



2014

annual report



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The story of our year

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Who we are:

Asia Catalyst works with **community based organizations (CBOs) from marginalized groups in Asia that promote the right to health.**

We train our partners to meet high standards of effective and democratic governance, to establish a stable foundation for future growth, and to conduct rigorous human rights documentation, research, and advocacy. With the help of Asia Catalyst, our partners are becoming leading advocates at the local, national, and global levels, and are successfully creating change for their communities.

Our programs are innovative, collaborative, and successful. In 2014, an external evaluation of Asia Catalyst's one-year capacity building program on organizational management and advocacy, lauded the success and innovative nature of Asia Catalyst's approach. The evaluation noted that Asia Catalyst's programming produced more effective, efficient, relevant, and sustainable organizations. The evaluation also highlighted the project's "ripple effect", whereby the benefits of the project flowed outside of the participating organizations.

Asia Catalyst's intensive tailored approach to human rights research, documentation, and advocacy is also extremely effective with graduates of Asia Catalyst programming achieving substantive advocacy gains. Our reports and expertise are regularly cited in the international press, including articles and citations this year on the front page of The New York Times, the South China Morning Post, The Guardian, BBC, The Wall Street Journal and the prestigious Lancet medical journal.

Asia Catalyst was incorporated on November 28, 2006 and received 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit status in the United States of America on July 25, 2007.



Asia Catalyst photo, Bangkok, Thailand

Impact story:**A Study in Sustainability**

Since 2008, Chengdu E-Road Working Group, a health and public interest CBO in China, has worked to combat stigma and discrimination against people living with Hepatitis B (PLHBV).

Zhuo Cheng, the CBO's director, joined Asia Catalyst's **one-year group training program** in 2011 to work on organizational management and advocacy for his organization. As part of the program, and with Asia Catalyst's support, Chengdu E-Road Working Group conducted a yearlong advocacy project aimed at lowering prices for hepatitis B medication in Chengdu, a major city in Western China. **The project was a tremendous success, and resulted in a 12.1% price reduction of Hepatitis B antiviral medication in 11 pharmacy chains throughout the city.** As of 2014, the group have also successfully advocated for eight other provinces—Jiangxi, Anhui, Zhejiang, Chongqing, Hunan, Hubei, Xianjiang, and Jilin—to **include Hepatitis B medication in their essential medicines list**, mandating that the medicine must be available at all times at a price the individual and community can afford.

After participating in Asia Catalyst's training-of-trainers program in 2012, Zhuo Cheng decided in 2014 to launch **a full-scale "spin-off" training series, using Asia Catalyst's materials and training methodology to increase the capacity of 5 other CBOs**, with Asia Catalyst in a mentoring role only.

In just a few short months since the series' completion, graduates of Cheng's training series have utilized their new skills to great effect. One graduate used Asia Catalyst's logic model for **a successful grant proposal that secured the largest grant the organization had ever received: 99,000 RMB (\$16,170 USD) over 3 years.** Notably, this CBO plans to use some of the funds to **run another training workshop series next year, and has asked Zhuo Cheng to facilitate.**

Zhuo Cheng remains committed to both national level advocacy and catalyzing stronger civil society in China. He says, "this has encouraged CBOs to study each other and to build alliances, to develop common public interests and to elevate their policy advocacy skills. These efforts also play a supervisory role to [government] administrative departments, making sure they are performing their duties according to the law; and encourage improvement of laws and policies. Thus, it results in the *overall change of the environment.*"

Zheng Xun photo, Zhuo Chen's advocacy World Hepatitis Day 2012



Highlights of 2014:



Change It: Ending Rights abuses now available in Burmese. Launched through **inaugural workshops** in Mandalay and Yangon.



Asia Catalyst (AC) graduate successfully lobbies Zhengzhou City Number 6 Hospital to **cancel the discriminatory US\$185 fee** charged for “doctor’s protection” for **surgery on people living with HIV**.



