Asia New Zealand Foundation
Te Whītau Tūhono

Year in Review
2019/2020

Asia New Zealand Foundation Te Whītau Tūhono

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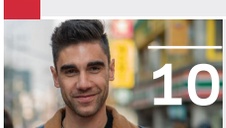

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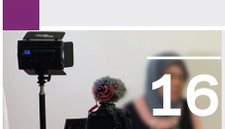

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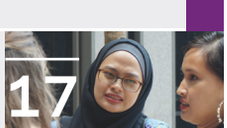

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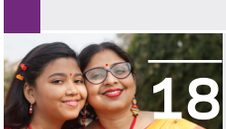

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About the Asia New Zealand Foundation Te Whītau Tūhono

What we do

We equip New Zealanders to be confident and engaged with Asia by enabling deeper connections, awareness and knowledge.

Why we do it

New Zealand's present and future, economically, culturally and socially, are firmly tied to Asia. This reality presents New Zealand with a range of positive opportunities – we need to be deliberate and thoughtful in our approach to them.

How we do it

We provide experiences and resources to help New Zealanders build their knowledge, skills, connections and confidence to thrive in Asia. This is achieved through a range of diverse programmes: arts, business, education, entrepreneurship, leadership, media, research, sports, and informal diplomacy (Track II).

Our goals

Deepening connections

We want New Zealand's relationships with Asia to have the breadth and depth we share with Australia, Europe and the Americas.

Growing awareness and knowledge

We want New Zealanders to be knowledgeable of Asia. It's also important we are recognised as a key part of the ecosystem on Asia and New Zealand's relationships, both within New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.

Growing confidence

We aim to be a key enabler of New Zealanders gaining confidence in their interactions with Asia. Success is seeing New Zealanders become more knowledgeable, attuned to and understanding of Asia and with connections and networks in the region.

Organisational performance

We stay relevant to our stakeholders and adapt as their needs change.

Chairman's report

Despite COVID-19 making the past year one of the more challenging ones in the Asia New Zealand Foundation's history, it has also been one of significant developments and milestones.

In October 2019 the Foundation celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a "25 to Watch" event at Parliament, highlighting 25 young people committed to strengthening ties between New Zealand and Asia. This capped off a range of activities that not only reflected on New Zealand's engagement with Asia over 25 years but also looked to the future.

In January, the Foundation strengthened its reach in the South Island with the opening of a Christchurch presence, and the appointment of Alistair Crozier as South Island Establishment Manager.

2019-20 saw two of our programmes reviewed externally, with positive findings. The findings of an independent review of the Asia Media Centre, established by the Foundation in 2017, resulted in the Board agreeing to fund the centre on an ongoing basis following its initial two-year trial. The Asia Media Centre builds on the Foundation's long investment in supporting New Zealand media to cover Asia, and we see this work as more important than ever in 2020.

An independent evaluation of the Young Business Leaders Initiative (YBLI), managed by the Foundation for New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), found the programme was helping to forge enduring two-way trade and business relationships between young business leaders and business communities from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and New Zealand. The review called the programme "careful, casual and curated" and recommended that MFAT continue to invest in the programme in the coming years.

Before the travel restrictions created by COVID-19, we were delighted to be able to connect with several of our Asia Honorary Advisers, both here in New Zealand and during visits to Asia. In 2020, we have been honoured to welcome businessman Amane Nakashima, President of Nakashimato Co and Chairman of Kewpie Corp, as a new Honorary Adviser in Japan. Since the early 2000s, Mr Nakashima has provided annual funding, administered by the Foundation, for initiatives that support New Zealand students to learn about Japan.

We know Asia will be vital to New Zealand's social and economic recovery from COVID-19. The Foundation's established connections in Asia are of particular importance for maintaining engagement with the region in these challenging times, and for growing New Zealanders' knowledge of the region.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my fellow trustees Simon Murdoch (deputy chairman), Danny Chan, Lyn Lim, Raf Manji, Simon Watt, Chris Seed (ex-officio) and to formally welcome Hon Dame Fran Wilde, who was appointed to the board following former deputy chairman Hon Steve Maharey's term.

I give sincere thanks to my fellow board members, the Foundation's Honorary Advisers, our staff, and our friends and partners in both Asia and New Zealand for all their support over the past year.

