

# BULLETIN

NEWS FROM THE ASIA FOUNDATION

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND DR. SAKENA YACOobi HONORED AT LOTUS AWARDS



Earlier this summer in New York City, more than 240 supporters gathered for the second annual Lotus Leadership Awards to honor Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, founder of the Afghan Institute of Learning, and the National Geographic Society (NGS) for

their long-standing commitments to improving the lives of Afghan girls through education. The Lotus Leadership Awards recognize outstanding individuals and organizations that have made major contributions to the well-being of women and their communities in Asia.

Together, over the last decade, The Asia Foundation and the National Geographic Society have made large-scale improvements to girls' schools that have impacted the lives of thousands of Afghan girls, their families, and their communities. The partnership began in 2002 after photographer Steve McCurry rediscovered Sharbat Gula, the "Afghan girl with the haunting green eyes" he photographed for a 1985 cover of *National Geographic*. Gula asked NGS to provide education to girls—something she had been denied. The National Geographic Society turned to The Asia Foundation to partner because of our knowledge and experience. "We value the National Geographic Society as both a partner and a path-breaker," said David D. Arnold, president of The Asia Foundation. "We are proud that our partnership is transforming

*See Lotus Leadership Awards, continued inside...*

## VISIONARY NGO LEADER SIR FAZLE HASAN ABED OF BRAC IS ASIA FOUNDATION FELLOW



The founder and visionary leader of BRAC, the largest development organization in the world, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed recently concluded an illuminating visit to San Francisco and Washington, DC as

The Asia Foundation's Chang-Lin Tien Distinguished Visiting Fellow. The fellowship honors the Foundation's late Board Chair and former Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley and continues his legacy of strengthening U.S.-Asia ties.

Born in Bangladesh in 1936 and educated in Dhaka and Glasgow, Fazle Hasan Abed was a successful senior executive at Shell Oil Company in Chittagong when the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh transformed his life. His departure from the corporate sector was prompted by the urgency of the relief and rehabilitation needs of millions of refugees who had fled to India and were returning to the newly independent Bangladesh. He established BRAC (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), with the mission of improving the living conditions of the rural poor.

Over three decades, due largely to Sir Fazle's leadership, BRAC has become the largest development NGO in the world, operating in 16 nations. BRAC's diverse program portfolio and global outreach now covers income generation, health care, education, agriculture and food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, advocacy and human rights, gender justice and diversity, environment,

*See Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, continued inside...*

## ASIA FOUNDATION AT GOOGLE'S BIG TENT ON OPEN DATA AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



On July 2 in Sendai, Japan, nearly a year and a half after the tragic earthquake and tsunami that devastated the region, The Asia Foundation participated in a Google Big Tent conference to examine using open data in disaster relief and to call attention to natural disaster management across both developed and developing countries. As nations across the globe increasingly embrace innovative information and communications technology tools to help support disaster management, the conference gathered leading experts in technology, emergency assistance, and development to discuss progress and challenges ahead. The forum featured experts from Google, The Asia Foundation, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, ChangeFusion, InSTEDD, NetHope, UNOCHA, and World Vision.

The Asia Foundation has been helping communities strengthen their resilience to natural disasters and the increasing threats from climate change for nearly two decades. Drawing on experiences from our disaster management training programs in the Pacific Islands and China, Michelle L. Chang, co-chair of The Asia Foundation's Technology Working Group, spoke on an expert panel on open data governance at Google's Big Tent.

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## LOTUS LEADERSHIP AWARDS

the future for Afghan girls and fostering the next generation of Afghan leaders," Arnold said. John Fahey, the National Geographic Society's chairman and CEO, accepted the award.

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, founder of the Afghan Institute of Learning, received the Lotus Leadership Award for her critical contributions to the education and health of Afghan women and children. Professor Yacoobi is a world-renowned teacher, leader, and advocate: she launched the first learning centers inside refugee camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan; risked her life to run illegal home schools for girls during the Taliban reign; pioneered student-centered learning and teacher training in Afghanistan; and created first-of-their-kind specialized health clinics for



women, enabling many women and their families to see a doctor for the first time ever.

