



Fall 2018

In this issue: Philippine Faultlines, Women’s Entrepreneurship, Community Mediation in Asia, Bangladesh, ASEAN Centrality, Asia Foundation Development Fellows, Advancing Gender Equality in Asia, India, and Thai-U.S. Relations

Upcoming Events

October 3— [Sam Chittick](#), The Asia Foundation’s [Philippines](#) country representative and a long-time observer of the country, will provide an update of recent political, security, economic and development shifts in the Philippines during the roundtable discussion on *Philippine Faultlines*.

October 18— The Asia Foundation and the Asian Development Bank will jointly launch their new publication titled “*Emerging Lessons on Women’s Entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific*,” featuring panelists [Priya Basu](#), head of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) Secretariat at the World Bank Group; Kate Francis, gender specialist and lead writer of the report; and [Amarzaya Naran](#), former project manager of the Asia Foundation’s Women’s Business Center and Incubator in Ulaanbaatar, [Mongolia](#). Read more about the Foundations’ work on women’s empowerment [here](#).

Recent Events

September 11— The event on [Approaches to Community Mediation in Asia](#) featured [Dinesha de Silva](#), the Asia Foundation’s [Sri Lanka](#) country representative, and [Preeti Thapa](#), the Asia Foundation’s Director of Justice and Governance programs in [Nepal](#), who shared insights and lessons learned from their country-specific community mediation programs, in addition to [Michael Woolcock](#), Lead Social Development Scientist at The World Bank, who shared insights drawn from the work of the Bank, including his research on crafting more effective interaction between informal and formal justice systems. The event was moderated by [Kim McQuay](#), Managing Director of The Asia Foundation’s Program Specialists Group. Watch a video of the event [here](#).

San Francisco, September 11— The Asia Foundation presented Ban Ki-moon with the [Chang-Lin Tien Distinguished Leadership Award](#) which recognizes prominent Asian leaders for a lifetime of achievement in government, business, and academia. Read more about the event [here](#).

September 20— The Asia Foundation hosted a roundtable discussion led by [Sara Taylor](#), the Asia Foundation’s [Bangladesh](#) country representative, who provided an update on the upcoming Parliamentary elections in December, and shared a preview of the findings from the Foundation’s recent survey.

September 26— The Asia Foundation released a new study titled “[ASEAN as the Architect for Regional Development Cooperation](#),” that analyzes ASEAN’s role in addressing regional development challenges in Southeast Asia, and its potential to play a greater leadership role in shaping development cooperation. The discussion included focus on ASEAN centrality and regional development initiatives, and approaches to Official Development Assistance, along with four case studies on disaster relief, workforce integration, human trafficking and sub-regional approaches. Watch a video of the event [here](#).

[2019 Asia Foundation Development Fellows Accepting Applications Through October 22](#)

The Asia Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2019 [Asia Foundation Development Fellows: Emerging Leadership for Asia’s Future](#) program. The 2019 fellowship class will be the sixth cohort of this prestigious program, launched in 2014 to engage and empower a dynamic community of emerging leaders from all over Asia. Applications will be accepted through October 22, 2018, with selection results to be announced in January 2019. Click [here](#) to review application information, and learn more about the [Foundation’s work](#).

Notes from the Field

[Advancing Gender Equality in Asia](#)



The [Gender Equality Advisory Council](#), launched at 2018 G7 Summit under the Canadian presidency, released its first report, [Make Gender Inequality History](#), which details commitments, investments, and measurable targets that G7 leaders should embrace to advance gender equality around the world. One recommendation stands out as the key to all the others—to adopt a feminist approach to international assistance by making gender equality a standalone objective and mainstreaming it throughout all development-assistance policies and programs. As countries focus on gender mainstreaming within their foreign-assistance policies and operations, the Asia Foundation's [Gender Smart Initiative](#) is cultivating an organizational culture and staff capacity to advance gender equality both institutionally and programmatically. As part of this organizational commitment, the Foundation's Women's Empowerment Program team organized the State-of-the-Art Gender Equality Workshop in [Sri Lanka](#) in August, bringing together more than 50 gender specialists, program leaders, and senior staff from The Asia Foundation's 18 country offices. Read the full blogpost to learn about the five key takeaways from their discussions and learn about the Foundation's programs to [empower women](#).

In the News

[India "Comes Out." Scrapping Law Criminalizing Homosexuality](#)

The Supreme Court of India recently [overturned](#) a 157-year-old law criminalizing homosexuality—[section 377](#) of the Indian Penal Code. In its decision, the Court cited research indicating that about [8 percent](#) of India's population of 1.3 billion identify as LGBTQI. In real numbers, that is approximately 104 million people, roughly equivalent to the [entire population of the Philippines in 2017](#). [Seventy-one countries](#) worldwide still criminalize same-sex relations, and the Supreme Court's decision has the potential to advance other decriminalization efforts in the South Asian neighborhood. Freed from legal sanctions, India's LGBTQI community can now make its presence felt in the nation's economy. Learn about the Foundation's programs in [India](#).

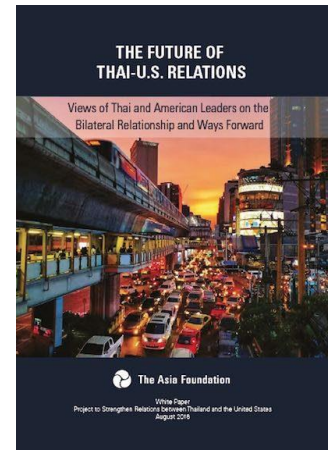


Delhi Queer Pride Parade, November 12 2017. Photo/Aamir M Khan / Shutterstock.com

Publication of Interest

[The Future of Thai-U.S. Relations](#)

After a few challenging years, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Thailand is showing clear signs of improvement. These positive developments provide an important window of opportunity to strengthen the relationship. Changes in the geopolitical context are accelerating, particularly with China's growing influence in the region, and expanding engagement by other major powers. Given these changes, it is an important moment to reinvigorate the U.S.-Thailand alliance to be more relevant for the emerging geopolitical context in Asia. This initiative, led by the Asia Foundation, was designed to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the United States and Thailand. The project included interviews with 50 leaders from the U.S. and Thailand, and a bilateral dialogue (track 1.5) between Thai and U.S. delegations in Washington in July 2018. Learn about the Foundation's programs in [Thailand](#).



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.