



December 2016

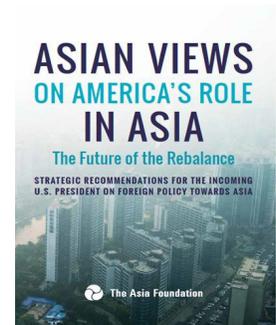
Happy Holidays from The Asia Foundation!

In this issue: Thailand, America's Role in Asia, the Philippines, Survey of the Afghan People, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Books for Asia, Myanmar, and Mongolia.

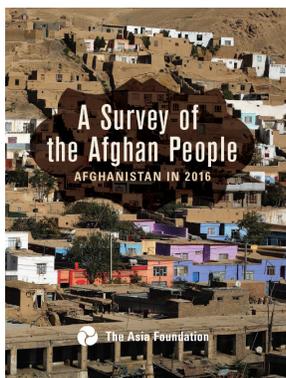
Recent Events

November 2 – Kim McQuay, The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Thailand, provided an update on the future of Thailand and Thai politics with the recent passing of King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Please click [here](#) for more information on our Thailand program. Kim McQuay has now assumed the position of Managing Director of the Program Specialists Group at The Asia Foundation.

November 15 – The Asia Foundation launched its signature foreign policy report, Asian Views on America's Role in Asia, a quadrennial project that promotes U.S.-Asian dialogue and formulates specific recommendations on U.S. policy towards Asia. The Foundation hosted a panel event featuring three prominent Asian experts who discussed concerns most important to the three sub-regions of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia.



November 29 – Steven Rood, The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in the Philippines, discussed the future of U.S.-Philippine relations in light of President Duterte's unorthodox approach to diplomacy. Please click [here](#) for more information on our Philippines program.



December 7 - The Asia Foundation released findings from Afghanistan in 2016: A Survey of the Afghan People - the broadest, most comprehensive public opinion poll in the country, covering all 34 provinces, with candid data gleaned from face-to-face interviews with more than 12,600 Afghan citizens. This marked the twelfth in the Foundation's series of surveys in Afghanistan; taken together they provide a barometer of Afghan public opinion over time. Click [here](#) to watch the video, [here](#) for more resources and [here](#) for the data.



In the News

The Evolving Role of Women in a Politically Uncertain Afghanistan

On June 14, 2014, 2.4 million Afghan women voted in the country's presidential run-off election—38 percent of total turnout—making it the highest level of women's electoral participation in Afghanistan's history. This year, the first women's university opened in Kabul, Khost province opened its first women's park, and more women graduated from the army cadet school and the police academy than ever before. After decades of battle with patriarchy and misogynist norms, we're seeing an increase in awareness of women's constitutional and natural rights, and the role of women in the political and economic spheres of Afghanistan is gradually evolving. Although the 2016 Survey of the Afghan People reconfirms that challenges such as cultural norms, fear for safety, and low levels of education among women continue, the opportunities women have had since 2004 have been quite remarkable. Read more from Idrees Ilham, The Asia Foundation's director for Governance and Law in Afghanistan, [here](#).

Notes from the Field

Supporting Hackathons Usher in New Chapter for Children's Books in Cambodia

On September 18, nearly 20 publishers, editors, writers, and young technologists, ready with pencils and laptops, filled a co-working space in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, for the country's first children's e-book hackathon. The hackathon is part of Let's Read! an Asia Foundation initiative that applies technology interventions to stimulate reading in developing Asian countries. By the end of the day, participants had created a series of engaging, original children's content in electronic format, all in the Khmer language. According to a 2015 Asia Foundation research study, 40 percent of Cambodian phone users own at least one smartphone, and a third of the population has access to the internet. Such increased access to technology is also opening up new opportunities for educational material to reach parents, teachers, and children, and helping to formulate a new way of publishing children's content. Read more from Elita Ouk, a consultant for The Asia Foundation in Cambodia and Wendy Rockett, the Foundation's Books for Asia senior communications manager, [here](#).

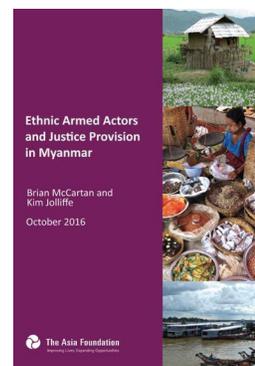


Hackathon participants were divided into teams, each with a writer, illustrator, designer, and coder. An editor and children's book experts from Room to Read guided the teams through the process, from conception to detailed storyboards and finished covers.

Publication of Interest

Ethnic Armed Actors and Justice Provision in Myanmar

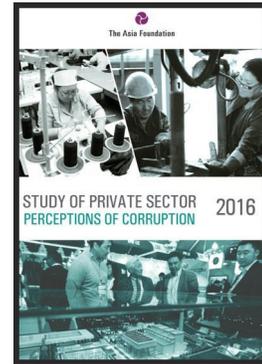
As a result of decades of ongoing civil war, large areas of Myanmar remain outside government rule, or are subject to mixed control and governance by the government and an array of ethnic armed actors (EAAs). These include ethnic armed organizations, with ceasefires or in conflict with the state, as well as state-backed ethnic paramilitary organizations, such as the Border Guard Forces and People's Militia Forces. Despite this complexity, order has been created in these areas, in large part through customary justice mechanisms at the community level, and as a result of justice systems administered by EAAs. Though the rule of law and the workings of Myanmar's justice system are receiving increasing attention, the role and structure of EAA



justice systems and village justice remain little known and therefore, poorly understood. As such, The Asia Foundation is pleased to present this research on justice provision and ethnic armed actors in Myanmar.

Study of Private Sector Perceptions of Corruption (STOPP) Survey in Mongolia 2016

In October 2016, The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with the Sant Maral Foundation, conducted its seventh installment of the Study of Private Sector Perceptions of Corruption (STOPP) Survey in Mongolia, a survey of businesses based in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar. The survey aims to provide a unique and robust tool to raise awareness and further encourage the business community, policymakers, and especially government service providers to continue to improve good-governance practices, change attitudes, and prevent corruption.



The Asia Foundation improves lives, expands opportunities, and helps societies flourish across a dynamic and developing Asia. We work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance pathbreaking reforms. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia's continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.