Hon John Luxton CNZM QSO
Chairman

Executive Director's report

It's strange to look back on the Foundation's achievements over 2019/2020. Simply put, it was a year of two halves.

In the first half of the year, we were able to support thousands of New Zealanders to learn more about Asian peoples and cultures and build connections.

We sent arts professionals to Asia to broaden their creative understandings; provided talented New Zealand graduates with experiences at some of Asia's most exciting companies; and supported members of our Leadership Network to grow their knowledge of Asia through a range of activities, including hui in China.

We supported hundreds of sportspeople to experience some of Japan's culture and traditions. We took New Zealand entrepreneurs to Vietnam and hosted ASEAN entrepreneurs in New Zealand to learn from their counterparts and build connections to last well beyond the journey home.

We extended our outreach into New Zealand's regions by getting out to schools across the country and supporting a wide range of cultural festivals and conferences to include Asian voices and elements.

To support New Zealand's public conversations on Asia, we published three major research reports, held a series of dynamic Track II dialogues and roundtables, and published numerous articles on our own platforms or in the media.

Providing real-life, on-the-ground experiences for New Zealanders has been a key focus of our work for many years, but this experiential focus took a real hit in 2020. Like communities, organisations and businesses around the world, our work has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between January and end of March 2020, we had to take a one-day-at-a-time approach. We kept a close eye on the outbreak in Asia and here in New Zealand and kept in regular contact with our partners and advisers.

The result was a raft of cancellations and postponements – some made by the Foundation, some by other people and organisations – which needed to happen to ensure the health and wellbeing of those involved. Many of our partner agencies and recipients of our funding have also had planned activity disrupted; and we have worked with them to find new ways to deliver their objectives where possible.

Like many other New Zealand organisations, in recent months we have focused on adjusting our work programmes for this significantly changed world. Our ability to travel to Asia, to support others to travel and to host guests here has been constrained — but we know there is plenty we can do to grow New Zealanders' knowledge, connections and confidence of Asia right here in Aotearoa.

Simon J Draper
Executive Director

Celebrating 25 years — and looking to the future

The "25 to Watch" with executive director Simon Draper, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rt Hon Winston Peters and Foundation chairman Hon John Luxton in 2019.

The Asia New Zealand Foundation's 25th Anniversary year culminated in the 25 to Watch event, celebrating the leaders of tomorrow who will grow and develop New Zealand's relationship with Asia.

The Foundation organised the 25 to Watch as a way of highlighting 25 young people who represent the future of Asia-New Zealand relations.

The 25 come from all walks of life — entrepreneurs, public service employees, enterprising high school students, dancers, artists, sportspeople and politically minded academics.

They were formally acknowledged by the Foundation and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rt Hon Winston Peters at a ceremony on October 17 at Parliament.

The Foundation chose to recognise young people aged 16 to 25 because they hold the key to New Zealand's future relationship with Asia.

Executive Director Simon Draper described the group as high achievers who were already demonstrating maturity beyond their years, and an ability to inspire and engage others.

"In the last 25 years we have seen many inspirational leaders who helped strengthen New Zealand's relations with Asia. And as we look ahead, we want to develop the next generation of leaders."

In his speech, Rt Hon Winston Peters recognised the Foundation as "New Zealand's leading non-partisan, non-profit authority on Asia", noting the "cumulative investment in our young people has been a theme of the Foundation's activities over the years."

The Foundation has continued to engage with the 25 to Watch, who have received leadership development guidance as part of their recognition, including a mentor. Many joined the Foundation's Leadership Network in its 2020 intake.

Other 25th Anniversary activities included an "Asia in my Life" photography competition, attracting entries from across Aotearoa on a diverse range of themes. The Foundation also ran two series of 25 stories on its digital channels showcasing the impact of its work since 1994 — "25 Grantees" and "25 Moments" in the Foundation's history.

COVID-19: Our response

Face-to-face connections are valuable for growing New Zealanders' knowledge, confidence and understanding about Asia – but the COVID-19 pandemic has put a brake on our ability to connect in this way.

