



October 2018

In this issue: Afghanistan in 2018, Afghan Women, Philippine Faultlines, Women's Entrepreneurship, Myanmar, Science Education in Rural Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Technology and Development in the Philippines

Upcoming Events

December 4— Save the date for the launch of the 14th annual “[A Survey of the Afghan People: Afghanistan in 2018](#)” - 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 15,000 Afghan citizens. Invitation and additional details forthcoming. Learn about the Asia Foundation's work in [Afghanistan](#).

December 6— Save the date for a panel discussion, co-sponsored by the [U.S.-Afghan Women's Council](#), highlighting the gender dimensions of the Asia Foundation's 14th annual [Survey of the Afghan People](#) that will be released that week. Invitation and additional details forthcoming. Read more about the Foundations' work on [women's empowerment](#).

Recent Events

October 3— [Sam Chittick](#), The Asia Foundation's [Philippines](#) country representative and a long-time observer of the country, provided an update of recent political, security, economic and development shifts in the Philippines during the roundtable discussion on *Philippine Faultlines*.

October 18— The Asia Foundation and the Asian Development Bank jointly launched their new publication titled “[Emerging Lessons on Women's Entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific](#),” featuring panelists [Priya Basu](#), head of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) Secretariat at the World Bank Group; Kate Francis, gender specialist and lead writer of the report; and [Amarzaya Naran](#), consultant and former project manager of the Asia Foundation's Women's Business Center and Incubator in Ulaanbaatar, [Mongolia](#). Click here for the [video](#).



Notes from the Field

[Myanmar: Women Breaking and Making the Rules](#)



Ku Kue, one of the five illustrators of [Girl Power in Myanmar](#), with her illustration of the [Women's Army of Burma](#)

The stories of a few powerful women in Myanmar, told again and again, have crowded out the stories of the unequal majority, along with the perpetuation of a popular idea that women in Myanmar have long enjoyed status equal to men. However, the country does have a rich history of women who refused to play by the rules, as in the case of Zarchi Win, a garment industry worker with no political connections or organizing experience, who led several hundred of her fellow workers to [demand firm labor protection policies](#) within Myanmar's garment and textiles sector. There are several other stories of Burmese women like Than Kyi—the only woman to become village leader in Kayah State, Sandar Khine—now a widely respected pioneer in Myanmar's contemporary art scene who had struggled to break into the male dominated field of arts, and Ketu Mala—a nun who rebelled against the insidious concept of *hpoun* that refers to an innate power only men are believed to possess, which often permeates into politics, the law, as well as religious beliefs and institutions, barring nuns from spaces that monks can freely access, and putting them at the bottom of Myanmar's social hierarchy: monks, men, women, and then nuns. Read about the Asia Foundations program in [Myanmar](#).

[School Science Labs for Rural Afghanistan](#)

Most Afghan students, especially in rural areas, do not have access to professionally qualified science teachers and properly equipped laboratories where theoretical science can be demonstrated through practical, hands-on experiments. Through the USAID-funded Strengthening Education in Afghanistan project (SEA II), the Asia Foundation has partnered with Afghanistan's Ministry of Education (MoE) and the General Directorate of Science and Educational Technology (GDSET) to improve science education in Afghanistan, training more than 1,860 teachers—1,092 men and 768 women—since 2014 from selected schools to improve their scientific knowledge and teaching methods, upgrading the eight regional GDSET-managed centers to “centers of excellence,” fitted with internet service, LCD TVs, smartboards, and laboratory equipment to support the professional development of science teachers and GDSET academics, and also organizing extracurricular activities in the provinces to cultivate interest in science. Learn more about the Foundation's programs in [Afghanistan](#).



GDSET training for Model School chemistry teachers in Badakhshan.

In the News

[#Palukuat \(Palu is Strong\)](#)



The condition of damaged houses in Palu, Indonesia a week after the earthquake and tsunami disaster. Photo/Herwin Bahar / Shutterstock.com

On Saturday, September 28, a 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck Palu in Sulawesi, Indonesia, followed by a tsunami, claiming more than 2,000 lives and displacing nearly 90,000 people. Despite losing family and friends to this disaster, many social activists in Palu put aside fear, fatigue, and trauma to mobilize their networks in support of rescue and recovery efforts in their surrounding communities. As communication was restored, hashtags like #Palukuat (Palu is strong) and #Palubangkit (Palu revived), reflecting the resiliency and positive spirit of the people in Palu, began to proliferate on social media. While the news media was consumed with reports of looting as supplies grew desperately short on day two and three, activists on social media told stories of collaboration among local organizations, communities, and humanitarian agencies. Learn about the Asia Foundation's programs in [Indonesia](#).

Publication of Interest

[From Analog to Digital: Philippine Policy and Emerging Internet Technologies](#)

This report explores emerging internet technologies beyond those traditionally used for Internet connectivity in the Philippines, especially those that may benefit the unserved and underserved areas. Comprehensive research was conducted on a wide range of emerging Internet technologies. Based on the assessment, three technologies seem appropriate and feasible for the Philippines: (1) Fiber to the Premises with Gigabit Passive Optical Network (2) Fixed mobile substitution with 5G, and (3) Low earth orbit satellite networks. The report seeks to initiate the discussion on possible technologies and does not intend to endorse any particular technology for adoption in the country. Learn about the Asia Foundation's country-programs in the [Philippines](#), and in the areas of [strengthening governance](#) and [technology & development](#).



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