



February 2019

In this issue: Advanced Middle-Income Countries, Governance, Environment, Technology and Development, *Promote Scholarship for Women*, 2019 Asia Foundation Development Fellows, City Life Survey 2018, and Understanding Violent Extremism in the Philippines

Upcoming Event

March 5— At the event on “[Advanced Middle-Income Countries of the Indo-Pacific: The Road Ahead](#),” our expert panelists [Chris Maloney](#) from USAID, [Sudhir Shetty](#) from the World Bank, and [William Cole](#) from The Asia Foundation will discuss some of the critical economic and political challenges that lie ahead for emerging Indo-Pacific AMICs and how a well-calibrated transition to new forms of bilateral partnership may help secure their successful transition. Please contact dc.events@asiafoundation.org or call (202) 588-9420 to register for this event.

Recent Events

February 13— [Matthew Arnold](#), the Asia Foundation’s country representative in [Myanmar](#), offered updates and reflections on the evolution of Myanmar’s governance structures, and commented on some of the Foundation’s ongoing initiatives in Myanmar such as promoting fiscal transparency and public participation in budgeting, as well as the findings of the Foundation’s [2018 City Life Survey](#). Learn about the Foundation’s programs in [Myanmar](#) and [strengthening governance](#).

February 25— The Asia Foundation’s director of environment programs, [Kim J. DeRidder](#), shared knowledge and experiences in advancing good environmental governance in Asia, where countries are facing growing vulnerability to both a rapidly depleting natural resource base and a changing climate, with severe consequences for rural and urban communities, food security, economic growth, and political stability. Read about the Foundation’s programs on [increasing environmental resilience](#).

February 26— The Asia Foundation hosted a discussion on digital solutions to advance opportunities for women and girls in Asia featuring [John Karr](#), senior director of the Asia Foundation’s technology programs, and [Melody Zavala](#), director of the Asia Foundation’s [Books for Asia](#) program, who discussed [Let’s Read](#), a free digital library for children. Watch the full video [here](#), and click [here](#) for more information on our technology programs.

Technology and Development

[The Asia Foundation Supports Nepal’s First Women in Data Conference](#)

With support from [Development Initiatives](#), The Asia Foundation’s Data for Development (D4D) program hosted Nepal’s inaugural [Women in Data](#) conference on February 23, featuring a selection of panels and workshop sessions on topics ranging from gender statistics in Nepal, to women using data for social good. The D4D program works to ensure that more and better data is available, accessible and usable by a range of government, civil society, and private sector actors to inform decision making, implementation and monitoring of development efforts at the national and local level. Read more about the [D4D program](#), and the Asia Foundation’s other country programs in [Nepal](#).



The keynote address was delivered by Meghan Nalbo, country representative for The Asia Foundation in Nepal.

Notes from the Field

[Scholarships Help Afghan Women Pursue Higher Education](#)



Higher education is essential for Afghan women to overcome disadvantages accumulated over generations or to achieve positions of authority and leadership. However, under the conservative cultural norms that restrict women's mobility in Afghanistan, women usually cannot attend preparatory courses for Kankor—the public university entrance exam focusing on mathematics and science, which is also not free and often costly. Through the USAID-funded *Promote* scholarship program for women, the Foundation helps eligible young women with academic potential from economically challenged

families pursue higher education at national universities in Afghanistan and international universities in India. The program takes a holistic approach to women's education, supporting girls from high school onwards with preparatory trainings, academic activities, and financial assistance. Local teachers are trained to work with the students and all activities are seamlessly integrated into daily classes and take place right in the schools, mitigating parents' unwillingness to send daughters to private courses. Learn more about our programs in [Afghanistan](#) and [empowering women](#).

In the News

[The Asia Foundation Selects 2019 Development Fellows](#)



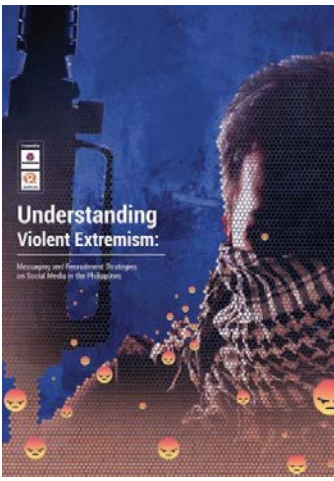
The Asia Foundation announced the 2019 class of [Asia Foundation Development Fellows: Emerging Leadership for Asia's Future](#) following a highly competitive selection process. Representing 12 Asian countries and a wide range of disciplines, the 2019 Development Fellows—6 women and 6 men—are emerging leaders in their fields, bringing bold, innovative thinking and a deep commitment to addressing Asia's most complex issues. Now in its 6th year, the program includes 70 current and alumni Fellows across Asia, forming an active and inspirational network of the region's most promising leaders. Learn more about our [leadership and exchange programs](#).

Publications of Interest

[City Life Survey 2018](#)

The *City Life Survey (CLS)* is the first of its kind in Myanmar. It is a multi-year, multi-city public perception survey to support policy-makers improve the well-being of urban residents. The 2018 CLS asked 2,400 respondents of Yangon, Mandalay, Taunggyi, Mawlamyine and Monywa 135 questions on their personal, economic, physical, interpersonal well-being and their relationship with government. Learn more about the Asia Foundation's programs in [Myanmar](#) and [strengthening governance](#).





[Understanding Violent Extremism: Messaging and Recruitment Strategies on Social Media in the Philippines](#)

Violent extremist activity on social media in the Philippines is a relatively new phenomenon in the complex conflict environment that exists in the southern part of the country. The rise of online violent extremism emerged despite the Philippines' significant strides in the Mindanao peace process. The 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the government and the MILF was a landmark achievement. Yet several armed groups rejected the deal, many of which are now engaged in online extremism. The apparent affiliation of these groups with issues beyond Mindanao and the Philippine state signaled a potential new era of conflict in the country. With these concerns as a backdrop, The Asia Foundation and Rappler worked together to explore how young Filipinos interact with social media networks, and look into the prevalence and characteristics of violent extremist messaging and recruitment in the Philippines in 2018. Read about the Asia Foundation's programs in the [Philippines](#), and in [Conflict and Fragile Conditions](#).

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation.