



## October 2019

**In this issue:** The Myanmar Business Environment Index 2019, South Korea, Satellite Broadband Service in the Philippines, Timor-Leste's Democratic Journey, Green Growth in Pakistan, The Gender Lab Boys Program, Afghanistan-Pakistan Cross-Border Trade, and Global Trading Identity Project in Vietnam

## Upcoming Event

**October 8** — Join us for the launch of [The Myanmar Business Environment Index 2019](#), featuring [Dr. Kim N. B. Ninh](#), The Asia Foundation's senior advisor and former country representative (2013-2018) in Myanmar, and [Edmund Malesky](#), Professor of Political Science at Duke University and Lead Researcher and Lead Author, who will share key findings from the report which reflects the views of private enterprises across Myanmar and measures localities against ten components of good economic governance. With its useful insights and analysis, the Index is a unique tool providing data for use by the government of Myanmar as well as other stakeholders seeking to further improve the country's business environment. Please email [dc.events@asiafoundation.org](mailto:dc.events@asiafoundation.org) or call 202-588-9420 to register for the event. Click [here](#) to learn more about our Myanmar programs.

## Recent Event

**September 25** — [Kwang Kim](#), The Asia Foundation's country representative in [Korea](#), shared learning and insights from the Foundation's recent private sector initiatives, especially those promoting entrepreneurship development, sustainable finance and corporate engagement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the event on "*Private Sector Engagement and Catalyzing Innovation in Korea.*"

## Technology and Development

### [Philippines: Capturing the Broadband Satellite Opportunity](#)



Despite its fast-growing information, the [Philippines](#) faces major challenges of deficient internet coverage and limited communication infrastructure due to its geographic disadvantage. Almost 45% of Filipino citizens and 74% of public schools lack internet access, and the reliance on only two main telecommunications companies leads to high internet prices and low quality. Reacting to the challenge, The Asia Foundation and the Australian Embassy in Manila launched the [Coalitions for Change](#) program, which brought together ICT experts, civil society organizations, internet users, and researchers to find a solution through the Broadband Alliance (BBA). The BBA advocated for reclassifying satellite broadband service to help small ICT enterprises and developed policy proposals to complement the government's Free Public Wi-Fi project. In 2017, the legislature accepted BBA's recommendations and passed the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act, which significantly increased the number of public Wi-Fi hotspots across the country. Residents in less developed areas can now access free and reliable internet, which will bring them better education, livelihoods, and all the potentially life-changing opportunities. Read more about The Asia Foundation's [technology and development](#) programs.

## Notes from the Field

### [Twenty Years of Elections and Democracy in Timor-Leste](#)

Following a referendum for national independence on August 30, 1999, [Timor-Leste](#) embarked on a democratic journey of holding elections and establishing national institutions. Although the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections and the 2002 presidential elections manifested early success, violence, political turmoil, and security concerns accompanied the process of democratic consolidation. The Asia Foundation has been working closely with local communities and civil society to steadily support [justice](#), security, and good [governance](#), such as ensuring [free and fairs elections](#) by organizing major voter-education programs, assisting with independent poll monitoring, and supporting [televised debates](#) between parties to stabilize a democratic political environment. In response to the 2008 political violence, the Foundation also developed a [community policing](#) model and established 251 community police councils to improve local security. Looking back to the 20-year democratic journey, The Asia Foundation is [proud to commemorate](#) the achievements with the people of Timor-Leste.



### [Green Growth in Pakistan: A Necessary Paradigm Shift](#)



Under the severe economic pressure caused by high inflation, [Pakistan](#) today has an opportunity to pursue sustainable development. However, although the Pakistan Climate Change Act in 2017 set a basic framework for the pursuit, civil society in Pakistan has failed so far to apply the bottom-up pressure for institutionalizing norms of sustainability. It is time for the non-profit sector to develop its own agenda for environmentally friendly economic growth. The Asia Foundation has launched the Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development Program in Pakistan, holding consultations with stakeholders to institutionalize nexus-based thinking in sectors of water, food, and energy. By conducting advocacy campaigns, the Foundation catalyzes conversations at all

levels—from students to the highest echelons of government. Read more about The Asia Foundation’s work in [expanding economic opportunity](#) and [increasing environmental resilience](#).

### **Program Highlight**

#### [The Gender Lab Boys Program](#)

According to a [2018 study](#) by Thomson Reuters Foundation, [India](#) was the most dangerous place in the world for women, with high rates of sexual violence, human trafficking, forced work and marriage, physical abuse, and sexual slavery. Aiming at empowering adolescents to change existing gender norms, *The Gender Lab Boys Program* has engaged 2500 boys from 61 school in different parts of India to redefine masculinity, understand gender equality, and stand up to gender-based violence. Under this program, adolescent boys collaborated to address issues regarding bullying, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination, and went into their communities to spread positive ideas, influencing over 10,000 people in the community. The Program is co-founded by The Asia Foundation’s 2019 Development Fellow [Akshat Singhal](#) and supported by The Asia Foundation. Watch the [video](#) from The Gender Lab Program and learn more about our programs in [India](#).



### **Publications of Interest**