In the first weeks of COVID-19, the Foundation's focus was on meeting the immediate needs of our programme participants and ensuring their health and safety. Before travel restrictions were put in place, we brought home all interns who were in Asia. Although COVID-19 meant they had to curtail their time in the region, we were encouraged to hear about the value they gained through their experiences – newfound understanding, knowledge, confidence and friendship.

During New Zealand's "lockdown" at COVID alert levels 3 and 4, our staff (working from home) began planning new ways to support Aotearoa's ongoing engagement with Asia. Our focus was on maintaining established connections to partner organisations in Asia and here in New Zealand, and on finding new ways to deliver Asia knowledge online.

Our education team worked quickly to produce new distance learning resources for schools, and to organise Asian cultural workshops that could be delivered remotely. This had some unexpected advantages in breaking down geographic barriers, enabling students in regional New Zealand to interact with Asian cultural practitioners in cities.

Throughout this period, the Foundation has played an especially important role in communicating developments in Asia to New Zealanders. This has been done both through the work of the Asia Media Centre and through commentary pieces by Asia New Zealand Foundation staff, including fortnightly columns for Stuff and its newspapers. We have also organised or contributed to several webinars on recent developments in Asia.

To help inform New Zealand's understanding of business developments in Asia – and the country's response to COVID-19 – the Foundation conducted a survey of our offshore business stakeholders in April. The results provided a real-time and real-life snapshot of how businesses were being impacted in Asian economies. Respondents overwhelmingly predicted permanent changes to their business models.

In June, we successfully adapted a planned in-person launch of our research into Auckland's Indian and Chinese business ecosystems into an online panel discussion and webinar.

We also commissioned a mini poll on New Zealanders' views of Asia post-COVID and incorporated this into our wider Perceptions of Asia report. This mini-poll told us recognition of the importance of New Zealand developing political, economic and social ties to Asia had actually grown after the onset of COVID-19.

Growing New Zealanders' knowledge and understanding of Asia — and building strong connections to the region — remains as crucial as ever. Our Perceptions of Asia research tells us New Zealanders have a wide range of Asia-related interests, which the Foundation can build on even as New Zealanders are unable to travel to the region.

Actors Sanaya Doctor, Shaan Kesha and Mayen Mehta performing *My Heart Goes Thadak Thadak* (Silo Theatre, 2019). Photo: Andi Crown Photography

Programme Highlights

Arts

The arts programme brings Asian arts into mainstream New Zealand culture by supporting events accessible to all New Zealanders and enabling creatives in diverse disciplines to grow their practice and connections in Asia.

My Heart Goes Thadak Thadak an insight into Indian culture

We supported the unique theatre show *My Heart Goes Thadak Thadak* at the Silo Theatre in its premiere season in 2019 through an arts project fund. The show moved beyond traditional portrayals of South Asian cultures, instead exploring the spaghetti Westerns genre in Bollywood.

The show was a major new commission by Sri Lankan New Zealand artist Ahi Karunaharan: "My inspiration for the work came from my childhood obsession with Indian cinema and spaghetti westerns and wondering what a collision between the two would look like."

My Heart Goes Thadak Thadak had an entirely South Asian cast of actors and musicians and engaged many of Auckland's extensive South Asian and community dance troupes.

"Being able to immerse myself in the art and craft of Taiwan invigorated me to continue my work in Aotearoa."
Curator Sarah McClintock

Milky Mountain deepens connections

Our strategic partnership fund created the opportunity to support the deepening of connections between New Plymouth and sister city Mishima, Japan.

Artist Yuichiro Tamura from Japan returned to New Plymouth to exhibit works of art inspired by being the 2018 Govett-Brewster Art Gallery international artist in residence.

The exhibition was called *Milky Mountain* / 裏返りの山 and explored connections between Japan and Aotearoa, including the filming of *The Last Samurai* in New Plymouth and Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, who took the pen name from New Plymouth's sister city Mishima.

The exhibition period was four months long between August to November 2019 at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.

Curator Sarah McClintock explores ideas in Taiwan

In November 2019, we supported curator Sarah McClintock from the Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatū in Nelson to travel to Taiwan.

She spent ten days in Taiwan, meeting contacts and exploring jewellery and ceramics in galleries and museums, with the intention of curating a New Zealand-based gallery exhibition in 2021-22.

