



July 2018

In this issue: Community Mediation, Bangladesh, Post-2018 Elections in Timor-Leste, 200 Years of US-Thailand Relations, Let's Read! Initiative, Pakistan, Women in Afghanistan's Legal Sector, Seventh World Peace Forum in Beijing, Women Empowerment, and Asian Views on America's Role in Asia

Upcoming Events

September 11— Save the date for an event on Community Mediation in Asia featuring [Dinesha de Silva](#), the Asia Foundation's [Sri Lanka](#) country representative, and [Preeti Thapa](#), the Asia Foundation's senior program officer in [Nepal](#). More details to come soon.

September 20— Save the date for a roundtable discussion led by [Sara Taylor](#), the Asia Foundation's [Bangladesh](#) country representative, who will provide an update on elections and share findings of the Foundation's recent survey in Bangladesh. More details to come soon.

Recent Events

July 17— [Todd Wassel](#), the Asia Foundation's country representative in [Timor-Leste](#), discussed the new Timorese government's possible approaches to the country's pressing development challenges such as building quality infrastructure, effective public service delivery and economic growth, and why this may be the last government to have the budget flexibility to address structural challenges.

July 17-19— The Asia Foundation organized a U.S.-Thailand Bilateral Dialogue to strengthen the relationship between Thailand and the United States, gathering Thai and U.S. leaders in Washington, D.C. over several days to commemorate 200 years of relations and support current efforts to deepen bilateral relations. Read veteran journalist Kavi Chongkittavorn's [commentary](#) published in the Bangkok Post, and learn more about the Foundation's programs in [Thailand](#) and [international cooperation](#).

Technology and Innovation



Photos: Pal Laukli

[Let's Read! Adds 50 New Children Books Translated into Khmer](#)

In partnership with SMART, Cambodia's leading mobile telecommunications company, the Asia Foundation hosted its third *Let's Read! Translation Event* on June 23 and 24 to translate and publish 50 children books from English to Khmer at the Foundation's TEK4Good, a community space for tech startups. Read these books on the [Let's Read! platform](#), a multi-lingual, digital collection of children's books designed to spark a lifelong love of reading throughout Asia, and learn about the Foundation's [Books for Asia](#) program that began in 1954, and other country programs in [Cambodia](#).

Notes from the Field

[Pakistan Elections: Will Youth Right the Nation's Course?](#)

On July 25, Pakistanis began casting their ballots to elect 272 National Assembly members and 577 Provincial Assembly members to serve for the next five years. Pakistan's young people, who emerged for the first time as a significant political constituency in the 2013 general elections, are showing an uncharacteristic optimism that their involvement and interest in this election could right the nation's course to deliver the fundamentals of good governance, efficient and effective justice

and social services, and pro-poor economic growth. They are widely connected via social media, fully wired and eager for political engagement, but social media outreach must be a two-way street that also allows the public to push back and raise their concerns. For Pakistan's democracy and its democratic institutions to endure and evolve to become truly inclusive, the political participation of young people must be paired with strategies to involve them in the next stage of Pakistan's socio-economic development. Read about the Asia Foundation's programs in [Pakistan](#), and on [elections](#) and [technology and development](#).

[More Female Prosecutors for Afghanistan](#)

Female participation in the legal sector has increased dramatically in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, but Afghan society's strict segregation of the sexes, and a shortage of female legal professionals, still makes it difficult for women to seek redress through the formal justice sector, where they face shame, intimidation, and gender bias. To address this issue, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) successfully recruited 115 women from a six-month Asia Foundation-led legal internship program offered to 242 female graduates of national law faculties and Sharia faculties, preceded by a month of pre-entry training, at AGO centers in 31 provinces. The program has helped increase women's representation at the AGO—from 3 percent to 20.7 percent—moving this vital national institution several steps closer to its stated goal of 30 percent. Learn more about the Foundation's programs in [Afghanistan](#) and on [law and justice](#).



A mock trial for female prosecutors in training.

In the News

[Asia Foundation Co-Hosts Panel on the Korean Peninsula at World Peace Forum in Beijing](#)



Joint panel on "Peace on the Korean Peninsula" by The Asia Foundation and Tsinghua University at the seventh World Peace Forum in Beijing.

The [seventh World Peace Forum \(WPF\)](#), China's only high level nongovernmental international security forum, was held in Beijing from July 14-15, with foreign diplomats from over 40 embassies attending the opening ceremony. For the third time, The Asia Foundation's China office co-hosted a panel with Tsinghua University titled "Peace on the Korean Peninsula" that analyzed the driving force behind the recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, the challenges to denuclearization and lasting peace in the region, and the expected roles of the various parties concerned in the peace process. Prior to this year's panel, the two panels cohosted with Tsinghua University focused on [Afghanistan's stability and development](#) (2015) and the [2016 U.S. presidential election](#). Learn more about the Asia Foundation's programs in [China](#).

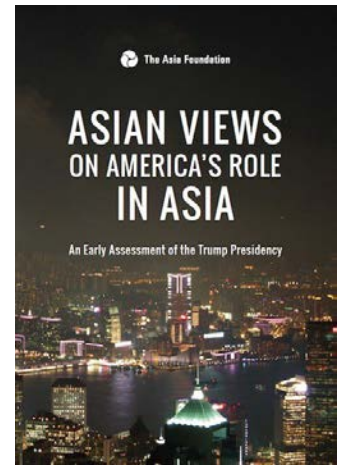
[No Women No Growth](#)

From July 9-10, the [2018 Chatham House International Policy Forum](#), themed "No Going Back: Making Gender Equality Happen," convened government officials, corporate executives, gender experts, and civil society representatives to provide crucial input for the upcoming Women 20 (W20) meeting in Argentina. Forum participants summed up the business case as "no women, no growth," emphasized the personal commitment of institution leaders to gender equality and to changing the norms that perpetuate gender inequality and power imbalances, and provided insightful analysis of key change levers to create gender parity like improving workforce agility, eliminating violence against women, increasing girls' education, especially in STEM, expanding economic opportunities for women in the digital economy, and closing the gender differential in unpaid work. Read more about the Asia Foundation's programs on [empowering women](#).

Publication of Interest

[Asian Views on America's Role in Asia: An Early Assessment of the Trump Presidency](#)

Asian Views on America's Role in Asia: An Early Assessment of the Trump Presidency offers a follow-up to The Asia Foundation's signature foreign policy initiative, [Asian Views on America's Role in Asia: The Future of the Rebalance](#) (AVARA), which brought together diverse perspectives from influential Asian thought leaders on U.S. foreign policy priorities in Asia. Prepared in the lead up to the 2016 election, the initial report presented a set of strategic recommendations for the incoming U.S. administration. This report is an assessment of the Trump administration's policies in Asia thus far from our Asian AVARA project chairs.



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.