

# BOOKS FOR ASIA PHILIPPINES



Books for Asia is a program of The Asia Foundation that regularly distributes books and other reading materials for all educational levels in over 15 countries. Since it was first started in September 1954, Books for Asia has distributed more than 41 million books and journals to more than 50,000 academic and non-academic institutions throughout Asia. In the Philippines alone, the Books for Asia Program has distributed over 13 million books and journals to public and private institutions across the country, as a contribution to national development, international understanding, and English-language literacy.

Donations of books (over 95 percent new) for this program are largely made possible through the contributions of American publishers and bookstores. The subject areas of books and journal donations vary from year to year. At present, the Books for Asia Program in the Philippines is largely focused on providing basic texts and supplementary reading materials for elementary and high schools; collections for university law schools and business programs; and resource materials for non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The level of materials ranges from elementary to university levels, with educational and professional references in such varied fields as governance, health, environment, information technology, social science, and international relations.

## BOOKS FOR MINDANAO

Recognizing the great need for educational materials in the conflict-affected southern Philippines, the Books for Asia Program began in 2003, with support from the United States Agency for International Development, to have a special focus in Mindanao. For instance, more than 11,000 brand new books were distributed in the

Province of Sulu to improve access to reading materials. Through the partnership with local government units, Books for Asia contributed to various reading centers to enable the youth to enhance their reading skills. In March 2006, more than 11,500 books and reading materials were turned over to 180 elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, *madaris* and day-care centers, government agencies, and NGOs all across Marawi City. In August 2006, the city government of Zamboanga hosted the distribution of 18,000 books to 500 public schools and academic institutions in Zamboanga City, Isabela City, and the island province of Basilan. As the need for books remains, and requests are on the rise, the Books for Mindanao program expects to increase its distribution over the coming years.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

*Sa Aklat Sisikat (SAS) Foundation* aims to build a “nation of readers” through its SAS Reading Program, which nurtures the Filipino child’s intellectual, ethical, and social development. To complement the SAS Reading Program, The Asia Foundation is providing children’s books to public elementary schools covered by the program. This partnership was created to improve the current condition of the Philippine public school system, which is overburdened and under-resourced. Fourth-grade public school children are the main beneficiaries of this effort since it is at this age that they begin to read comfortably and reading habits are formed. Thus far, 300 elementary schools in Metro Manila, Isabela, Cavite, Batangas, Pampanga, Bicol, and several provinces in Mindanao have received a total of 16,543 books and other supplementary reading materials. The Asia Foundation, through its Books for Asia



## PHILIPPINES

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A donation of Intuit’s QuickbooksPro small business accounting software, with training, has helped more than 1,000 cooperatives across the country.

More than 2,600 books were distributed to all public elementary and secondary schools in Argao, Cebu. The event took place in the remote Barangay of Colawin, birthplace of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr.

*“It was more than 30 years ago when I came to know about the Books for Asia Program. [A] few years later, the library of my own barangay in Colawin, Argao, Cebu became a recipient of the Books for Asia program. I saw at once the invaluable contribution of The Asia Foundation could give in the laying of the strong foundation for a stable Asia under a regime of democracy and the rule of law.”*

**HON. HILARIO G. DAVIDE JR., FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Program, supports the *Metrobank Foundation’s Search for Outstanding Teachers*. The Search for Outstanding Teachers is an expression of the Metrobank Foundation’s commitment to promote a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. The Foundation supports this prestigious award annually by contributing books and reference materials to the schools of the award-winning teachers.

Since the early 1980s, the Foundation has provided more than 11,000 books to the 14 *American Studies Resource Centers* in the Philippines. These centers were established by The Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy in universities in various regions of the Philippines. The purpose is to provide the academic, governmental, and private sector communities with information about the United States.

### **BOOKS FOR REMOTE BARANGAYS IN THE PHILIPPINES**

To keep administrative costs as low as possible, organizations requesting books must either pick them up in Manila or pay for shipment to their home province. Currently, enterprising individual librarians from schools and public libraries around the country visit The Asia Foundation to

select a box of books to carry back at their own expense. Unfortunately, this process often excludes the poorest and most rural libraries and schools in the country, which most need book donations. Through partnerships, The Asia Foundation is better able to reach these remote areas.

Through a strong partnership with Kiwanis International Philippine South District, the project “Kiwanis Book Bank Program” has been successful in reaching out to remote villages of central and southern parts of the country. All active Kiwanis clubs in the Visayas and Mindanao served as a network to identify and select prospective book recipients and pay for the shipping cost of the books to various remote school villages. To date, 50,000 brand new books have been distributed to 1,000 public schools and institutions across the Visayas and Mindanao as part of the club’s continuing book distribution program. With the help of Aboitiz2Go shipping service, which has assisted with the shipment of more than 1,500 boxes of books throughout the country, the Foundation has been able to distribute books at grassroots level and reach out to a myriad of groups and causes.

*The Asia Foundation is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization working to advance mutual interests in the United States and the Asia-Pacific region. It is funded by contributions from corporations, foundations, individuals, and governmental organizations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress. Through its programs, the Foundation builds leadership, improves policies, and strengthens institutions to foster greater openness and shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.*



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