While in Taiwan, McClintock had the opportunity to visit many art centres, galleries and museums, including Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei, the Yingge Ceramics Museum, the Hong-Gah Museum and Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

Business

Our business internships at top companies in Asia support New Zealand students, graduates and professionals to build their Asia capability. Our business programme also upskills those already working in the sector to better engage with what Asia has to offer.

Internships help students thrive in Asia

We provided 18 internships in Asia over the year. The students interned in cities across Asia, including Taipei, Mumbai, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta and Tokyo in organisations such as Thailand space agency GISTDA, KPMG, Tata Consultancy Services and the Taipei City Government.

We also introduced an initiative for mid-career film producers to get a professional development opportunity in Asia. Benjamin Brooking travelled to South Korea to work at CJ CheilJedang (within CJ Culture Foundation and CJ Entertainment departments) and Jenny Gao worked at Beach House Pictures in Singapore.

Injecting Asian perspectives into business conferences

Our South Korean Honorary Adviser Heekyung (Jo) Min visited New Zealand in late 2019. Min is executive vice-president and head of corporate social responsibility at CJ CheilJedang, a large Korean lifestyle conglomerate.

We brought her to New Zealand to speak at the annual conference of the Institute of Finance Professionals New Zealand (IFINZ) where she addressed an audience on how businesses can contribute to social and environmental goals while also increasing profitability.

Benjamin Brooking on the streets of Seoul.

Min's visit was part of our work supporting high calibre thought leaders from Asia to speak at New Zealand conferences, deepening understanding of business and economic trends in Asia.

Auckland's Business Ecosystems – the Indian and Chinese experience

In June, we held an online webinar with a panel of four business leaders discussing our recently commissioned research into the two largest Asian business communities in Auckland: the Chinese and Indian business communities.

The research was presented by prominent Auckland businessman and business advisor Kenneth Leong and the panel was moderated by our director business Felicity Roxburgh.

The panel included Foundation Trustee Danny Chan; Chair of the India New Zealand Business Council Sameer Handa; Chief Executive of the Employers and Manufacturers Association Brett O'Riley; and Director of the Auckland office of MFAT, Caroline Bilkey.

"What I'll take away from this experience is an incredible insight into how CJ operates as the biggest player in South Korean cinema… and an appetite to get involved in the future of cinematic storytelling in Asia."
Producer and director Benjamin Brooking

Education

A wushu workshop at a Hamilton primary school.

The education programme provides New Zealand teachers and students with resources and opportunities to increase their knowledge of Asian cultures, languages and peoples.

Workshops go digital

The education team had been working alongside experts in their fields to develop workshops on wushu (a Chinese martial art) and rakugo (Japanese storytelling) and were rolling them out when schools were closed due to COVID-19.

As a result of lockdown, the team adjusted the workshops so they could be delivered online to schools throughout New Zealand. After the success of the online rakugo and wushu workshops, taiko drumming and Bollywood dancing were added to our offerings, proving popular with teachers and students alike.

> *"The opportunity to take part in these online workshops and experience different cultural aspects has been hugely motivating for my students."*
> **Bronwyn Thomson, Otago Girls' High School teacher**

Kiwi kids experience Asia at school

Albany Junior High and Albany Primary Schools came together in late 2019 for a taster of Chinese culture, thanks to Experience Asia grants, which support schools to hold Asia-themed events and workshops.

The two Albany schools brought in experts from the community to help run their China festival, which included demonstrations of the lion dance, kung fu and traditional Chinese music. Students were also able to try their hands at a tea ceremony, calligraphy, chopstick games, mooncake-making and paper cutting and held a Chinese food market.

Harnessing sports to grow knowledge of Japan

In preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (since rescheduled to 2021), the Foundation partnered with the New Zealand Olympic Committee to produce online teaching resources for social studies. These modules enable students to explore varied topics around Japanese culture. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we produced a series of distance learning resources to support schools to teach students about Asian countries and cultures while at home.

Sports

Our sports programme hit its stride in the last year, giving young sportspeople and seasoned athletes a chance to experience Japanese culture.

Drumming up enthusiasm

New Zealand's top wheelchair rugby players experienced more than just a good tournament when they went to Japan in October 2019.

