



May 2019

In this issue: Federalism in Nepal, India, Lotus Leadership Awards Dinner, Women in ICT, China, Gender Equality in Nepal, Conflict in Border Regions, 2018 Survey of Afghan Returnees, and Myanmar

Recent Events

May 16—[Meghan Nalbo](#), The Asia Foundation’s country representative in [Nepal](#), provided an on-the-ground perspective on Nepal’s political context and shared emerging lessons on engaging at the municipal and new provincial level, conflict transformation and access to justice, and the adaptive, politically informed approaches that seem to be allowing for traction in Nepal’s transition to federalism.

May 22—[Nandita Baruah](#), The Asia Foundation’s country representative in [India](#), shared insights on women’s security in public spaces, their access to services and economic opportunities, their engagement in the new age virtual labor market, as well the overall economic and social implications for women in India.

San Francisco, May 29— [The Lotus Leadership Awards Dinner](#) is hosted annually by The Asia Foundation’s [Lotus Circle](#), a group of committed individuals, foundations, and corporations who are advancing the rights and opportunities of women in Asia through their support of the Foundation’s [Women’s Empowerment Program](#). This year’s dinner honored Lana Condor, Actor, Philanthropist and Education Advocate; [Jennifer Cabalquinto](#), Chief Financial Officer of the Golden State Warriors; and the [Center for Education and Development](#), a nonprofit supporting education and development in [Vietnam](#). Check out our [Instagram Stories highlights](#) and [San Francisco Lotus Leadership Awards Dinner 2019 slideshow](#).

Technology and Development

[Women in ICT: Entering a Forbidden Space](#)

Despite making significant improvements in gender equality and having a “reverse gender gap” in tertiary education, women in Mongolia only occupy a small number of top management positions in the public and private sectors. Just 1.4 percent of women take degrees in information and communications technology (ICT) compared to 5.4 percent of men, and while sex-disaggregated statistics on ICT employment is lacking in Mongolia, we can assume that the number of women who pursue a career in ICT are fewer than those who graduate. To bridge this gap between women and ICT in Mongolia, The Asia Foundation is working with Korean IT company SOLUTEK Systems, Inc., and the [Korea International Cooperation Agency \(KOICA\)](#) to integrate ICT into the second phase of its successful [Women’s Business Center and Incubator \(WBC\) project](#). Read more about the Asia Foundation’s programs in [Mongolia](#), [Korea](#), [empowering women](#) and [technology and development](#).



KOICA and SOLUTEK at the Women’s Business Center.

Notes from the Field



Prof. Lester Salamon, right, and Prof. Ma with conference participants.

[Measuring China’s Nonprofit Sector](#)

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in China employ over 800,000 people, some of which ventured beyond their own national borders for the first time in 2015 while [mobilizing to provide earthquake relief](#) in neighboring Nepal. The two-year study released by the Beijing Wanzhong Social Innovation Institute (BWSII) on *Research on the Calculation of NPO-GDP in China* in July 2018 offered a first-of-its-kind portrait of China’s nonprofit economy. The difference in China’s internal data and the *Research study* led The Asia Foundation and BWSII to host an international symposium in March in Beijing called “*Measuring the Economic Scale of the*

Nonprofit Sector in China” to understand how Chinese methods differed from international standards. Without statistics consistent with emerging international usage, China cannot tell a convincing story about the development of its “third or social economy” sector. Learn more about The Asia Foundation’s programs in [China](#).

[Nepal Survey: Does a Seat at the Table Guarantee Gender Equality?](#)

Representation quotas for women, enshrined in the 2015 Constitution of Nepal, have given a record number of women a place at the table in Nepal’s political sphere. However, meaningful, widespread participation in major decision-making by women in Nepal remains elusive. The Asia Foundation’s recently released [A Survey of the Nepali People in 2018](#) reveals that even though a large proportion of Nepalis believe in greater equality for men and women, gender stereotypes still have deep roots in Nepali society. Around half of respondents (49.6%) say that women should not control their own income, movements, or decisions; 39.5% say that a woman has no right to decide how many children she will bear; and 28.3% say that a man has the right to punish his wife if she disobeys him. A substantial majority of Nepalis overall (86.8%) believe the status of women has improved in the last five years but only 47.9 % of women would choose to be reborn as a woman, compared to 64.7 % of men who would choose to be reborn as a man, showing ample room for improvement when it comes to gender equality in Nepal. Learn more about the Foundation’s programs in [Nepal](#) and [strengthening governance](#).

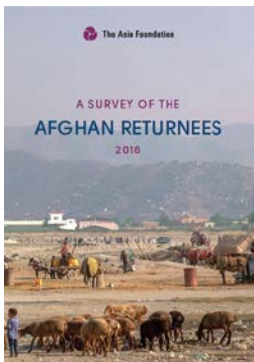


Program Highlight

[Understanding Conflict in Border Regions Project Summary](#)

In Asia, the Middle East and Africa, conflict and instability endure in contested border regions where local tensions connect with regional and global dynamics. The Asia Foundation, the [Rift Valley Institute](#) and the [Carnegie Middle East Center](#) are working together to better understand the causes and impacts of conflict in these border areas and their international dimensions, support more effective policymaking and development programming, and build the capacity of their local partners to leverage research to advocate for peaceful change. Read the full summary to learn about the research, networks, and methods of the *Understanding Conflict in Border Regions Project*, and other Asia Foundation programs in [conflict and fragile conditions](#).

Publications of Interest



[A Survey of the Afghan Returnees 2018](#)

This survey explores the many challenges returnees to Afghanistan face, including limited employment opportunities and infrastructure, insecurity, lack of housing, discrimination and stigma, as well as language and cultural barriers. The first of its kind ever conducted in Afghanistan, *A Survey of the Afghan Returnees* is a three-year public perception survey on returnees that addresses gaps in empirical knowledge about both returnees and host communities. Read the [FAQs](#) about the Survey and learn more about The Asia Foundation’s programs in [Afghanistan](#).

[The Myanmar Business Environment Index 2019](#)

The Economic Governance Index (EGI) is a tool that has become widely accepted by governments to understand economic growth, attract investors, and engage in public-private sector dialogue. The Myanmar Business Environment Index (MBEI) follows in this tradition by adapting the EGI model to the Myanmar context. The MBEI is designed to provide Union and state/region government leaders, as well as stakeholders such as business managers, with a tool to understand and address the challenges Myanmar businesses face, and thereby encourage sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Learn about The Asia Foundation’s programs in [Myanmar](#) and [expanding economic opportunity](#).



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.