As part of the awards program, Dr. Isobel Coleman of the Council on Foreign Relations was a featured panelist, alongside Dr. Yacoobi.

Broadcast journalism veteran Lynn Sherr, who has reported on women's issues for 30 years as an *ABC News* correspondent, hosted and moderated.

The Lotus Leadership Awards were launched, conceived, and organized by The Asia Foundation's Lotus Circle Advisors, including 2012 Luncheon Chair Ida Liu and 2012 Vice Chairs Carol Rattray, Missie Rennie, Masako Shinn, and Gina Lin Chu.

Photos: Whitney Legge

(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

## SIR FAZLE HASAN ABED

and climate change. For his outstanding efforts to reduce poverty in Bangladesh and globally, Fazle Hasan Abed was knighted in 2010 and has received numerous awards and accolades from world leaders and organizations across the globe.

As The Asia Foundation's Chang-Lin Tien Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Sir Fazle shared his international expertise on poverty alleviation and the role of social innovation in developing economies with speaking engagements arranged by The Asia Foundation at UC Berkeley, the World Affairs Council, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and Stan-

ford University in California. He then traveled to Washington, DC, where he met with senior officials in the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, followed by a roundtable luncheon co-hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and culminating in a public presentation co-hosted with InterAction, "40 Years of Combating Poverty, Illiteracy, Disease and Social Injustice." *In Asia*, The Asia Foundation's well-respected blog, conducted an exclusive face-to-face Q&A with Sir Fazle, which you can read online at [asiafoundation.org](http://asiafoundation.org).

Photo: Whitney Legge

# RENOWNED PHILANTHROPIST DR. CHONG-MOON LEE LAUNCHES NEW PROJECTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



A new \$100,000 grant from Asia Foundation trustee emeritus and noted philanthropist Dr. Chong-Moon Lee, chairman and chief executive officer at AmBex Venture Group, will support two one-year pilot projects to combat human trafficking in Cambodia and Laos. This support comes at a critical time for these two countries, whose populations of women and youth are increasingly at risk for trafficking and exploitation. Through Dr. Lee's generosity, the Foundation and our

network of local government ministries and local NGOs will implement public awareness campaigns to educate women and girls about trafficking.

“I am a firm believer that public awareness along with access to education and economic opportunities for young minds will address the root causes of human trafficking, an increasingly serious issue today,”

said Dr. Chong-Moon Lee. “I am certain that The Asia Foundation, through its deep local presence on the ground and innovative outreach programs, will alter the lives of many young citizens.”

The one-year Cambodia project will bring together The Asia Foundation's technical expertise on safe migration and trafficking with the established network and youth club infrastructure of local NGO partner, The Youth Council of Cambodia. The program will disseminate vital information to individuals and communities vulnerable to trafficking. The 18-month program in Laos will feature a two-pronged prevention strategy: implement a public awareness campaign to educate women and girls about trafficking and provide vocational training scholarships to victims and women and girls who are at risk of trafficking.

In October the California-Asia Business Council will honor both The Asia Foundation and Dr. Chong-Moon Lee in San Francisco at the Four Seasons with the distinguished Silk Road Award for long-term contributions to California-Asia relations.

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## LUCE SCHOLARS REPORT FOR ASSIGNMENTS IN ASIA



Since the Luce Scholars program—the signature program of the Henry Luce Foundation—was launched in 1974, The Asia Foundation has administered this major effort to provide an awareness of Asia among future leaders in American society. The Luce Scholars Program remains unique among American-Asian exchanges in that it is intended for young leaders who have had limited experience of Asia and who might not otherwise have an opportunity in the

course of their careers to come to know Asia. The heart of the year-long program continues to lie in the organizational placements arranged by The Asia Foundation for each Scholar on the basis of their individual career interests and experience, and our advising and assisting them throughout the year. The range of organizations that have hosted Luce Scholars over the years reflects the extraordinary dynamism and rich diversity of Asia, the broad reach and depth of The Asia Foundation network, and the unique scope of talents and interests of the Scholars themselves.

