

TAIWAN



Established in 1997, the Asia Foundation in Taiwan operates as a local affiliate of The Asia Foundation

Asia Foundation in Taiwan (AFIT) programming reflects Taiwan's rapid political and economic development. Current AFIT projects aim to support good governance, sustainable economic development, and cross-strait and regional relations.

The Asia Foundation has maintained a presence in Taiwan for more than 50 years, assisting in Taiwan's transformation into a prosperous society. From the start, the Foundation's Taiwan program was shaped by an abiding belief in the ability of Taiwan's citizens to drive the island's social, political, and economic development. From 1954 through the mid-1990s, The Asia Foundation contributed to the institutional strengthening of Taiwan's universities, and assisted economic planning, human rights protection, women's advancement, and election and legislative reform.

In the 1990s, The Asia Foundation recognized the need to further adapt its role to the remarkable changes that had taken root in Taiwan. Building on the Foundation's successful history in Taiwan, former grantees established the Asia Foundation in Taiwan (AFIT) in 1997 as the Foundation's first "joint-venture" in Asia. Together, The Asia Foundation and AFIT represent a true Asian-American partnership in the planning, management, and financial support of AFIT activities.

PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Beginning in the mid-1980s, political liberalization and improved socio-economic conditions encouraged the growth of Taiwan's civil society. AFIT is committed to nurturing a stable and

mature civil society by encouraging greater linkages among local non-profit organizations (NPOs), improving the environment for NPO development, and encouraging the capacity of NPOs to better serve their constituents. In 2005, AFIT joined other local NPOs in establishing the Taiwan NPO Self-Regulation Alliance to help improve NPO accountability standards. Previous projects included sponsoring a draft Foundation Law to improve the legal framework for NPOs and organizing conferences on NPO capacity-building issues. Also in 2005, AFIT and The Asia Foundation collaborated on researching Taiwan's legislative development needs, the results of which are summarized in the working paper, *Taiwan's Legislative Yuan and the Challenge of Putting Democratic Principles into Practice* (available on The Asia Foundation's website, www.asiafoundation.org).

ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AFIT programs are helping to support Taiwan's continued economic development, particularly by promoting increased attention to sustainable development and improvements in technology management. AFIT works to encourage the growth of corporate social responsibility practices among Taiwan's multinational companies, organizing events such as the "Forum on Global Investment and Corporate Social Responsibility" (2005) and "Forum on Corporate Community Involvement" (2004). AFIT was commissioned by Taiwan's Intellectual Property Office to conduct interdisciplinary training on managing intellectual property rights for biotechnology, agricultural technology, and technology transfer. Under the


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Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation framework, AFIT has also drafted best practices guidelines for the Taiwan government covering topics including fostering women's entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprise development, and expanding learning opportunities for youth.

Since 2004, The Asia Foundation and AFIT have administered the Taiwan Environmental Study Tours program, involving technical exchanges between the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency and its U.S. counterpart on topics such as methane utilization and recovery, wastewater treatment, and environmental information management.

ADVANCING CROSS-STRAIT AND REGIONAL RELATIONS

Taiwan is now in a unique position – culturally, economically, and politically – to play a constructive role in supporting peaceful relations and development across the Asia-Pacific region. AFIT organizes a biannual “International Forum on Prospects in Asia,” which brings scholars from Asia and the U.S. to Taiwan to share views on trends shaping relations around the Asia-Pacific region. Focusing primarily on NPO development, agro-economic development, and law and governance, AFIT and The Asia Foundation also seek to contribute to enhancing cross-strait relations by developing a variety of mutually beneficial exchange and cooperative activities. Past exchanges facilitated by AFIT, in cooperation with The Asia Foundation, included a study tour on agro-economic development in western China by experts from Taiwan and a visit to Taiwan by a delegation from the Shanghai Institute of International Studies.

In support of The Asia Foundation's commitment to promoting regional development and cooperation, AFIT is also helping Taiwan use its successful economic and civil society development experiences as examples for shared learning with neighboring Asian countries. AFIT organized an Asia-Pacific non-governmental organization (NGO) conference in October 2003 to help promote the internationalization of NGOs in Taiwan and the exchange of ideas among NGO leaders in the region. Also in 2003, AFIT launched the Southeast Asian Leader's Exchange Network (SEALEN) with an international conference on NGO governance. Follow-up activities included a Southeast Asian civil society leaders' observation visit during Taiwan's 2004 presidential election and the Taiwan-Indonesia Muslim NGO Leader Exchange program in 2005. In 2004 and 2005, AFIT also organized visits to Mongolia by Taiwan experts to provide equipment and efficiency-improving techniques to local poultry farmers.

AFIT and The Asia Foundation now are making preparations to include Taiwan in the Foundation's new Partners in Asian Development (PAD) initiative. PAD will facilitate and provide services for more effective mobilization of financial, in-kind, and human resources from economically advanced Asia, including Taiwan, to support the development of those parts of Asia with greater needs. Through PAD, AFIT and The Asia Foundation will help Taiwan further enhance its contributions to peaceful development across Asia.

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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