



## The Asia Foundation



### UPDATE FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Welcome to The Asia Foundation's Washington, D.C. May newsletter. This issue features updates about our recent events on **Locally-Led Approaches for Advancing Women's Leadership and Gender Equality in Asia** and **Lessons for International Peace Support and Effective Peacebuilding in Myanmar**, InAsia posts about **reforming agricultural land titling in the Philippines** and a **Right to Information boot camp in Bangladesh**, as well as a recent publication on **the state of media in Timor-Leste**.

## Recent Events



Locally-Led  
Approaches for  
Advancing  
Gender Equality

**Powering Up: Locally-Led Approaches for Advancing Women's Leadership and Gender Equality in Asia**

**May 20** – Progress towards achieving gender equality has experienced a backslide in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and persistent conflict. Supporting local partners to influence policy approaches and mobilize funds, networks, and movements in the region is crucial to hold and gain ground for transformational change. The Asia Foundation has supported local partners across Asia and the Pacific on locally-led and intersectional work to support women’s organizations and networks, including women forest defenders, women in public office, and groups on the frontlines of addressing gender-based violence. At this event, experts from [Indonesia](#), [Laos](#), [Sri Lanka](#), and [Nepal](#) shared their perspectives on promising approaches and successful strategies to address challenges and their recommendations to strengthen local leadership for gender equality. Learn more about the Foundation’s [Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality](#) program.

## Lessons for International Peace Support and Effective Peacebuilding in Myanmar

**May 21** – Between 2010 and 2020, political and economic reforms generated dramatic changes in Myanmar. Concerted efforts were made at this time to resolve the country’s persistent subnational conflicts. The research project [International Peace Support and Effective Peacebuilding in Myanmar](#) explores the peace process that surrounded the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. It focuses on the successes and failures of international support for peacebuilding at that time, drawing together findings that policymakers and practitioners, both in Myanmar and internationally, can apply. The Asia Foundation was joined by two of the co-authors of this report – [Adam Burke](#), Senior Regional Director of Conflict and Fragility Programs, and Khin Khin Mra – who reflected on the report’s findings and discussed how while future efforts to find peace in Myanmar will look very different from those of the past, it is vital that lessons from the past are taken on board. Learn more about the Foundation’s [Conflict and Fragility](#) program.

## Voices from the Field



### [InAsia Podcast on Reforming Agricultural Land Titling in the Philippines](#)

In 1936, the Philippines gave traditional farmers formal title to the lands they had farmed for generations. The Public Land Act was expected to boost agriculture by encouraging landowners to invest in their property, yet for years it did not work. The puzzle was why, and what to do about it. In this InAsia podcast episode, hear from Erwin Tiamson, former director of the Philippines Land Management Bureau and an attorney with the Foundation for Economic Freedom, and Jaime Faustino, of the Asia Foundation’s [Coalitions for Change](#) program, about [‘thinking and working politically’](#) to change the law. Learn more about the Foundation’s work in the [Philippines](#).



## [The Right to Information: A Boot Camp for Young Activists in Bangladesh](#)

In Bangladesh, the landmark Right to Information Act of 2009 enshrined the public's right to information (RTI) principle in law, but RTI is by itself just a tool; someone must pick it up and wield it in the service of democracy. This was the impulse behind the [RTI Boot Camp](#), a four-day residential training program in 2021 for young activists, offered by the [Media Resources Development](#) Initiative. With support from the Foundation's [South Asia Governance Fund](#), the boot camp introduced 33 young men and women to the nitty-gritty work of retrieving public information from their own local governments. This project is now complete, but investing in Bangladeshi youth and inspiring them to exercise their democratic rights in the public square remains an urgent necessity. Democratic self-governance cannot survive without transparency and accountability in public bodies and training a new generation to love and practice their right to information is the way forward. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Bangladesh](#).

## Recent Publication



### [State of the Media: Timor-Leste 2024](#)

*State of the Media: Timor-Leste* provides new insights into Timor-Leste's media landscape, outlining achievements and challenges facing the industry in Asia's youngest democracy, 22 years after independence. The study includes valuable evidence for Timor-Leste's media sector as it navigates a digital future and champions media freedom. Learn more about the Foundation's work in [Timor-Leste](#).



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