



November 2019

In this issue: Launch of the 2019 *Survey of the Afghan People*, Role of Women in Afghanistan, Mongolia, Laos, *The Myanmar Business Environment Index*, Livable Cities Forum, Policy Reform in Myanmar, Battling Violence Against Women on Timor-Leste's Airwaves, Bangladesh, and Trade in the Sulu Archipelago

Upcoming Events

December 3 — Join The Asia Foundation and the U.S. Institute of Peace for a presentation on the key findings of the Foundation's 2019 [Survey of the Afghan People](#), followed by a panel discussion on the trends and shifts in the data from past years. This year's annual survey is based on face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of 17,812 citizens across all 34 Afghan provinces on a wide range of key issues, including security, the economy, corruption, justice, reconciliation with the Taliban, access to media, the role of women, governance and political participation. Check out the Foundation's Data Portal at surveys.asiafoundation.org or learn more about the Foundation's programs in [Afghanistan](#).

December 5 — At the event on "[The Role of Women in Afghanistan: Key Findings from the 2019 Survey of the Afghan People](#)," experts from The Asia Foundation, the George W. Bush Presidential Center and EnCompass LLC will discuss findings from the 2019 [Survey of the Afghan People](#) and reflect on the implications of this opinion data for women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan. This event launches The Asia Foundation's new series on "[Women Transforming Asia](#)," celebrating 25 years of the Foundation's dedicated women's empowerment program. Email [Soniya Sharma](mailto:Soniya.Sharma@asiafoundation.org) or call (202) 292-5002 to register for the event, and click [here](#) to learn more about the Foundation's programs empowering women.

December 11 — [Mark Koenig](#), The Asia Foundation's country representative in [Mongolia](#), will share his reflections on the country's recently approved constitutional changes and the critical upcoming elections in June 2020. Additional details are forthcoming. Read more about the Foundation's programs [strengthening governance](#) in Asia.

Recent Event

November 21 — [Todd Wassel](#), The Asia Foundation's country representative in [Laos](#), shared updates and reflections on the evolution of the country's governance institutions and economic growth, and commented on some of the Foundation's ongoing initiatives in Laos such as promoting development of the legal sector to improve access to justice for all Lao citizens and spearheading a community-based approach to monitoring and managing water resources.

October 8 — The launch of [The Myanmar Business Environment Index 2019](#) featured [Dr. Kim N. B. Ninh](#), The Asia Foundation's senior advisor and former country representative (2013-2018) in Myanmar, and [Edmund Malesky](#), Professor of Political Science at Duke University and Lead Researcher and Lead Author, who shared key findings from the report reflecting the views of private enterprises across Myanmar and measuring localities against ten components of good economic governance. Click [here](#) to watch a recording of the event and [here](#) to learn more about our Myanmar programs.

Technology and Development

[The Asia Foundation and the Asian Development Bank Host Livable Cities Forum](#)

The rapid urbanization of Asian cities is posing challenges that affect planning, administration, health, security, economic growth, opportunity, and quality of life, especially for vulnerable populations. The [Livable Cities Forum: Digital Solutions for Livable Asian Cities](#), co-hosted by the Asian Development Bank and The Asia Foundation in San Francisco, California on November 15, 2019, capitalized on Silicon Valley and Bay Area expertise alongside global stakeholders to develop and adapt digital solutions for smarter, more livable Asian cities. Learn more about the Foundation's programs on [technology and development](#).



Notes from the Field

[Blocked Drains and 1500 Cups of Tea: Making Reform Work in Myanmar](#)



Mawlamyine's tea-shop tax campaign thanked over 3,500 people for their increased contributions to the city's development. The first lucky 1,500 got a free cup of "pote man," Myanmar's favorite milk tea!

As the 2020 elections draw near, the Myanmar administration is looking to implement policy reforms to bring tangible improvements to people's lives. However, policymakers face difficulties because decades of dictatorship have left them with few conventions to support the reforms. The Asia Foundation has been supporting Myanmar's Development Affairs Organizations for more than four years to [strengthen governance](#) in Myanmar. Having approached policy issues from various perspectives and interacted directly with the public through [surveys](#), the Foundation has drawn three important lessons to facilitate nationwide policy reforms: analyze root causes, pay attention to policy implementation, and focus on communication. Read the full [policy notes](#) and learn about the Foundation's work in [Myanmar](#).

[Radio Liberdade: Battling Violence against Women on Timor-Leste's Airwaves](#)

Teki Toke, a weekly broadcast of Timor-Leste's Radio Liberdade, is making great progress in educating the country's young generation on violence against women. Aiming to change the conventional view on women's role, the radio project covers broad themes of love and relationships, work and money, family life and parenting, and addresses situations that can lead to domestic violence. Support for the radio project comes from The Asia Foundation's [Nabilan program](#), an eight-year program funded by the Australian government to end violence against women and children. Read more about [Intimate Partner Violence against Women in Timor-Leste](#), as well as the Foundation's country programs in [Timor-Leste](#).



Radio Liberdade's Teodosia dos Reis and Celestina Soares recording in the studio for the Teki Toke show.

In the News

[The Asia Foundation Celebrates 10 Years of Partnership with Pubali Bank](#)

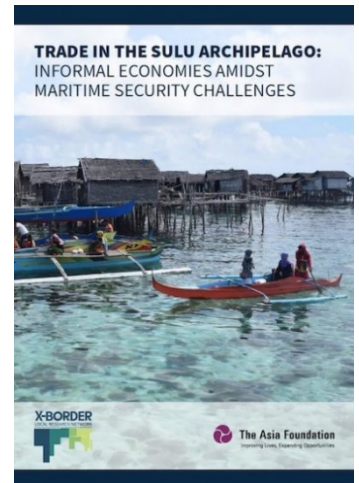


On October 21 in Dhaka, The Asia Foundation celebrated ten years of partnership with Pubali Bank Limited. The first of the Foundation's private partnerships in Bangladesh, Pubali Bank's consistent and dedicated support has been instrumental in enabling [Books for Asia](#) to reach an estimated 1.5 million individuals with 375,000 brand new educational books through schools, universities, libraries, and other institutions. Learn about the Foundation's country programs in [Bangladesh](#).

Publication of Interest

[Trade in the Sulu Archipelago: Informal Economies Amidst Maritime Security Challenges](#)

This study describes the networks of formal and informal actors involved in trade, and the various ports and channels they pass through when importing high value goods and commodities across the Sulu archipelago. The findings are based off key informant interviews conducted by local research teams in early 2019 with local traders, boat operators, merchants, port authorities and local governments across the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, as well as Zamboanga City. This study is part of the [X-Border Local Research Network program](#).



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.