

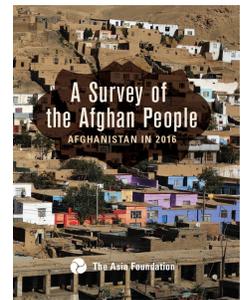


January 2017

In this issue: Survey of the Afghan People, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Community Policing, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste

Recent Events

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](#).



Save the Date

March - Dinesha de Silva, The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Sri Lanka, will comment on recent developments in the country and discuss the present political environment.

March - Herizal Hazri, The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Malaysia, will discuss current economic and political challenges facing Malaysia.

March - The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in India, Sagar Prasai, will discuss the future of regional cooperation in South Asia and comment on developments in India.

April - The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Nepal, George Varughese, will offer his perspective on the Nepali government's new leadership and discuss opportunities ahead.

In the News

Asia's Biggest Issues in 2017: Experts Weigh In

In 2016, Asia was rocked by major events that tested the region's perseverance and proved its strength. While many countries in the region proved to be economically resilient and politically stable, others were challenged by shifting alliances and leadership change, including the passing of a beloved monarch, and threats of regional insecurity and resource shortfalls. Asia Foundation experts share what they view will be the pivotal issue in their respective countries this year. To find out just what to expect in 2017, read more from experts [here](#).

Breaking the Deadlocks to Peace in Southern Thailand

On August 12-14, 2016, as Thais were celebrating the long holiday marking the Queen's birthday, a series of 13 coordinated explosions rocked several provinces in Thailand's Upper South, including popular tourist spots in Hua Hin, leaving four people dead and 30 wounded, including 10 foreigners. Forensic evidence points to the opposition group known as the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) as the likely perpetrators. While data suggests that violence associated with the protracted subnational conflict in Thailand's southern border provinces has been on the decline in recent years, the latest surge in attacks in and outside the Deep South is a troubling reminder of the long-simmering conflict, which since 2004 has left over 7,000 dead and more than 10,000 injured. Read more from Santi Nindang, a senior program officer for The Asia Foundation in Thailand, here.



Thai forensic police investigate a bombing in the Deep South. While data points to a reduction in violence, recent conflicts are a troubling reminder of the simmering conflict. Photo/Arparorn Winijkulchai

Notes from the Field

Are Cambodians Better Informed in the Internet and Facebook Era?

For the first time, the internet has surpassed traditional media as the main source of news for Cambodians, according to The Asia Foundation's 2016 annual survey on mobile phones and internet usage. This has significant implications in terms of connectivity and information access in Cambodia: just three years ago, only 15 percent of people said they received their news from Facebook or other online sources, compared to 30 percent today. Read more from Menghun Kaing a program officer for The Asia Foundation in Cambodia, here.

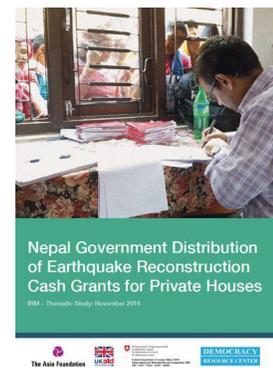


Publication of Interest

Nepal Government Distribution of Earthquake Reconstruction Cash Grants for Private Houses

The earthquakes of April and May 2015 caused massive housing destruction with over half a million houses collapsed or badly damaged. In order to get people back into safer, permanent housing, the Government of Nepal and major donors developed the Nepal Rural Housing Reconstruction Program (RHRP). The Nepal Government Distribution of Earthquake Reconstruction Cash Grants for Private Houses report, produced by Democracy Resource Center Nepal (DRCN) and The Asia Foundation, examines the implementation process as well as local awareness and reception of the program and provides recommendations on how it can be improved.

The report details findings from the qualitative field research conducted in Gorkha and Dolakha – the first two districts where the disbursement started – during July 2016 along with data from three rounds of qualitative and quantitative fieldwork, of which the latest was undertaken in September 2016. It forms part of a larger longitudinal and mixed methods study, the Independent Impacts and Recovery Monitoring project. A series of reports produced by this project seek to provide insights into the effectiveness of aid delivery and its impact on recovery in the aftermath of Nepal's 2015 earthquakes.



Community Policing as A Catalyst for Change: Working With the Police in Sri Lanka And Timor-Leste

This paper explores why community policing has become a popular area of programming, and the opportunities it offers for institutional reform. In post-conflict, post-authoritarian, and high crime environments, community policing is seen as a way to provide the security needed for sustainable development. Yet community policing is also an ambiguous concept, meaning many things to different people. This paper seeks to set out the Foundation's distinctive approach to community policing. Drawing on ongoing programs in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, the Foundation has navigated the high expectations placed on community policing by donors. The paper shows that the Foundation leverages community policing as an entry point into wider policing reforms. The Foundation emphasizes locally led programming and 'best fit,' rather than 'best practice' approaches to reform. This is the tenth paper in the Working Politically in Practice series.



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.