

Asia Catalyst Update

January—February 2009

[ADVOCACY]

International Harm Reduction Association Conference

Asia Catalyst is co-sponsoring the International Harm Reduction Association's 20th International Conference, from April 20-23 in Bangkok, Thailand. Harm reduction is an approach to reducing drug dependency that focuses practical strategies to mitigate the negative effects of drug use, through promotion of safer use, to managed use, to abstinence. This year's theme will be "Harm Reduction and Human Rights," and Asia Catalyst's executive director, Meg Davis, will speak at a panel on "Human Rights Violations in the War on Drugs: Linking Documentation with Advocacy," as well as helping with a human rights documentation workshop for Cambodian harm reduction activists. For more information on the program, see: <http://www.ihra.net/Thailand/Home>. A full report will be provided in the next newsletter!

Advocacy Impact

On January 29, Asia Catalyst translated a letter by two Chinese HIV/AIDS activists, Tian Xi and Li Xige, which called on China's National People's Congress to appoint an HIV+ representative -- and posted it to our blog (here: <http://asiacatalyst.org/blog/2009/01/put-people-with-aids-in-chinas-congress.html>). UNAIDS saw the letter and met with Tian Xi to discuss ways they could work together on this goal.

Mark Heywood in China

Asia Catalyst worked with [Korekata AIDS Law Center](#) to bring South African AIDS advocate Mark Heywood (chair, UN Reference Group on AIDS and Human Rights; director, AIDS Law Project; co-founder, Treatment Action Campaign) to China in November. [China AIDS Information Network](#) co-sponsored the visit. Mark spoke at an AIDS law training organized by Korekata in Wuhan; to a group of AIDS activists convened by Prof. Wang Ruotao in Beijing, and lectured at Tsinghua University Law School. Prof. Wu Zunyou took him out for dinner, arranging a meeting with Chinese health officials and doctors where (by all accounts) frank views were exchanged. Mark says he's been bitten by the China bug and plans for a second visit are already under discussion.

[INCUBATION]

Korekata AIDS Law Center

We are happy to announce that our current incubation project, the Korekata AIDS Law Center, has said goodbye to its freezing offices in the temple courtyard! It moved into a new office at the end of February – where staff will enjoy the novelty of having heat and air conditioning. The Center shares the new space with China AIDS Information Network (CHAIN), and ideas for joint projects are already under discussion.

Xu Haibo, the director of the Korekata AIDS Law Center, conducted his first field outreach trip of the year to meet with people living with HIV/AIDS in Henan Province, where he looked into possible cases for the Center to take on. He met with a number of people who were infected with HIV through blood transfusions, as well as others who asked for legal aid.

The Korekata Center will be graduating from the Asia Catalyst incubation project in June 2009, and we plan to celebrate! Details will be available soon.

Exploring Future Cooperation

We are continuing to develop our future incubation project with an organization in Yunnan Province, which provides support services to former and current commercial sex workers. If our fundraising efforts are successful, we hope to launch the partnership this coming summer.

While in Indonesia from February 14 to 21, Meg met with injection drug user groups (IDUs) to explore possible incubation and advocacy projects.

[RESEARCH]

Commercial Sex Work and Trafficking

In January, Asia Catalyst graduate intern Oliver Dinh began research on commercial sex workers in China and trafficking, to support our future incubation project with the Yunnan-based organization. Oliver and other members of the team have met with Human Rights Watch and have begun outreach to sex worker groups to learn about the field.

Forthcoming: Report on Access to Pediatric Treatment in China

Since the summer of 2008, Asia Catalyst's China Program has been working hard on a research report that documents barriers in access to pediatric AIDS treatment in China, building on the field research conducted by graduate interns Lauren Burke and Josh Greenstein in the summer of 2008. Look for the final report to come out this spring.

Thanks to everyone who has donated to our spring campaign to raise \$3000 to launch the report! We still need your support – if you haven't yet, please make a gift through our secure Paypal link at www.asiacatalyst.org/get_involved.

