

An Organization for Asia 1954 - 1985

Agricultural Development Council

The Agricultural Development Council, established by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in 1954, addressed food and population issues in Asia by increasing capacity within each country through education. During its 30-year history the A/D/C supported advanced degree studies of 588 men and women from 16 Asian countries. In addition to providing degree scholarships the A/D/C strengthened university departments, sponsored conferences and supported research initiatives.



A Vision for Asia's Future

John D. Rockefeller 3rd became interested in Asia during his travels following college in 1926. After World War II he became concerned about the growing population and decreasing food supply. This dilemma was not new in the 1950s, but it was not then recognized as the crucial issue it later became.

Through his relationship with Dr. William Myers, a fellow Rockefeller Foundation Trustee, Rockefeller came to believe that the social sciences were key to solving food and population crisis. He created a new organization to address human and economic problems on the farm. The Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs, later renamed the Agricultural Development Council (A/D/C), was incorporated in 1953.

Unique Approaches Set A/D/C Apart, Contributing to Its Success and Impact

The A/D/C was not the only organization of its kind. A number of groups offered fellowships for study abroad, particularly in the U.S., to promising agricultural economics graduate students. Among those at the time were the Rockefeller, Ford and Asia Foundations as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development. But the approach that made the A/D/C unique also made it highly successful.

A Network of Associates

A/D/C associates, U.S. professors that agreed to live in Asia and work at local universities, were responsible for identifying fellows, conducting in-country academic research, strengthening the institutions that hosted them, and maintaining contact with professionals in the rural social sciences throughout their regions. As a result, associates gained a deep understanding of the context and needs within each country. They were free to pursue an agenda that would have the greatest impact without having to follow a predetermined program structure.

Focusing on Individuals

The A/D/C focused on supporting individuals rather than institutions, an unusual practice at the time. Associates took the initial step of identifying fellowship candidates who possessed a deep commitment to helping others and a resolve to advancing their countries. The A/D/C wanted to find graduate students who would return home to share their skills. A fellowship committee met twice a year to review applicants.

Providing Professional Advancement Opportunities

Graduate fellowships were only one of the ways the A/D/C fostered development. It funded conferences for fellows and researchers in Asia, and in 1966, began sponsoring an A/D/C conference just before the annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association. In 1967, regional meetings were held to benefit researchers who lacked the resources to travel outside the region. The first regional meeting held in India attracted 17 former fellows.

Promoting South-South Collaboration

The Asian Fellowship Program, established in 1971, awarded master's-level candidates graduate assistantships at Asian universities in countries other than their own. The Program built relationships across the region, promoting collaboration on shared problems and information exchange among researchers, academics and development practitioners that continues today. As academic and research programs evolved, the A/D/C responded. An Inter-regional Program was developed to support collaborative research, publications and professional meetings from headquarters established at Kasetsart University in Bangkok.

A/D/C Growth and Expansion Reaches More People

In the late 1970s, the A/D/C reached its peak, receiving significant funding from the Ford Foundation, the Canadian International Development Resource Centre (IDRC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support expansion. Fellowships were awarded in new areas of study including rural sociology, social anthropology and business administration. Programs were expanded to Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. In 1979, the A/D/C launched a program in China and shifted its focus to target the basic needs of poorer Asian countries - irrigation and water management, renewable resource management, and rural labor and employment. Soon support for the advancement of Nepalese scholars dominated the A/D/Cs efforts. But expansion became difficult to support.

In 1983, the A/D/C's Trustees sought to merge with two other Rockefeller family-founded organizations - the International Agricultural Development Service and the Winrock International Livestock Research and Training Center. The merger was completed in 1985, forming the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, a nonprofit headquartered in Arkansas.

Continuing the Tradition

Winrock International's programs and projects furthered the work initiated by its predecessor organizations and expanded to encompass other disciplines that are key to breaking the cycle of poverty. In 2003 Winrock International's Board of Directors approved special funding to renew activities of a similar nature to those of the A/D/C. The John D. Rockefeller 3rd Scholars Program was established to support multi-country applied research on critical development challenges in Asia. It builds on the vision of John D. Rockefeller 3rd by strengthening cross-borders collaboration throughout the region. Learn more about the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Scholars Program and its new initiatives at www.winrock.org.

A/D/C Fellows 1953 - 1985

Philippines	99
Nepal	66
Thailand	60
Indonesia	57
Japan	49
Bangladesh	45
Malaysia	43
India	42
Taiwan	33
Pakistan	29
South Korea	28
Sri Lanka	20
People's Republic of China	8
Burma	2
Singapore	2
Vietnam	1



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