

# KOREA



*The Asia Foundation cooperates with Korean partners to address challenges arising from Korea's rapid rise as a prosperous democratic society in the context of a divided nation, and to support Korea's aim of becoming a model and a leader in the Asia-Pacific region.*

The Asia Foundation has had a continuous presence in the Republic of Korea since 1954. The Foundation's programs have kept pace with changes in Korea over the decades, as Korea has undergone rapid economic development and democratization. Early programs helped strengthen institutions of governance, supported research and training programs, and encouraged the expansion of the role of women in public life. Today, The Asia Foundation seeks to partner with Korean organizations in meeting the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities arising from Korea's emergence as an important economic and diplomatic actor in the Asia-Pacific region. Current programs focus on Korea's relations with the United States and its Asian neighbors, Korea's expanding role as an aid donor for the less developed countries of Asia, and promoting peaceful resolution of tensions arising from the division of the Korean peninsula. The Foundation partners with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic and research institutions, and government agencies in developing strategies and programs to address these issues.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Asia Foundation's programs promote U.S.-Asia relations and relations among Asian countries. The Foundation's long history and network of offices in Asia provide it with extraordinary access to current and emerging leaders, and a unique perspective on developments and dynamics within the region. In Korea, Foundation programs aim to foster a mature Korea-U.S. relationship based on equity and mutual respect, and support Korea's role in resolving regional tensions and

constructing a viable Asia-Pacific community. To this end, the Foundation conducts research and facilitates dialogue on the complex foreign policy issues facing Korea, neighboring countries, and the United States.

In 2006, the Foundation hosted forums, symposiums, and workshops to examine Korea's relations with the U.S. and other Asian nations. In January, the Foundation organized a forum on "Building an East Asian Community: Roles of America and Korea," with the participation of former Korean and U.S. ambassadors and other analysts. In cooperation with the East-West Center, the Foundation arranged a wide-ranging and animated dialogue in May between Korea and U.S. journalists regarding coverage of Korea-U.S. relations and other pending issues. In July, the Foundation co-organized a workshop in Washington D.C. with the Korea Development Institute School for 25 senior Korean officials from various branches of the government to exchange views on security and trade issues with their U.S. counterparts. The Foundation's Korea Office has also convened forums and dialogues on a wide variety of themes regarding Korea's relationship with countries including China, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

## FACILITATING KOREA'S SUPPORTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

The Asia Foundation encourages and strengthens Korea's role as a resource for accelerating the development and growth of the less-developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Through the Foundation's new Partners in Asian Development



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The Asia Foundation has had a continuous program in Korea since 1954.

Since the 1970s, the Foundation has supported the emergence and strengthening of the Korean movement for empowerment of women.

The Foundation has convened public forums on crucial policy issues affecting the changing Korea-U.S. relationship.

The Foundation has sent more than 100,000 books to North Korean libraries and institutions since 1996.

The Foundation has launched a Partners in Asian Development initiative to support Korea's role as an aid donor country.

initiative, and its 18 offices in the region, the Foundation supports efforts of the Korean government and development NGOs to increase the quality and impact of their development assistance programs, including the facilitation of collaboration between local and international non-governmental development organizations in the region. At the same time, the Foundation seeks partnerships with Korean corporations operating in less-developed Asian countries by offering models and channels to develop effective community relations programs beneficial to the local people. In 2006, the Foundation's Indonesia and Afghanistan representatives gave presentations on the challenges of implementing effective development programs in Islamic societies, and the Foundation's Vietnam representative offered expert comments on Vietnam's economy and trade relations. The Foundation's Korea Office also arranged for a staff member of a Korean NGO to work as an intern in the Foundation's Indonesia Office to acquire a better understanding of the development context and strategies in a Muslim country.

### **FOSTERING PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

The Asia Foundation seeks to reduce tensions and expand cooperation on the Korean peninsula, helping to lay the basis for eventual Korean unification. Through a targeted program, the Foundation seeks to improve North Korea's institutional and human capacity for implementing changes that will eventually help improve the welfare of its people and encourage economic reform and opening. Through the Books for Asia program, the Foundation has provided more than 100,000 English-language volumes on a broad range of topics to the leading university libraries in North Korea. In addition, the Foundation has organized technical training and exchanges in

international law and economics, agricultural science, and English teaching. The Foundation also organizes conferences where experts from various sectors and countries discuss the challenges posed by engagement with North Korea and new strategies to enhance peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and beyond. In June 2006, the Foundation convened a forum of specialists from Korea and abroad to compare and discuss their experiences with training and exchanges in North Korea.

### **COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The Asia Foundation recognizes human trafficking to be a cross-border issue that requires an international solution. The Foundation encourages Koreans to share their experiences and work with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to design collective actions to disrupt the complex networks and systems of trafficking in Asia. In July 2005, the Foundation co-hosted an international conference on "Migrant Workers, Human Rights and the Media: Comparisons across Asia," where participants from China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Korea examined the relationship between public attitudes, government policies, and media coverage on Southeast Asian migrant workers in Northeast Asia. In September 2005, the Foundation supported a symposium organized by the Korea Women's Associations United to evaluate Korea's anti-sex trafficking law and to provide wider comparative analysis from Australia, Japan, the Philippines and Sweden. The Foundation also co-organized a regional symposium with the Joint Committee for Migration and the Asia Migration Forum where representatives from 13 Asian countries discussed the issue of the feminization of migration and the growing problem of migrant women being trafficked in Asia.

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