness (COMPETE) program to modernize energy planning and investment and lower power costs.

To promote more inclusive growth, the Foundation promotes secure property rights by supporting the Residential Free Patent Law to formalize nearly 8 million untitled residential properties. Since the law was passed in 2010, more than 342,000 families have received formal titles, boosting the pace of land titling by 1,400 percent. The Foundation supports local land-management councils throughout the country so that local governments can join the national Department of Environment and Natural Resources in promoting this reform. And the Foundation's Technology for Property Rights program facilitates land titling by harnessing technology such as drones.

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

To address the fragmentation of local road and infrastructure planning, the Foundation helped forge a partnership between the Department of Interior and Local Government and the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA) to use standard geospatial data from NAMRIA's Unified Mapping Project as a resource for local government planning.



### PHILIPPINES

The Asia Foundation has been programming in the Philippines since 1954.

The Foundation supports peace in Mindanao, helping communities manage conflict, and acting as a trusted neutral party in the formal peace process.

Books for Asia provides 100,000 books each year to more than 1,500 Philippine schools and libraries.

## BASIC EDUCATION

The Asia Foundation contributed to the success of the Senior High School Program through integration of competency-based technical training into high school and the formation of school-government-industry coalitions. Successful linkage projects in manufacturing and tourism have been adopted and replicated by school divisions around the country.

## DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Fully Abled Nation project (FAN), a partnership with the Australian Embassy, has built a coalition of government, civil society, and private sector groups to address issues relevant to persons with disabilities. FAN helped increase the number of accessible polling places from two in 2013 to 5,000 in the May 2016 elections, and it helped integrate disability sensitivity into the formal training module for some 300,000 Board of Election inspectors. FAN now focuses on developing disability-inclusive education and employment policies.

## COUNTERING CORRUPTION

The Asia Foundation supports the annual Enterprise Survey of Corruption, begun in 2000. The survey is conducted by Social Weather Stations, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry's National Competitiveness Council and the Makati Business Club. The survey is a time series measure of Philippine enterprise managers' experience with corruption, and allows progress against corruption to be tracked.

## LEGAL AND JUSTICE REFORM

To promote judicial efficiency, The Asia Foundation works with the Supreme Court to implement a case-decongestion project in 175 overloaded courts throughout the country. The Foundation is piloting reforms to reduce court delays, such as the continuous trial system for criminal cases and early submission of evidence and face-to-face trial for civil cases. The Foundation also promotes private mediation for business disputes by supporting the training of business mediators by the National Center for Mediation.

The Foundation is working with the Supreme Court to develop a medium- and long-term reform agenda, including: (1) institutionalizing integrity and increasing the credibility of the

bench and the bar; (2) promoting appropriate, speedy, and predictable judicial actions; (3) improving judicial infrastructure and systems; and (4) building the judiciary's human resources capacity.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The Asia Foundation's program in Mindanao continues to support the peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). As a trusted neutral party, the Foundation works to improve the implementation of the peace process and increase its credibility among stakeholders and the greater public. Working with local organizations, the Foundation helps raise public awareness about the peace process; supports convergence of the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); and broadens the constituency for peace among religious leaders, women, businesses, indigenous peoples, and youth. The Foundation also supports security policy reforms, stronger civilian oversight of the military, and improved civil-military engagement.

The Foundation has long worked to mitigate localized conflicts that may affect the peace process, particularly the persistent clan conflicts known as *rido*. The Foundation has published empirical work, and supports partner organizations to mediate between warring parties and arrange settlements. Complementary to this are efforts to improve voter education and strengthen security protocols, especially during elections, which are potential triggers for *rido*.

## BOOKS FOR ASIA

The Asia Foundation's longest-running program provides quality academic books for all levels of education at a rate of approximately 100,000 volumes per year to more than 1,500 schools and libraries. The Foundation collaborates with government, civic organizations, businesses, and other donors, and Books for Asia now partners with the National Library of the Philippines to process, store, and deliver books to all registered public libraries and other recipient organizations.

In the Philippines, The Asia Foundation's programs are also funded by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the UK's Department for International Development, the British Foreign Commonwealth Office, UNICEF, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, and private organizations, companies, and individuals.

*The Asia Foundation  
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lives across a dynamic  
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