3 graduate organizations spearhead an **advocacy campaign and landmark lawsuit**, designed at an Asia Catalyst training, against a gay ‘conversion’ clinic in China; the **first case of its kind** accepted by a Chinese court.



Regional Rights Training Program launched, bringing together community leaders from **Viet Nam, Cambodia, China, and Myanmar** to work on medical discrimination against People Living with HIV.



Due to lobbying by an Asia Catalyst graduate, the Chinese local government in Xinyang finally implements **national level health policy to provide housing subsidies** of RMB 3000-5000 (US \$490-817) **for People Living with HIV** in its locality.

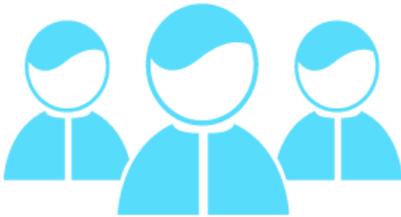


Ripple Effect: graduate conducts **first full “spin-off” capacity building program** using Asia Catalyst’s curriculum and methodology, **trains 5 more CBOs** in organizational management and advocacy in China.



1st comprehensive English-language report on transgender female sex workers

in China is published by Asia Catalyst and community partners.



Asia Catalyst spearheads **coalition of lawyers, scholars and activists** to initiate legal advocacy campaign **against arbitrary detention of female sex workers**, ‘Custody and Education’ in China.



AC graduate **works with the Guangdong CDC** to enable **access to free treatment** for opportunistic infections for all students living with HIV in the city, regardless of location of their household registration, and a **government-provided one-time payment and monthly stipend** for HIV treatment.

Chair Report:

As I reflect on Asia Catalyst's eighth year of operations, I see how much the organization has achieved in such a short space of time. In China, the number 8 is considered especially lucky and, as Asia Catalyst celebrates its 8-year anniversary, it is reaffirming to see Asia Catalyst transition from a start-up to an established leading authority and resource on a broad spectrum of rights issues in Asia.

In her first year as Executive Director, Charmain has strengthened the organization through a strategic internal re-organization with a vision to broaden the reach and influence of the organization. Establishing a presence in Bangkok will ensure Asia Catalyst's unique approach to capacity building and community empowerment is accessible to more groups, and will also place us at the heart of much of the decision-making taking place in the Asian regional hub.

Asia Catalyst also spent more time in Myanmar this year, where organizations in Yangon and Mandalay had requested our specialized assistance for groups working at the intersection of health and human rights. Our workshops had a high turnout from a cross-section of community based organizations, all but one of whom had never received training before.

We were also busy in New York. Our expanded Board of Directors remain committed and engaged with the values and mission of Asia Catalyst, giving 100% contribution and proactively engaging with the organization's mission whenever possible. Board members this year hosted several events, including a particularly illuminating evening of discussion with pre-eminent HIV treatment pioneer, Dr. David Ho. His remarks inspired us with a discussion on progress towards an HIV vaccine and promising developments on preventing mother to child transmission of HIV in China.

