



January 2019

In this issue: Myanmar's Transition, Environment, Technology, Data for Development in Nepal Program, India, Mindanao Referendum, Mongolia, and Female Employment Stagnation in Bangladesh

Upcoming Events

February 13— The Asia Foundation's country representative in [Myanmar](#), [Matthew Arnold](#), will offer updates and reflections on the evolution of Myanmar's governance structures, as well as comment 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](#), will share knowledge and experiences in advancing good environmental governance in Asia, where weak environmental policies and enforcement often have less to do with technical knowledge or resource constraints than with the active resistance to progressive change by powerful actors with vested interests in preserving the environmentally devastating status quo. Read about the Foundation's environment programs [here](#).

February 26— The Asia Foundation will host a discussion on technology and development 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 will discuss [Let's Read](#), a free digital library for children. Click [here](#) for more information on our technology programs.

Technology and Development

[Reflections on the World Data Forum: Harnessing Data for Development](#)

The [UN World Data Forum](#), held in Dubai last October, emphasized the critical need for better data that is disaggregated socially and demographically to make and measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A delegation from the [Data for Development in Nepal program](#), an Asia Foundation partnership with the international development organization [Development Initiatives](#), attended the three-day forum featuring the world's leading data and statistics experts from several continents. Understanding the politics behind national statistical systems, paying special attention to data on migration and gender, communicating data better to facilitate its use, complementing government statistics with alternative data sources, and addressing data privacy concerns emerged as key themes throughout the forum. Learn about the Foundation's programs in [Nepal](#), and other programs in [technology and development](#).



The Data for Development in Nepal team and partners at the UN World Data Forum in Dubai.

Notes from the Field

[In India's Cities, Women Should Work, Thrive, and Loiter](#)

About [60 percent](#) of India's population is expected to live in cities by 2050. The constant influx of rural migrants into cities has made it challenging for urban governments to keep up with the increased demand for civic amenities, services, safe and efficient public transportation, etc., which often disproportionately affects women. Observations from the Indian cities of Bhopal, Gwalior, and Jodhpur reflect that the public invisibility of women in cities, society's incorrect assumption that places the onus of women's security on the individual, and the absence of safe and high-quality public transportation to ensure that women can move freely without fear contribute to their unsafe circumstances. The Asia Foundation continues its efforts to support urban governments that prioritize women's public safety through its long-time partner [Safetipin](#), who is conducting safety audits in all three cities, as well as by working with the police as an integral part of our work against gender-based violence. Read more about the Foundation's programs in [India](#), and on [women's empowerment](#).

[A Momentous Moment for Mindanao](#)



BOL signing ceremony at the Presidential Palace, August 6, 2018. Photo/Philippines Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

On January 21 and February 6, residents of areas affected by decades of conflict in the southern Philippines cast their votes on the [Bangsamoro Organic Law \(BOL\)](#) that could bring an end to decades of armed conflict and civil unrest by creating a new autonomous region for central and western parts of Mindanao: the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Despite high tensions in the region, the dynamics are different from the last two attempts, in 1989 and 2001, to marry an executive-level peace agreement with implementing legislation. The new law has been publicly embraced by President Duterte, senior government officials including the current governor of the ARMM, the leadership of the [Moro Islamic Liberation Front \(MILF\)](#) and majority of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Success at the ballot will trigger a three-year transition period, with President Duterte appointing an 80-person Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), led by the MILF, leading to elections in 2022. Learn more about the Foundation's programs in the [Philippines](#), and in [conflict and fragile conditions](#).

In the News

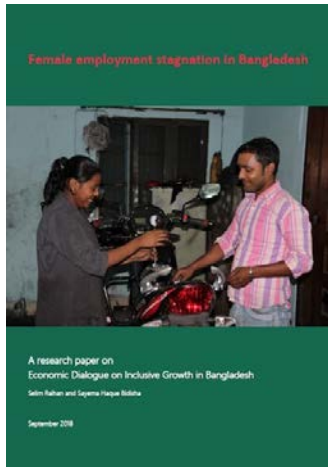
[KOICA Presents The Asia Foundation with 'Best Partnership' Award](#)

On December 28, the [Korea International Cooperation Agency \(KOICA\)](#) presented the 'Best Partnership' award to The Asia Foundation for the Women's Business Center and Incubator Project in [Mongolia](#). KOICA President Mi-kyung Lee delivered the letter of appreciation to [Kwang Kim](#), country representative of The Asia Foundation in [Korea](#). Currently, the Foundation is expanding support for Mongolian women entrepreneurs by implementing a follow-up project through Inclusive Business Solution in



partnership with Korean ICT company, 'Solutek'. Watch a [short film](#) featuring one of 28 graduates of the Women's Business Center.

Publication of Interest



[Female Employment Stagnation in Bangladesh](#)

It is now widely accepted that women's labor market participation improves their relative economic position, and from a broader perspective also stimulates the efficiency and development potential of the economy. However, traditional gender norms and patriarchal values often restrict women's mobility and constrain their activities in the labor market. Against this backdrop, the objectives of this research are to explore the factors affecting female labor force participation in Bangladesh; to examine the effect of technology and automation on female labor demand at firm level; to explore the opportunities and challenges of expansion of female employment in different potential sectors in the economy; and to offer strategies and policies for the government as well as the private sector on actions that could address the problems identified. The Policy Brief can be found [here](#). Learn more about The Asia Foundation's work in [Bangladesh](#), and in areas of [economic opportunity](#) and [women's empowerment](#).

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.