Eight members of the Wheel Blacks and their crew were in Atsugi and Tokyo to play in the World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge, a test event for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Through our community sports fund, we supported them to add cultural experiences to their trip. As well as playing against the world's toughest wheelchair rugby teams, the group experienced traditional Japanese cuisine and had a taiko drumming lesson.

"I think it's definitely a good idea for sportspeople to get an understanding of the culture of the country they're travelling to."
Wheel Black Cody Everson

The Japanese men's hockey team interacted with Taranaki children during a community training session.

"This experience is something that has truly opened the students' eyes beyond their own backyard to the wider world around them … We took this tour as a rugby tour but quickly found out that rugby would play second fiddle as we immersed ourselves in local culture and shared New Zealand and Māori culture in return."
Wainuiomata High School deputy principal Philip Kauika

From Wainuiomata to the world

Wainuiomata High School's first XV travelled to Japan to play rugby in September 2019, but the matches quickly became secondary to the cultural exchange.

The Foundation's School Sport Fund allowed the team learn about Japanese culture during their busy rugby tour itinerary, including experiencing the bustle of Tokyo's Akihabara and Harajuku, visiting Asakusa's ancient temples, ascending the Tokyo Skytree, and visiting a local sumo stable to see how the athletes train – and eat.

Japan-New Zealand hockey teams strike a friendship

The Japanese men's hockey team spent 10 days on field and in the community in Taranaki last year. Hockey New Zealand hosted the Vantage Black Sticks v Japan test series in October 2019, and with Foundation support were able to include the Japanese team in its community engagement. That engagement included a turf training session with the New Plymouth Boys' High School hockey team, a coach and officials' breakfast and an open community training which saw more than 80 children having a go at field hockey with the Black Sticks and Japanese men's hockey team.

Entrepreneurship

Southeast Asian tourism entrepreneurs during their visit to Te Puia in Rotorua.

Our entrepreneurship programme supports emerging New Zealand entrepreneurs to build connections and facilitate business relationships in Asia and brings entrepreneurs from Asia to New Zealand.

Kiwi social entrepreneurs find inspiration in Vietnam

The entrepreneurship programme took a group of social entrepreneurs to Vietnam to learn about the social enterprise scene there, explore business opportunities and inspire ideas.

The group came from diverse industries and met with a wide range of social entrepreneurs in Vietnam, working in sectors including tech, travel, agriculture and education.

The visit included a hui in the coastal city of Hoi An that brought together social entrepreneurs from across Southeast Asia who have previously taken part in a Foundation entrepreneurship programme.

"After visiting Vietnam, I not only feel equipped to do business there but also across Southeast Asia. I had the opportunity to make connections from this trip to [help me] hit the ground running in so many countries."
Michael Watson, Vietnam programme participant

Southeast Asian tourism entrepreneurs impressed by New Zealand

In September 2019, the entrepreneurship programme brought a group of leading Southeast Asian tourism entrepreneurs to New Zealand.

The group visited Auckland, Rotorua and Christchurch to make connections and share insights with their New Zealand counterparts.

In Rotorua, a well-attended networking evening was held at Māori-run tourism venture Te Puia, where three of the visiting entrepreneurs spoke to local tourism operators about developing their tourism ventures. The visit wrapped up in Christchurch with the entrepreneurs attending the New Zealand Tourism Awards.

Up Against the Wall: stories of resilience from Southeast Asian entrepreneurs

The Up Against the Wall webinar brought three leading Southeast Asian tech entrepreneurs together to talk about the challenges they face due to COVID-19.

All three entrepreneurs had previously visited New Zealand through the entrepreneurship programme and maintained close contact with the Foundation.

The speakers discussed the pivots and hard decisions they had had to make to keep their businesses viable during these difficult times.

The experienced panel provided valuable insights to a New Zealand business audience eager to know more about how COVID-19 is being responded to in Asia.

Leadership

The Leadership Network is a global professional network focussed on developing and maintaining strong links between Asia and New Zealand.

China Hui

In September 2019, the Leadership Network took a group of its members to China to learn about the country and how 'NZ Inc' operates there.

The China Hui was held to coincide with the Opening Doors to the West business forums organised by the China Chamber of Commerce New Zealand and the municipal governments of the host cities, Chengdu and Xi'an. At the forum, network members heard from NZ business leaders and gained insights into doing business in China.