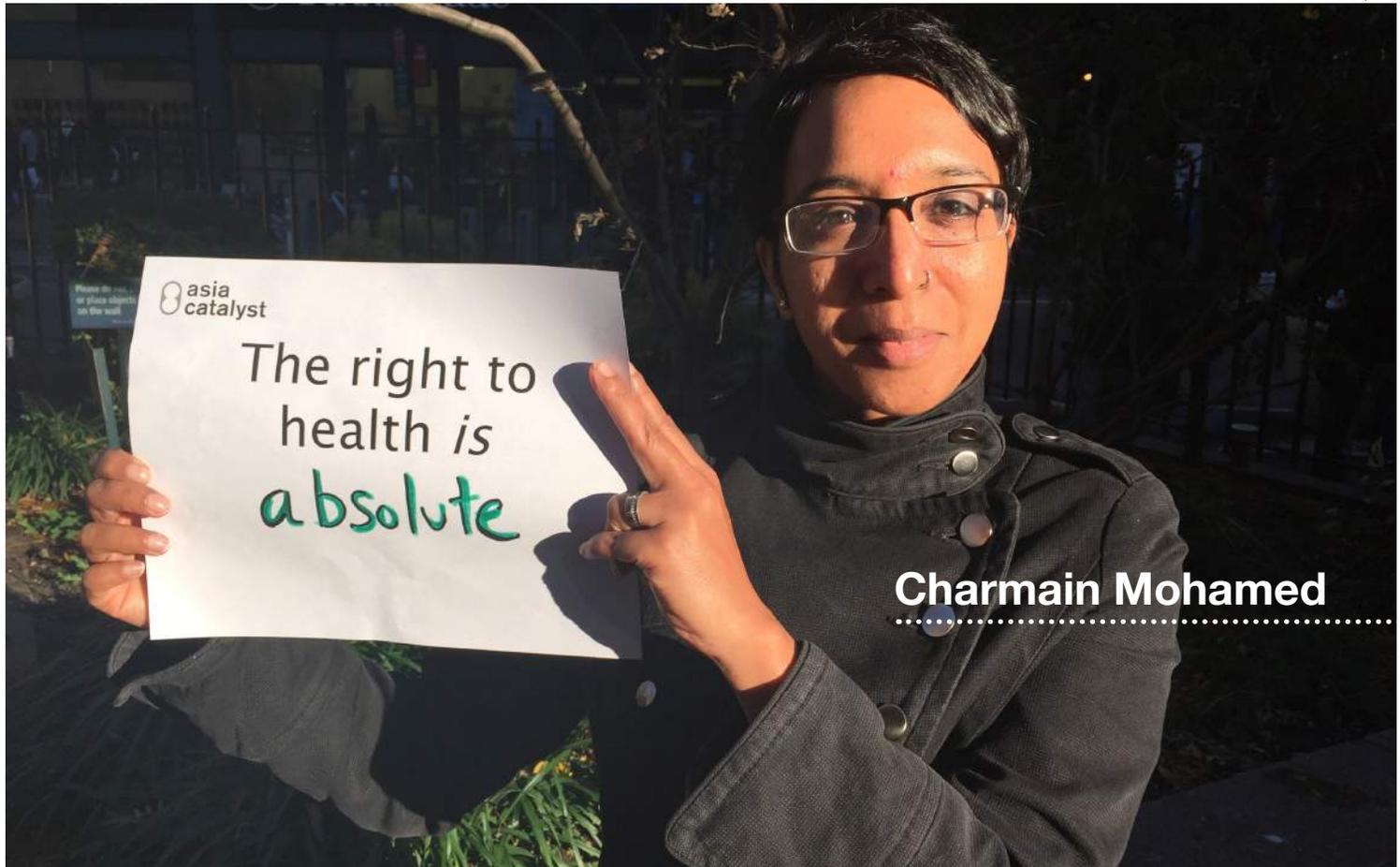
As we've seen with this year's Ebola crisis, strong community involvement in responding to public health emergencies is key to fighting epidemics, as is ensuring non-discriminatory and stigma free access to healthcare. These concepts are at the heart of Asia Catalyst's mission. Over 30 years after the HIV virus was first identified, discrimination remains the biggest obstacle to an effective response to fighting and preventing the epidemic. We are making good progress in overcoming this obstacle.

Yvonne Y. F. Chan

Chair and Treasurer, Board of Directors



Yvonne Y.F. Chan

**Charmain Mohamed**

Executive director report:

We are very proud of our work at Asia Catalyst, but it was extremely reaffirming to have our impact confirmed by two external evaluations of our work in China this year. Both remarked on the extraordinary success of our capacity building programs in bringing tangible results for the people and communities we work with. Both evaluations also noted the added value that Asia Catalyst has at bringing together organizations, facilitating coalitions on key issues, and catalyzing change on a wider level. For example, our program alumni gathering in July this year spawned three new collaborative advocacy projects, one of which on LGBT discrimination is already making headway in China's courts. Furthermore, our work is proving sustainable. The first 20 graduates of our one-year capacity-building program went on to train 61 other organizations and 50 university students. Using our curriculum and methodology, one participant of our training-of-trainers program started his own capacity building project and trained a further 5 organizations in organizational management and advocacy.

