



April 2014

In this issue: Conflict and Development, Social Sector Reform, Elections, Obama in Asia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, the Philippines.

Upcoming Events:

June – Patrick Barron, Regional Director for Conflict and Development, will be visiting Washington from the Foundation’s office in Bangkok. Mr. Barron will highlight some of The Asia Foundation’s work in conflict resolution, including discussion of the 2013 Contested Corners of Asia study.



July – Jaime Faustino, Program Director for Economic Reform and Development Entrepreneurship from the Foundation’s office in Manila, will discuss his work on social sector reforms, including his contributions to the recently published Room For Maneuver: Social Sector Policy Reform in the Philippines.

July - Regional Director for Elections and Political Processes, Tim Meisburger, will be in Washington and share his views on the many elections occurring in Asia this year.

In the News:

Obama’s Asia Trip to Test Rebalancing Policy

This week President Obama travels to four Asian countries – Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Malaysia. In many respects, the president’s visit is to make up for his absence last October in Brunei and Indonesia to attend the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders meeting because of the U.S. government shutdown. At the time, President Obama had no choice but to remain in Washington until the budget crisis was resolved. However, his absence cast serious doubt in Asia on whether the U.S. is able to serve as an effective counterbalance to China. This visit is meant to allay concerns in Asia that the Obama administration’s “pivot” or “rebalancing” policy is more rhetoric than substance. Read full article by John Brandon on our blog.

Impartiality Critical to Ensuring Afghanistan's Election Credibility

Election day in Afghanistan exceeded even the most optimistic expectations, with long queues of men and women turning out to vote for a new president in what many are declaring a sign of increased political maturity and belief in democratic systems among Afghans today. Read the full analysis by Abdullah Ahmadzai, The Asia Foundation's Deputy Country Representative in Afghanistan, on our blog.



Afghan women wait in line in a rainy Kabul to cast their ballots in Afghanistan's April 5 election. Estimates show a turnout of over 50 percent, 37 percent of whom were women.

Notes from the Field:



Asia Foundation Development Fellows: A Conversation with Mongolian NGO Leader Badruun Gardi

Just back from an intensive, nine-day leadership training workshop in Singapore and the Philippines, which kicked off The Asia Foundation's Development Fellows program, In Asia editor Alma Freeman interviewed one of the 10 inaugural Fellows from Mongolia, Badruun Gardi, executive director of the Zorig Foundation in Ulaanbaatar. Read the interview on our website.

Publication of Interest:

Room For Maneuver: Social Sector Policy Reform in the Philippines

To contribute to better understanding of the politics of reform, The Asia Foundation published *Room for Maneuver: Social Sector Reform in the Philippines*. Exploring four important social sector reforms -- anti-violence against women and children, reproductive health, freedom of information, and education governance -- the cases focus on the institutional contexts, what happened, who initiated and persevered in their prosecution, and draws out why some succeeded and others failed. Download the full publication and learn more about our programs in the Philippines on our website.