



September 2016

In this issue: Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation, Development and Aid Effectiveness, Vietnam, Women's Empowerment Program, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Working Politically in Practice Series

Upcoming Events

September 14 – The Asia Foundation will launch a book on “India’s Approach to Development Cooperation” featuring Anthea Mulakala, the Asia Foundation’s Director for International Development Cooperation. This is part of the Asia Foundation’s program “Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation” (AADC), which brings together traditional and emerging Asian donors to share perspectives about the changing dynamics of international development cooperation. Learn more about the Foundation’s program on Development and Aid Effectiveness here and click here for information on our work in India.

September 27 – Michael DiGregorio, the Asia Foundation’s Vietnam Country Representative, will provide an update on the current political and economic situation in Vietnam, including developments after President Obama’s recent trip.

September 27 – The Asia Foundation and The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) will co-host a trilateral forum on women’s empowerment, with speakers representing the United States, Japan and Korea. Learn more about the Foundation’s Women’s Empowerment Program here, and click here for information on our country programs in Korea and here for information on our country programs in Japan.

September 28 – The Asia Foundation’s Country Representative in Mongolia, Meloney Lindberg, will provide insights into the recent parliamentary elections in Mongolia and other political and economic developments in the country.

October 6 – Nazrul Islam, Program Director for Islam and Development in the Asia Foundation’s Bangladesh office, and Tim Meisburger, The Asia Foundation’s Director for Elections and Political Processes will discuss the survey, Bangladesh’s Democracy: According to its People, which captures the diverse range of attitudes towards democracy and its necessary institutions in Bangladesh.

For more information, please contact the TAF office in Washington at 202-588-9420.

In the News

Government of Myanmar and The Asia Foundation Sign Memorandum of Understanding

A signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and The Asia Foundation was held in Yangon on August 29, 2016. The MoU was signed

by U Aung Lynn, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Gordon Robert Hein, Senior Vice President of The Asia Foundation. Also present at the signing ceremony were the director-general, the deputy director-general and officials from the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with representatives from The Asia Foundation. Read more here.



Permanent Secretary/Director-General at the ASEAN Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aung Lynn and the Foundation's Senior Vice President of Programs, Gordon Hein shake hands after renewing the MOU. Photo: The Asia Foundation

Notes from the Field

Supporting Low-Skilled Labor in the New Lower-Middle Income Cambodia

Last month, the World Bank upgraded Cambodia's economic status from low income to lower-middle income, a classification that the ruling Cambodian People's Party has been eagerly anticipating and holds up as a sign of its success in poverty alleviation and development. A major part of this success story is a result of the abundance of cheap labor, particularly in the garment industry, that Cambodia has enjoyed over the past decade. However, most workers do not have reliable access to job information. In response to this, The Asia Foundation is currently piloting a job information portal called Bong Srey to provide job information to garment workers in Phnom Penh's Stung Meanchey area. Bong Srey models a call center that allows workers to call in to ask for information, such as what factories in the area are recruiting, for what positions, and what benefits, like salary and allowances, are offered, as well as factory contact information. Read more from Menghun Kaing, a program officer for the Asia Foundation's Cambodia office, here.

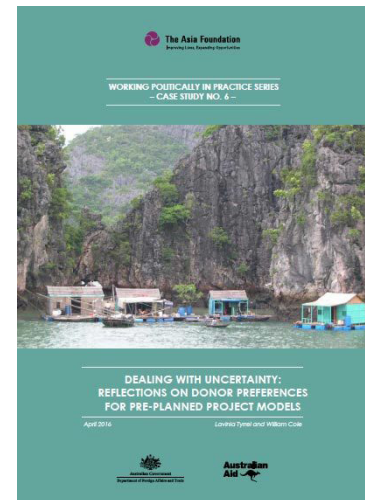


The apparel industry accounts for nearly 80 percent of Cambodia's export revenue and employs an estimated 700,000 people, the largest formal contract employer for low-skilled workers in the country. Photo/Flickr user ILO in Asia and the Pacific

Publication of Interest

Dealing With Uncertainty: Reflections on Donor Preferences for Pre-Planned Project Models

This paper is the sixth in the Asia Foundation's Working Politically in Practice Series funded through a partnership with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). While past cases have studied lessons from particular programs, tools used to aid practitioners, and reflections from those in the field, this paper looks across the ideas emerging from those experiences and explores why they can be difficult for donors to implement. Walking through an honest discussion of perceptions of risk, the need for predictability and other incentives that shape the ability of donors to support flexible and innovative programming approaches, the paper argues that without fresh consideration of what risk means, it will be a challenge for the aid industry to embrace the exciting lessons about, and possibilities of iterative, searching programming approaches. Read the report here.



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.