Our reach is also growing. This year's program in China received 88 applications from 30 out of 34 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions in China, and we conducted workshops for the first time in Guangxi and Gansu provinces. The trainings in these remote locations

highlighted needs of the 19 organizations that participated, which are cut off from resources in more developed parts of China.

Finally, the re-launch of our Regional Rights Program at the end of 2014 will bring together community organizations from Cambodia, China, Myanmar, and Viet Nam to work on medical discrimination against people living with HIV. Two thirds of the 35 million people living with HIV in the world are still not accessing treatment, and discrimination in health care settings is a major reason. This is especially true for the communities we work with, who are some of the most marginalized groups in the world. Meeting some of these activists during my trips to Beijing and Bangkok this year was definitely a highlight; their commitment motivates us all to keep working until everyone has equitable access to healthcare.

Charmain Mohamed
Executive Director

Where we are working now:

In the last eight years, Asia Catalyst has worked with **hundreds of activists and community-based organizations across Asia**. In 2014, our partners were based predominantly in China and Myanmar. The opening of our regional office in Bangkok, which houses two new full-time Asia Catalyst staff members, will allow Asia Catalyst to be even more closely available to our partners around the region, and will put us at the center of this decision making hub in the region.

Here is where we were in 2014.



● One-year group training on organizational management and advocacy

● Tailored coaching program

● Human rights documentation and advocacy training

● One-day workshops



Asia Catalyst photo, AIDS 2014
Melbourne, Australia

“Attending AIDS 2014 with Asia Catalyst has been very meaningful and insightful for me in my intervention work among sex workers and the LGBT community in China.”

Our work is based on our core values:

Asia Catalyst is a leader in **participatory curriculum design**. In response to CBO requests, Asia Catalyst developed Know It, Prove It, Change It: A Rights Curriculum. This innovative and participatory curriculum combines the experiences of Asia Catalyst and project partners Thai AIDS Treatment Group in Thailand, and Dongjen Center for Human Rights Education and Action in China. It was developed through an innovative participatory drafting process with local groups, and field-tested over the course of two years. It is specifically designed for CBOs working at the intersection of human rights and HIV and is freely available in Chinese, English, and Thai, with Change It now also available in Burmese.

The strength of our curriculum is that it provides participants with the entire process of human rights actions. The three volumes include: Know It: The Rights Framework, which teaches groups to conduct human rights analysis of local issues by using national and international human rights laws; Prove It: Documenting Rights Abuses, which teaches groups to conduct human rights documentation research and produce evidence-based reports; and Change It: Ending Rights Abuses, which teaches groups to design and implement effective advocacy campaigns.

Asia Catalyst's editorial philosophy and curriculum design is **driven by these core values**:

Participation: Asia Catalyst believes that “human rights begin at home.” This means that, before the larger society can be changed, CBOs must first model democratic values and governance in their operations and among their staff. This includes promoting the meaningful participation of all members of an organization and the inclusion of target community members in decision-making and program activities within the organization.

Empathy: Empathy in this context refers to the ability to learn from the experiences of other individuals and organizations. The experiences of civil society groups across the Asia-Pacific region hold many relevant lessons for health rights activists in each country, and can help break the perceived relative isolation of grassroots organizations through regional interaction and international forums.

Practicality: Our curriculum, tools, and concepts have real world applicability and utility. Although the curriculum draws on education theory and research, its emphasis remains on introducing practical, actionable tools for grassroots organizations.

