



Message for books turn-over Mindanao Land Foundation

Mr. Efren N. Balajadia, Director, Books for Asia Program of The Asia Foundation

It is unfortunate that I was not able to physically attend this important gathering. But it is a great pleasure for us, The Asia Foundation, to be part of this momentous event of promoting education and literacy lead by the energetic officials of Mindanao Land Foundation. With the presence of our many constituents, I am delighted that through our partnership we were able to bring the Books for Asia Program in various remote places in Mindanao. Mabuhay po kayong lahat!

As some of you may already know, The Asia Foundation is an international, non-government organization that works with partners and communities towards a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation works with various institutions to support programs that help improve governance and law, economic reform and development, women's participation, and international relations. With a network of 18 offices throughout Asia from Japan to Afghanistan, the Foundation addresses these issues on both a country and regional level.

Realizing the great need for educational resources in the country, our Books for Asia Program aims to strengthen the learning and reading skills of our younger generation and future leaders of the country. In the Philippines, the Books for Asia Program has distributed over 13 million books to public and private institutions across the country, as a contribution to national development, international understanding, and English language literacy.

We are grateful to the American publishers who donate these books to The Asia Foundation and contributing these brand new books to the people of the Philippines. Today, The Asia Foundation through Books for Asia will continue this worthwhile campaign for literacy hand in hand with Mindanao Land Foundation. Likewise, we would like also to thank United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their generous support in our endeavors in Mindanao especially in shipping. In this way we can reach out to community groups and improve educational opportunities for our young people in Mindanao and the country as a whole.

All Filipino students should benefit from Books for Asia. For fifty years we have taken one region at a time, one province at a time, one school at a time, and one child at a time to reach hundreds of communities. With the help of our local leaders and private partners, we will bring the program to the remotest places in the country.

The Asia Foundation is proud to join you in the undertaking of making education and literacy a reality for all the people of this great nation. And with your support, we can promote literacy and we can help our dear children go from a life of hardships to a life of opportunity. We hope that as we continue to send volumes of books to various partners—we will be able to open the hearts of our children to build a competent, healthy and a thoughtful society. And we'll make the world more peaceful and hopeful place for every child.

Thank you very much.