[ASIA REPORT]

Our Chinese-language news site, *Asia Report* (www.yazhoudiaochoa.com) is launching new interactive features this spring, including online colloquia on new approaches to AIDS law featuring international advocates and practitioners, guest commentary from leaders in the field in South and Southeast Asia, and a database of HIV/AIDS laws from throughout Asia.

Since the launch in October 2008, Asia Report has seen a steady increase in traffic to the website. Coordinator Ken Oh is working with graduate interns Garrett Traub, Peggy Fan, and Anton Muhajir on gathering and posting new information on a weekly basis.

Email info@asiacatalyst.org to join our Chinese-language email list if you'd like to receive updates on new posts to *Asia Report*!

[OUTREACH]

Speed-dating for Progressives

Asia Catalyst is excited to present our spring fundraiser: Speed-dating for a Cause! Monday, March 23rd at 6:30 pm at the Greenwich Treehouse, 46 Greenwich Avenue @ Charles Street.

Our first event is for 25-35 year-old progressives interested in dating members of the opposite sex. Go on 8 dates in one night with individuals who are also interested in social justice! If you are single and have worked or volunteered at a nonprofit in the past 3 years, email us at info@asiacatalyst.org to save your spot!

Tickets are \$15 and include free admission to the after-party.

If you're not dating right now, it's just five dollars to join us for the after-party on March 23rd at 8:30 pm to meet new friends, win fabulous raffle prizes, and dance to the dulcet tunes of DJ Spark.

All funds raised will go towards Asia Catalyst's campaign for AIDS treatment for children in China. Stay tuned for future speed-dating events for more diverse crowds.

[ON THE HOME FRONT]

Staff and Board

We are delighted to announce that Minky Worden, Human Rights Watch's media director, joined the board of Asia Catalyst in January. Minky works with journalists to help them cover crises, wars, human rights abuses and political developments in more than 70 countries worldwide. Before joining Human Rights Watch in 1998, Minky lived and worked in Hong Kong as an adviser to Democratic Party chairman Martin Lee and worked at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. as a speechwriter for the U.S. Attorney General and in the Executive Office for US Attorneys. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Ms. Worden speaks Cantonese and German, and is an elected member of the Overseas Press Club's Board of Governors. She is the editor of *China's Great Leap: The Beijing Games and Olympian Human Rights Challenges* (Seven Stories, May 2008) and the co-editor of *Torture* (New Press, 2005). We're glad to have you on board, Minky!

Interns and Volunteers

We also welcome two new additions to our *Asia Report* team this spring:

Peggy Fan holds master's degree in comparative and international education from Oxford University and UCLA, and majored in women's and gender studies in Amherst College. She is exploring the international organization and the non-profit sector work at the moment, working with UNESCO last fall and now UNAIDS in New York. She is part of the *Asia Report* team.

Anton Muhajir is a Bali-based Indonesian freelance journalist and member of Alliance of Independent Journalist (AJI) and Bali Blogger Community (BBC). He has a passion for writing and getting involved in human right issues, marginalized communities, and freedom of expression. Anton works on the *Asia Report* team as a researcher on Southeast Asian human rights and HIV/AIDS issues.

They join new interns Gisa Hartmann and Oliver Dinh, who were introduced in the last newsletter, and continuing staff and volunteers Lauren Burke, Josh Greenstein, Ken Oh, Garrett Traub, and Carol Wang.

Website

Please visit the new streamlined Asia Catalyst website, at www.asiacatalyst.org. We always welcome comments and suggestions at catalystasia@gmail.com!

[GET INVOLVED]

► **Donate.** As a small, volunteer-driven nonprofit, we couldn't do any of this without your help! Make a tax-deductible gift through Paypal or mail a check to P.O. Box 20839, New York, NY 10009.

► In February, Asia Catalyst launched our campaign to raise \$3000 for our campaign to improve treatment access for kids with AIDS in China. So far, thanks to Facebook friends, we've raised over \$500 in donations of \$10 or \$25.

If we get a total of 500 friends to join the cause by March 6, new board member Minky Worden will donate \$500! Please help by joining the Facebook Asia Catalyst cause at <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/117443?m=96aaaf39>.