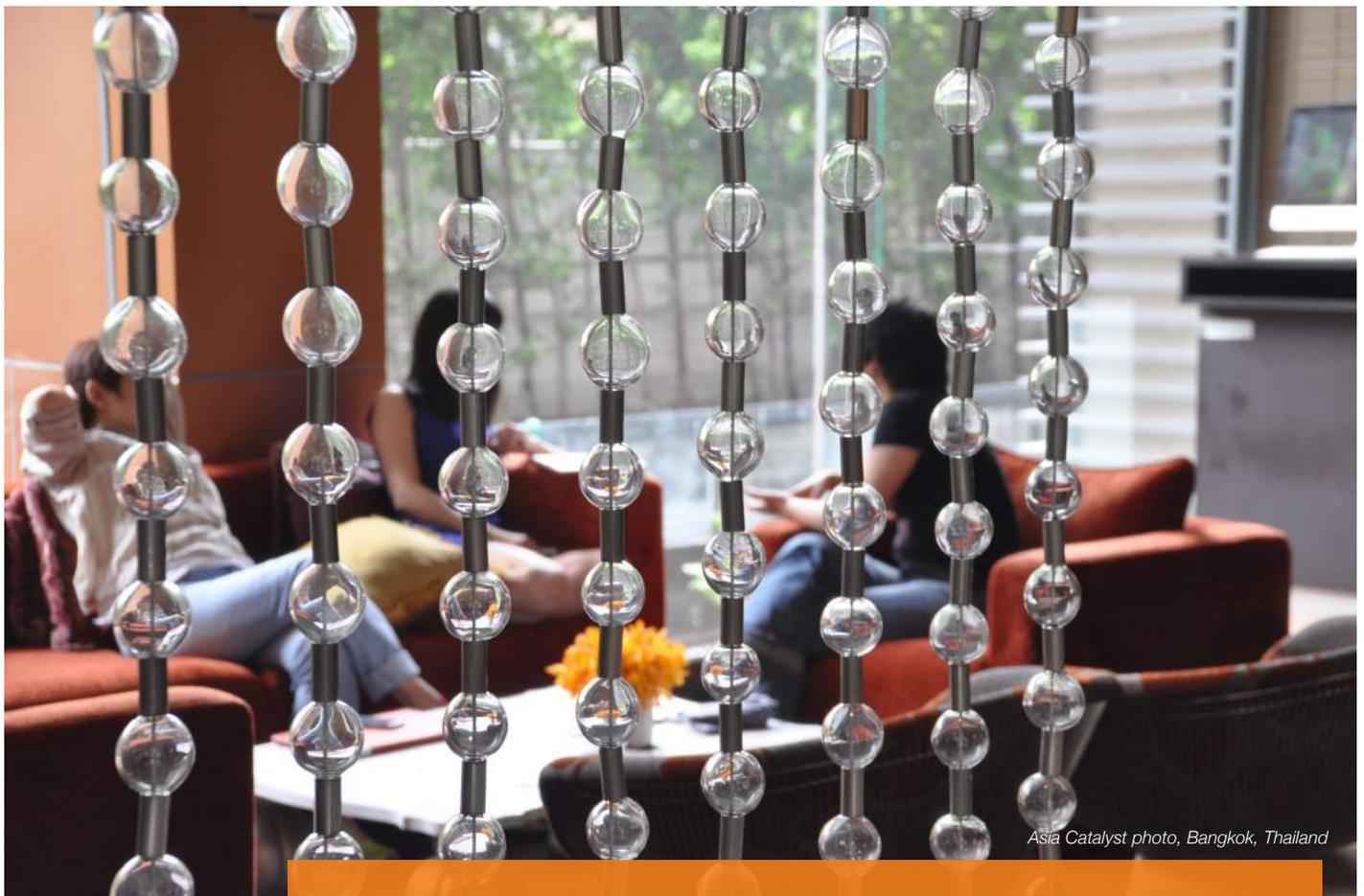
Diversity: The participatory nature of the curriculum means that participants are asked to share their own experiences and reflections with peers. To enrich the learning potential of this approach, we aim to create a classroom that reflects a diversity of experiences, in which “diversity” is broadly understood across lines of age, sex/gender, sexual orientation, urbanity/rurality, ethnicity, (dis)ability, experience level, and area of work.