The visit was aimed at network members who had not been to China before and all reported the trip to be an eye-opening experience that greatly expanded their understanding of the country.

"As a young student now transitioning into my professional career, I sometimes feel unsure about my future, but talking to amazing leaders in various industries was a golden opportunity that could not be replicated in a book or podcast."
China Hui participant

Leadership Network members Pete McKenzie and Sarah Novak in China.

Leadership Network member Fine Koloamatangi leads an Asia-focused session at Festival for the Future.

Festival for the Future

In July 2019, the Foundation sponsored one of New Zealand's leading youth events, Festival for the Future in Wellington.

More than 1200 young people from all over New Zealand attended, including network members. As well as a hosting a booth and providing a speaker as part of a panel discussion, the Foundation's Leadership Network delivered four successful workshops on opportunities for young Kiwis in Asia.

The Foundation's involvement brought an Asia-focus to this event, demonstrating what is exciting about the region and why the next generation needs to better understand it.

Mentorship programme

This year, the Leadership Network established a mentorship programme to build connections between our members and provide opportunities for members to grow their confidence and skills as leaders. A series of online workshops were held to introduce mentors and mentees and provide them with the knowledge required to build a successful relationship.

The Foundation will act as kaitiaki and facilitators of the mentorship programme and sees the sharing of Asia knowledge as a real point of difference for the programme.

Media

Our media programme helps New Zealand journalists cover stories that shed light on Asia and on New Zealand's ties to the region.

Gaining real-life understanding of news in Indonesia

As part of our professional development opportunities for New Zealand journalists, since 2007 the Foundation has supported journalism students to participate in the Journalism Professional Practicum run by the Australian Consortium for In-country Indonesia Studies in Jakarta. This year's participants, Michael Andrew and Katie Harris, spent six weeks in Jakarta, reporting for The Jakarta Post and AFP news agency respectively.

RNZ's reporter John Gerritsen in China with Dr Huang Ning.

"As well as helping my journalism, my experience in Indonesia helped me realise new ways to connect with people from different cultures."

Journalism Professional Practicum participant Katie Harris

Top journalists deepen their reporting on Asia

Our media travel grants support journalists to provide on-the-ground reporting from Asia, enabling a wider range of stories to be told to New Zealand audiences. Amanda Cropp, Christchurch business bureau chief for Stuff, travelled to China to cover a New Zealand trade delegation and to report on how New Zealand businesses were growing their China market.

For Radio New Zealand education correspondent John Gerritsen, Foundation funding enabled his first trip to China, where he reported on the impact of Chinese alumni of New Zealand universities on China-New Zealand relations. Our funding also supported NZME's Head of Business Fran O'Sullivan to report on economic and political developments in South Korea, and enabled RNZ's Lynn Freeman to research stories in Nepal.

Asia Media Centre

The Asia Media Centre is a resource hub for New Zealand journalists to access information and expertise on Asia and Asian peoples.

Asia Media Centre becomes permanent

The Foundation set up the Asia Media Centre in 2017 as a two-year trial. In 2019, the Centre underwent its scheduled external review, which found its work contributed to the Foundation's mission and that stakeholders had a "very positive attitude" to its continuation.

The review recommended it be funded on a permanent basis, and the Board agreed to provide this funding. In 2020, Asia Media Centre visitor and page view numbers have increased steadily, and the weekly Asia Digest newsletter continues to provide a roundup of news and views on a wide range of topics about Asia and New Zealand-Asia relations.

Increasing the diversity of voices in the media

The Asia Media Centre offers media training sessions to help Asia experts and community representatives grow their knowledge and confidence about the New Zealand media. This in turn increases the range of voices on Asia that journalists have access to, and helps deepen understanding of Asian current affairs, societies and cultures.

As part of this work, in January the Asia Media Centre ran a special workshop in Christchurch for victims of the attacks on Christchurch mosques, to help prepare participants for media interactions in 2020. An earlier workshop in Christchurch focused on South Island academics working in a range of Asia-related disciplines.

Thought leadership on Asia

This was Executive Director Simon Draper's third year of writing fortnightly columns for Stuff.co.nz and Stuff's newspapers. Aimed at a business audience, these commentary pieces are well-read across the country and have covered a wide range of topical subjects, including business adaptation to the impacts of COVID-19 in Asia; bilateral and regional trade agreements; Asia's growing influence on the global film industry; and New Zealanders' knowledge of Asia and engagement with the region.