Since 1974, over 600 Luce Scholars have completed their year-long fellowships, and have gone on to demonstrate extraordinary leadership in their personal and professional careers. This year's 18 Luce Scholars, the 39th class, are spending their year working on assignments in Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Meet the Scholars online:

[asiafoundation.org/program/overview/luce-scholars-program](http://asiafoundation.org/program/overview/luce-scholars-program).

Photo: Whitney Legge

## BRIEFLY NOTED

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN MONGOLIA

Our trustees traveled to Ulaanbaatar and outside the capital city to see Asia Foundation Mongolia programs, including a water quality monitoring project on the Tuul River in Terelj National Park. Photo: Tenzing Paljor



## MULTIMEDIA ONLINE AT ASIAFOUNDATION.ORG

### Storytime Campaign Reaches 2 Million Children Across Asia



In the lead-up to International Literacy Day on September 8, The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia program launched *Storytime in Asia*, a month-long campaign that celebrated the transformative power of children's books by providing critically needed reading material to some of the world's poorest students. The campaign brought together four world-class children's book publishers – Scholastic; Penguin Young Readers Group; Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; and ABRAMS. Visit our Facebook page and website at [asiafoundation.org/media](http://asiafoundation.org/media) for enlightening multimedia highlighting

the many children and schools reached through the campaign. Photo: Mario Ignacio

### Batticaloa: Rebuilding in Sri Lanka Takes Shape



The Asia Foundation has played a key role in Sri Lanka's post-war recovery by focusing efforts in some of the hardest hit areas of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Since the war in the East ended before the war in the North, Eastern towns like Batticaloa have had a head start toward recovery and can begin to show what's to come for Sri Lanka's recovery as a whole. Asia Foundation President David D. Arnold recently traveled to Batticaloa to see how our programs converge to contribute to this town's critical post-war recovery, fostering growth and stability as part of the Foundation's multi-pronged

strategy across Sri Lanka. Through our strategically and carefully implemented programs there, Batticaloa is moving beyond recovery and rebuilding, toward lasting peace and economic resurgence. Watch the slideshow at [asiafoundation.org/media](http://asiafoundation.org/media). Photo: Karl Grobl

### The Asia Foundation in China



China's economic transformation presents challenges for the country's rapidly changing society and for the government, which has undertaken reforms to promote the rule of law, curb pollution, and encourage more broad-based development. The Asia Foundation in China works on legal development, governance, women's empowerment, disaster management, environmental protection, and international relations. Watch a new video on our work in China at [asiafoundation.org/media](http://asiafoundation.org/media). Photo: Matthew Pendergast



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## ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION SUPPORTS POST-FLOOD RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE IN THAILAND



The Asia Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation recently launched a new initiative to enhance community, private sector, and local government engagement in Thailand’s flood rehabilitation and recovery program. In 2011, Thailand faced its worst flooding in half a century. There were over 800 deaths, 13.6 million people were affected, and economic losses exceeded \$45 billion USD. This new project will improve coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders and help to inform future national policies, plans, and protocols on water management and natural disasters.

Climate change projections suggest that natural disasters of this kind will occur more frequently in Thailand in the years ahead. Therefore, the project is designed to influence broader and longer-term environmental governance in Thailand. It will include three core activities: a

political economy analysis and mapping of the program environment and institutional landscape; multi-stakeholder coordination; and communications and outreach to raise public awareness of key issues. The project will place particular emphasis on the interests and voice of citizens and communities that have historically been excluded from policy planning and implementation in Thailand.

The partnership highlights a historically close relationship between The Rockefeller Foundation and The Asia Foundation dating back to the 1990s. For two decades, the two organizations have worked together to build the Asian philanthropic sector, document innovations in the allocation of health services, and alleviate the impact of economic recession on vulnerable populations in Southeast Asia.

Photo: Arpaporn Winijkulchai



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**The Asia Foundation**

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports Asian initiatives to improve governance and law, economic development, women's empowerment, the environment, and regional cooperation. Drawing on nearly 60 years of experience in Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research.

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