



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Chinese, Thai, US Groups Join to Train AIDS Activists in Human Rights

(New York, December 1, 2010)—Award-winning rights advocates from China and Thailand are joining together to train grassroots HIV/AIDS groups in human rights skills. Their first training manual, *Prove It: Documenting Rights Abuses*, was published on World AIDS Day, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

The manual is the first in a series, *Know It, Prove It, Change It: A Rights Curriculum for Grassroots Groups*, published jointly by **Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG)**, **Korekata AIDS Law Center** in China, and **Asia Catalyst** in the US. This is the first time two leading Asian rights advocates have worked together to train people living with HIV/AIDS in their rights.

“HIV/AIDS is one of the major human rights challenges of our time,” said Paisan Suwannawong, executive director of TTAG and winner with Karyn Kaplan of the John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award. “People at risk of HIV, such as drug users, face police abuse and other rights violations that drive them underground and increase their risk of infection. At the same time, having HIV often leads to rights abuses, such as discrimination. To fight HIV, we have to empower people to advocate for their rights.”

“Though our organizations work in different cultures, the communities we work with share similar problems of stigma and discrimination,” says Li Dan, executive director of Dongjen Center and winner of the Reebok Human Rights Award. “These communities need training to help them to work effectively with authorities and prevent the spread of the pandemic.”

*Prove It* covers such topics as how to plan a research project, obtain informed consent, conduct interviews, and manage post-traumatic stress disorder among interviewees. It comes with a supplement containing detailed lesson plans that activists can use to hold community workshops. *Prove It* is written in simple, accessible English. Chinese and Thai editions will be released in January 2010, with other Asian languages to follow.

“Our goal is to create handbooks that are useable in both open and restrictive societies in Asia,” said Sara L.M. Davis, executive director of Asia Catalyst. “So instead of writing the manual in our offices, we got a lot of input from local groups in China and Thailand.”

The three partner groups co-wrote the manual, and then held a series of trial workshops to test it with drug user, LGBT, sex worker and AIDS activists in Beijing and Bangkok. “Based on their input, we had to do some heavy rewrites,” said Davis.

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The next two volumes in the *Know It, Prove It, Change It* series will focus on training groups in human rights analysis and advocacy. All three books will be published in English, Chinese and Thai, and will be available for free download online.

Asia Catalyst is a New York-based nonprofit that provides technical assistance and capacity-building coaching to grassroots nongovernmental groups in East and Southeast Asia. *Prove It: Documenting Rights Abuses* is available for free download at [www.asiacatalyst.org](http://www.asiacatalyst.org).

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