

# Korea



Our office in Seoul tackles key development issues in Korea and the region, including inclusive growth, women's empowerment, and climate resilience in partnership with South Korean government agencies, the private sector, and civil society. Our Korea office also facilitates international relations and regional cooperation activities in Northeast Asia.

## Project Highlights

### **Preventing violence against women and supporting social and economic rehabilitation for victims in Mongolia**

TAF provided education and awareness campaigns to prevent violence against women. From 2019 to 2023, more than 8,000 participants in Mongolia received preventive education, and victims received rehabilitation support and vocational training.

### **Northeast Asia Youth Exchange on Environment Challenges**

We gathered young experts from diverse backgrounds in Northeast Asia region for dialogues, knowledge sharing, and collaborative efforts. By fostering mutual cooperation, the program cultivates environmentally conscious leaders to develop innovative solutions to significant environmental challenges in the region.

### **Enhancing collaboration between the Republic of Korea, Australia, and the United States**

TAF organized trilateral dialogues in 2021 and 2023, bringing together 42 specialists from the ROK, Australia, and the United States to build new and deeper ties and explore new opportunities for trilateral cooperation. The summary of the dialogues and recommendations was published for a wider audience.

## 2023 Snapshot



**8,836 participated in the preventive education on violence against women in Mongolia, with a satisfaction rate of 94.4 percent**



**Business support program for 328 women entrepreneurs in Gyeonggi province, Korea**



# Flagship Initiatives



## Vietnam Girls Scholarships

Since 2009, TAF has provided scholarships to girls from low-income families and remote areas in Vietnam's Mekong Delta region through Friends of The Asia Foundation Korea funding. The scholarship helped 388 girls finish their secondary school education, easing their financial burden and providing a supportive atmosphere to persevere and succeed. By investing in these young women, the scholarship helps them prepare for higher education and careers.

## Accelerating Women's Entrepreneurship in Korea

Through comprehensive business support services from 2020 to 2023, women entrepreneurs in Gyeonggi province identified 72 new market channels and raised 358 million KRW connected to 1,032 individual investors. The participants also established a business network and the Personal Initiative Women Entrepreneurs Association to continue strengthening their self-starting and innovative business mindsets for business growth.

## Expanding Economic Opportunities of North Korean Refugee Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship has become the primary means of economic activity among the 33,000 North Korean Refugees in South Korea. However, only 16 percent of refugee entrepreneurs report that their businesses have survived beyond three years. TAF conducted a survey of more than 130 refugee entrepreneurs to identify key challenges. As a result, TAF provided personal initiative training to more than 50 refugee business leaders, helping them develop an entrepreneurial mindset to compete in South Korea's market-based economy. Among the participants, 67 percent reported increases in business performance. TAF also provided market support by offering training on sales channels and market entry strategies, connecting entrepreneurs with buyers and providing individual consulting services.

## Enhancing Inclusiveness in the Korean Society

North Korean refugee students face numerous challenges when studying and settling in South Korea. Many must work to support themselves or pay tuition fees, leaving them with little time to study or establish social connections. TAF's scholarship program, funded by the Kahng Foundation, provides financial support to North Korean refugee students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees, allowing them to achieve better academic performance and participate in social activities.

The Asia Foundation is an international nonprofit organization working to solve the toughest social and economic challenges in Asia and the Pacific. Informed by more than 70 years of experience and deep local knowledge, we work with partners across more than 20 countries through 17 offices to improve lives and expand opportunities.