

The Asia Foundation's  
***Myanmar 2014: Civic Knowledge and Values in a Changing Society***  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

December 12, 2014

**What is *Myanmar 2014: Civic Knowledge and Values in a Changing Society*?**

This is the first nationwide survey in Myanmar to document public knowledge and awareness of government institutions and processes. *Myanmar 2014: Civic Knowledge and Values in a Changing Society* sheds light on the political, social, and economic views of people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, which will inform long-term development and the nature of state-society relations.

**Why did The Asia Foundation conduct this survey? How will the findings be used?**

The findings can inform the country's development and are being made available to the Union government, state and region governments, national and regional parliaments, political parties, civil society organizations, the private sector, development organizations, and the media. We hope that the data will provide a platform for a wide-ranging, public discussion in the country about the vision people have for a new Myanmar, one that will strengthen governance and justice, support peace, and offer economic opportunities to all.

**When was the survey fieldwork conducted?**

3,000 face-to-face interviews were conducted between May 1, 2014, and June 10, 2014.

**How many Myanmar citizens were surveyed?**

A random, nationally representative sample of 3,000 Myanmar citizens was interviewed face-to-face in 84 townships across all 14 states and regions. Respondents were 18 years and older, residents of Myanmar, and included both urban and rural households. In order to obtain sufficient survey interviews to make comparisons across individual states, respondents in the states were oversampled (300 interviews conducted in each state). Survey results were weighted to make it nationally representative using 2006 population data provided by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development.

**What was the survey's margin of error?**

The national sample was 3,000 and this gave us a national-level survey results at a margin of error of +/- 1.8% at the 95% confidence level. A sample size of 300 interviews was maintained in each of the states, yielding a final margin of error of +/-5.6% at the 95% confidence level.

**Who conducted the fieldwork? What are the quality control methods?**

Twenty-six interviewers (20 women and 6 men) were trained to conduct in-person interviews in Myanmar with guidance from Sunil Pillai, the Foundation's survey manager with extensive experience in designing and implementing public opinion survey research cross the region. Fieldwork was conducted by Myanmar Survey Research (MSR). During fieldwork, MSR supervisors directly monitored 40% of all interviews, and 14% of all interviews were back-checked by an MSR quality control team.

**How was the questionnaire designed?**

Questions for this survey were drawn from the Foundation's own deep experience of conducting public perception surveys, as well as from well recognized and reliable sources such as the World Values Survey and the World Bank's Governance Survey Database. Questions allowing multiple response and open-ended answers were also incorporated in the survey to capture public perception with greater nuance. The questionnaire was translated into Burmese and then translated back into English, and field-tested. It was not feasible for the questionnaire to be translated into all major language groups, but translation was done for the Chin, Kachin, Kayah, and Rakhine languages. The survey team used local interpreters for other languages as needed in the course of survey implementation. The full questionnaire in both English and Burmese can be downloaded from The Asia Foundation website.

**How can the opinions of 3,000 people represent the views of a whole nation?**

Our goal is to closely capture the views of the entire population using an unbiased, random sampling approach. The random, nationally representative sample of 3,000 respondents reflects the views of the people from all over the country, from every ethnic group, age group, and gender. For example, the selection of the location in the country, the selection of the household, and the selection of the respondent within the household are conducted randomly and without any bias. In addition, scientific formulae have been developed in statistical sciences to arrive at the exact number of respondents to be surveyed. Using this formula, we can input the error margin and total population size information and arrive at a sample size that is suitable for the study. When the sample is chosen in this manner, the results represent the views of the entire population. For detailed information on the survey methodology, please refer to the survey report.

**To what extent does the 2014 Census population data affect the findings of this survey?**

At the time this survey was conducted, no data on settlement level populations and no current census data for Myanmar were available. For that reason, MSR used the 2006 population data provided by the Central Statistical Organization of the Ministry of National Planning and Development as a sampling frame from which to select townships using the probability proportionate to size method. In order to make the data nationally representative, the results were weighted in accordance with 2006 population proportions in the states and regions, rural and urban areas, and by gender. The new census data shows similar gender and rural-urban proportions with the main difference being variance in population size in the states and regions. The population of a state or region as a proportion of the national population has also changed marginally in most cases. Hence, if the weights for the survey data were drawn from the 2014 census information then it would impact the survey results in increasing or decreasing certain voices represented, such as those from Shan or Yangon, but on the whole, we believe that the impact would not be significant.

**What were the main limitations of the survey?**

Surveys of this kind necessarily have some limitations. Given the newness of public perception surveys in Myanmar, and the recent establishment of many government institutions and processes since 2011, it is not surprising that the percentage of people answering "don't know" was high. The refusal rate, however, was negligible, and the "don't know" responses dropped markedly on questions that people felt they knew the answers to, such as those related to government at the lowest level of village-tracts and wards, or how they define their own identity. This suggests that people generally were not afraid to answer survey questions, but

that they do face a significant knowledge and information gap. Use of terms with technical or complex definitions was deliberately avoided during the design of the questionnaire, but where understanding of terminology may have nevertheless influenced survey responses, the possibility is noted in the findings. Lastly, for security reasons, it was not possible to carry out fieldwork in areas under the control of non-state, armed groups or in areas experiencing ongoing, armed conflict.

**Some survey findings may not reflect an individual’s particular experience. What may this mean?**

A number of questions in the survey also probe people’s perceptions on a range of issues, and the survey documents what Myanmar citizens tell us. The data captures their views, impressions, and opinions. It is important to remember that opinions can sometimes be contradictory or different from individual experiences. Taken together, survey findings represent the views of a broad number of citizens across the country rather than the specific concerns of a particular group or locality.

**Who funded the survey?**

The survey is a product of The Asia Foundation, with support provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

**What is The Asia Foundation?**

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC to address critical issues affecting Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—governance and law, economic development, women’s empowerment, environment, and regional cooperation.

**What does The Asia Foundation do in Myanmar?**

In 2013, the Foundation re-established a resident country office in Myanmar after an absence of more than 50 years. The Foundation works with partners in government, the private sector, and civil society to build the country’s capacity for regional and global integration, strengthen the core institutions and processes of democratic governance at national and local levels, support initiatives for inclusive economic development, promote women’s empowerment and political participation, and increase public access to information through policy research and dissemination. Since 2007, our Books for Asia Program has donated nearly 170,000 books to 351 educational and research institutions throughout Myanmar.

**Does The Asia Foundation conduct other country surveys across Asia?**

In nearly all of the 18 Asian countries in which we have programs, the Foundation conducts research and perception surveys to help contribute to an active public discourse. Many of these surveys have been conducted in fragile, conflict-affected states and regions where reliable official statistics are often missing. Foundation surveys have also been conducted in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, among other Asian countries, on issues ranging from the incidence of corruption to women’s access to economic opportunity.

**Where can I read or download the survey report?**

The survey report is available in both English and Burmese at <http://asiafoundation.org/country/overview/myanmar>

**Who should I contact for more information?**

Please contact the Foundation's Yangon office at [country.myanmar.general@asiafoundation.org](mailto:country.myanmar.general@asiafoundation.org).