Our programs in Asia:

Asia Catalyst works with communities facing **severe and often endemic health issues and human rights violations**. According to UNAIDS, strong community responses are “essential” to controlling epidemics like HIV, as CBOs from marginalized groups are “key providers of prevention, treatment, care, and support services, and also work to create the social, political, legal, and financial environment needed to effectively respond to the epidemic.” This essential need for increased community involvement is magnified when widespread discrimination dissuades or prevents marginalized groups from openly seeking appropriate medical care and treatment. Such involvement contributes to a stronger, more resilient civil society empowered to leverage change for broader protections, freedoms, and human rights for all.

Around Asia, however, young CBOs from these groups are often ill-equipped to comprehensively take ownership and represent the communities they serve. They lack vital skills and expertise to conduct advocacy, change policy, and strengthen a holistic health response for more positive outcomes for affected individuals. While many of these CBOs are clear on the change they want to create, and can reflect on the issue and consequences of discrimination, most do not have the experience, knowledge, or capacity to launch and sustain targeted advocacy campaigns.

Asia Catalyst works with these groups to **catalyze burgeoning activism and enable members of these communities to run sustainable organizations and conduct rights-based documentation and advocacy on the right to health**. We work with our partners, one-on-one in their offices and in coalition with their peers, using curriculum developed with feedback from the communities we serve. Together with Asia Catalyst, our partners are becoming leading advocates at the local, national, and global levels.



Asia Catalyst photo, Bangkok, Thailand

An Asia Catalyst staff member facilitates a discussion between two civil society leaders from China, while at a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2014.

Capacity Building and Community Initiatives

One year group training series

Asia Catalyst's seminal program, the one-year group training series, is an innovative, holistic capacity building program, **merging organizational management skills with rights-based advocacy training for CBOs.**

Over the course of one year, Asia Catalyst convenes **ten CBO leaders from marginalized communities for a series of workshops** that teach new skills, launch advocacy projects with support and sub-grants, and build coalitions among a diverse set of CBO leaders who often operate alone at the margins of society. The ten leaders represent diverse marginalized groups—such as people living with HIV or hepatitis, LGBT, and sex workers—and remote geographic regions—such as border areas in China. They all focus on distinct health rights issues and their organizations are often poorly resourced and vulnerable to changing political, environmental and financial dynamics.



Participants in Asia Catalyst's one year group training series, 2014

In 2014, Asia Catalyst's One Year Group Training participants included community-based organizations:

- *Representing* people living with HIV; LGBT and men who have sex with men (MSM); sex workers; people who use drugs; hemophilia; children with disabilities; pulmonary hypertension; and water safety.
- *From* 9 provinces and municipalities—Beijing, Fujian, Gansu, Hebei, Henan, Hunan, Liaoning, Shandong, Xinjiang—in China.
- *Conducting advocacy on* issues concerning: PLHIV, MSM, LGBT, female migrants and sex workers, and hemophilia and hypertension.

What program graduates are saying

"Asia Catalyst's training gave us the skills, especially in advocacy risk management, to work together with other local NGOs to successfully fundraise for a program, which we have recently begun in July 2014. This program will teach Dai farmers in Xishuangbanna about the law, and will be in a platform for us to promote other advocacy initiatives in rural areas."

"I have learned to practice and take action while studying theories. The skills I learned were absent in my organization previously. We urgently needed the skills and knowledge to guide us in our work, in the hopes of achieving more effective advocacy."

