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In this issue: Timor-Leste, Gender Justice in Sri Lanka, 2018 APEC App Challenge, Women's Entrepreneurship in Mongolia, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, Elections in Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and City Life Survey in Myanmar

Upcoming Event

July 17— A successful early election on May 12 in Timor-Leste gave rise to a new coalition after nearly a year of political deadlock resulting from a minority government. [Todd Wassel](#), the Asia Foundation's country representative in [Timor-Leste](#), will discuss the new government's possible approaches to the country's pressing development challenges and why this may be the last government to have the budget flexibility to address structural challenges for building quality infrastructure, effective public service delivery and economic growth.

Recent Events

June 14— [Ramani Jayasundere](#), the Asia Foundation's director of justice and gender in [Sri Lanka](#), shared lessons, experiences and insights from the Foundation's projects to strengthen gender sensitivity within Sri Lanka's formal justice system, and advance justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Read the blogpost on [Seven Questions to Consider When Promoting Gender Justice in Sri Lanka](#), and learn about our programs on [women's empowerment](#), and [law and justice](#).

Technology and Development

[The Asia Foundation, APEC Secretariat, and Google Host 2018 APEC App Challenge](#)



The 2018 APEC App Challenge, held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 23–24 May.

The 2018 APEC App Challenge, held in Papua New Guinea on 23–24 May, explores how new digital solutions can connect entrepreneurs in the informal sector with new customers and business opportunities. During the 24-hour challenge, developers worked closely with Papua New Guinea's handicraft sector to build tools that local entrepreneurs can use to amplify their products' stories and connect with customers in ways that translate into sales. Check out the 3 winners [here](#), and learn about the Asia Foundation's work in [Pacific Island Nations](#), and on [technology and development](#).

Notes from the Field

[Building an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem for Women in Mongolia](#)

With half of Mongolia's population living in Ulaanbaatar and competing for essential infrastructure like water and electricity, starting a business here and keeping it running is hard, even more so for women entrepreneurs. Mongolia's first-ever [Women's Business Center \(WBC\) and Incubator Project](#), funded by the [Korea International Cooperation Agency \(KOICA\)](#) and The Asia Foundation's [Lotus Circle](#), supports a growing number of women business owners, particularly single mothers and those with disabilities or from low-income groups, by providing an [enabling environment of high-quality business support services](#). As the most active network of women entrepreneurs in Ulaanbaatar, the WBC is helping women clients create employment opportunities for other women, shift from informal



President Khaltmaagiin Battulga visits the Women's Business Center on May 14.

cottage enterprises to formal businesses, and experience higher self-esteem and improved status in their communities. Learn about the Foundation's programs in [Mongolia](#), on [expanding economic opportunities](#) and [empowering women](#).

[Asia Foundation's Kathmandu Conference Examines Asian Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding](#)



The [Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation \(AADC\) dialogue series](#) held its 18th meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal, to examine South-South and development cooperation approaches to addressing conflict challenges in Asia. Many South and Southeast Asian countries have experienced subnational conflicts in recent decades, often caused due to tensions between diverse ethnic and religious communities. The critical need to support country-to-country learning within Asia on what has worked when it comes to peacebuilding was also identified by the recently released [The State of Conflict and Violence in Asia](#) report of The Asia Foundation. Over the years, AADC conferences have focused

on a wide range of issues including the changing aid landscape, social mobility and planned urbanization. Read about the Foundation's programs in [conflict and fragile conditions](#), and [Nepal](#).

In the News

[Indonesia: Normalizing Intolerance](#)

The stunning, 2017 electoral defeat of Jakarta's popular, non-Muslim governor, and his subsequent imprisonment for blasphemy, caught most Indonesians off guard. Indonesia was built on the premise of pluralism, writes Asia Foundation's country representative for [Indonesia](#), [Sandra Hamid](#), and appeals to Islam had been largely ineffective in past elections. But as politicians prepare to contest more than 170 local elections later this month, and a presidential race in 2019, appeals to Islamic identity are now increasingly common. Read the [full paper for CILIS](#), the [Centre for Indonesian Law, Islam, and Society](#), which points to a vicious cycle of identity politics, mass-media representations, and political opportunism that has brought religious intolerance in Indonesia suddenly to center stage.

Publications of Interest

[City Life Survey](#)



Given the lack of reliable data in Myanmar as well as government's lack of experience with city planning, complex urbanization issues are becoming significant challenges to policymakers. This pilot *City Life Survey* is the beginning of project that is intended to shine light on what Myanmar's cities are like as places to work and live. It is the first of its kind in Myanmar, tracking public perceptions and lived experiences of urban life across multiple cities and on a multiyear basis. For this pilot *City Life Survey*, the research team asked 1,400 urban residents of Yangon, Taunggyi and Hpa-An 118 questions about their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. The survey builds off The Asia Foundation's experience conducting over 300 perception surveys in Asia, as well as the Foundation's [Myanmar 2014: Civic Knowledge and Values in a Changing Society](#) survey. Read about the Foundation's programs on [strengthening governance](#), and its country programs in [Myanmar](#).

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.