Foundation staff have also penned commentary pieces on developments in Hong Kong; diplomacy during COVID-19; and the importance of maintaining constructive business relationships with Asia.

Track II participants in Kuala Lumpur.

Track II

Our Track II programme facilitates exchanges between experts in New Zealand and leading think tanks, universities and counterpart organisations in Asia, so we can better understand the changes taking place in our region.

Cracking the India Code

In January, the Foundation led its first ever delegation to India's Raisina Dialogue – the largest international affairs conference in South Asia. The visit included interactions with former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and New Zealand's Chief of Navy Commodore Melissa Ross, as well as a full programme of calls on leading think tanks, media and diplomats.

The visit highlighted the importance of face-to-face interactions and building personal rapport, and of having side conversations that offer new insights and perspectives. These experiences informed a range of outputs, including media articles, but also changed perspectives and renewed interest in this dynamic South Asia powerhouse.

Shifting conversations online

In 2019 we led delegations to Kuala Lumpur for the 12th ASEAN Australia New Zealand Dialogue and to Seoul for a dialogue with the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

After those enriching dialogues, shifting discussions online in 2020 because of COVID-19 felt like winning second prize. But online dialogues have proved useful in new ways, enabling us to widen our pool of participants and observers, and to "meet" with a wider range of Track II partners across Asia.

Going online has also facilitated "just-in-time discussions" on important developments, at low cost and without the logistical challenges of taking delegations offshore. One highlight was a session we hosted with I-Chung Lai, the President of Prospect Foundation, on the changes taking place in Taiwan.

Growing the next generation of strategic thinkers

In September, we held a "Next Generation" Track II workshop on the sidelines of the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Dialogue in Kuala Lumpur. This saw New Zealand participants joining with ASEAN and Australian counterparts to discuss security, economic, social and environment policy issues across the region. We have also held a series of workshops and simulations for students across New Zealand, helping to grow a more diverse and representative generation of participants for foreign policy dialogues.

"The Raisina Dialogue provided me with insights into Indian thinking on strategic issues in Asia in addition to what the other regional stakeholders thought of the developments in Asia … I found these discussions extremely useful for my research and teaching, as well as in the context of Track II dialogues beyond India."

Manjeet S. Pardesi, senior Victoria University of Wellington academic and managing editor of Asian Security

Research

Our research programme commissions studies that support informed public conversations about New Zealand's relationship with Asia. We also support the next generation of scholars through our postgraduate research grants.

New Zealanders see ties with Asia as increasingly important

The *2019 Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples* survey offered particularly interesting insights into New Zealand's maturing relationship with Asia. Despite the outbreak of COVID-19 and widespread border closures, New Zealanders rated Asia as even more important to New Zealand's future.

The main survey was carried out in November 2019 and at that time, two-thirds (67 percent) of New Zealanders said that it was important for New Zealand to develop political, economic and social ties with Asia. By March 2020, when the Foundation carried out a second mini poll (mid-COVID-19 pandemic), that figure had grown to 79 percent.

New Zealand and Japan: To our future

With New Zealand's eyes on Japan for the Rugby World Cup, in September 2019 the Foundation published a new report by academic David Capie, titled *New Zealand and Japan: To our future*.

The report showcases the growth of the Japan-New Zealand relationship (dating back 150 years) and the strong economic and people-to-people links that have given the relationship depth and warmth. It also highlights emerging areas for cooperation, including through indigenous connections, Pacific development, trade, and on initiatives to tackle climate change.

People links central to New Zealand-India relationship

In February we published *India and New Zealand: Our story, our future*, to highlight the dynamic connections between New Zealand and India.

The report, by Graeme Waters, describes the shared interests between the two countries, and points to the fundamental role that strong people-to-people relationships play. It includes case studies of New Zealanders and Indians working in partnership and highlights plenty of potential in the economic relationship, with two-way trade in goods and services approaching the NZ$3 billion mark.

The report was timed so that it could be used as collateral in support of the successful visit to India by New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Trade and their accompanying delegation, including Foundation executive director Simon Draper.

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