"We used these techniques to advocate for funding from the provincial level CDC for our own organization...and to coordinate with NGOs from 8 other cities to successfully lobby city level CDCs to also sustainably fund their organizations. From January 2014 until now, this funding has allowed us to provide health check services for 1500 MSM in Harbin city. Hundreds of MSM in other cities have also been tested by our partners."



Asia Catalyst photo, Regional Rights program 2013

“Before Asia Catalyst, I did not think we could make real change. I thought, ‘maybe other can do it, but we cannot.’ Now, I don’t just think that we can make change in the lives of people living with HIV. We already have.”

-Xiaomi
Group training program graduate

Impact:

A December 2013 external evaluation of the first two years of the program lauded the success and innovative nature of Asia Catalyst’s program, noting that, as a result of Asia Catalyst training, participant organizations became **more effective, efficient, relevant, and sustainable organizations**. The evaluation also indicated that the benefits of the project flowed outside of the participating organizations. After completing the program with Asia Catalyst, **participant organizations in the first two years of the program used the knowledge and skills gained to formally train 61 other organizations and 50 university students at local and national level training workshops**. In 2014, even more have been trained.

Solidifying the sustainability of the approach, this year in China one program graduate, using the skills he learned in Asia Catalyst’s program, **ran his own capacity building project with Asia Catalyst’s curriculum and methodology**. With mentoring from one of our trainers he trained five other grassroots leaders over the course of 2014. One graduate of his spin-off capacity building series has successfully fundraised to run another training series spin-off for CBOs focused on children with autism in China. She has asked our graduate to facilitate the training series.

We call this the ripple effect.

Regional rights training program:

Community based organizations (CBOs) have a *unique understanding* of the needs and circumstances of the communities they represent and, with the necessary skills, are *best positioned* to conduct their own advocacy.

However, successful advocacy often requires coalitions of CBOs to achieve any measurable progress or long-term impact. CBOs that are working on competing priorities and without proper resources may find themselves isolated from their peers or, without peers that are able to support their efforts due to a lack of capacity.

To address this need, Asia Catalyst founded the Regional Rights Program in 2013. Now in its second year, **The Regional Rights Program trains CBOs on human rights analysis, documentation and advocacy within a framework of coalition building between like-minded CBOs working on the right to health.**

The 2014 iteration of this program brings together 16 representatives from 8 CBOs from **China, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Cambodia**, with a thematic focus on **discrimination in healthcare settings against people living with HIV (PLHIV).**



Asia Catalyst photo, Regional Rights Program 2013

According to UNAIDS, strong responses by people living with HIV community organizations are “essential” to controlling the epidemic, as they are the “key providers of prevention, treatment, care, and support services, as well as working to create the social, political, legal, and financial environment needed to effectively respond to the epidemic.”

- “Supporting Community-based responses to AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.” UNAIDS, June, 2010

The Bottleneck of Medical Discrimination:

There are **4.8 million** people living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific today;

HIV-related stigma in Asia and the Pacific reduces PLHIV's access to healthcare by a staggering **33%**;

29% of healthcare providers become unsupportive after discovering their patient's positive HIV status;

41.7% of PLHIV have faced HIV related discrimination in China;

35% of PLHIV in Myanmar were denied access to family planning services and **20%** denied sexual/reproductive health services in the past year due to their HIV status;

Asia Catalyst photo, Regional Rights program 2013

Launched in 2014, Asia Catalyst's Regional Rights Program will:

- 1 Produce an Issue-specific Curriculum:** Asia Catalyst tailor-designs all our training materials to fit the needs of the participants. The curriculum for this program will focus on issues around medical discrimination and will combine the core content of our original human rights manuals *Know It, Prove It, and Change It*, with workshop materials from our other trainings and feedback from external evaluations.
- 2 Train 16 CBO Leaders:** 16 CBO leaders from Cambodia, China, Myanmar, and Viet Nam will meet in Bangkok for trainings on human rights analysis, documentation, and advocacy on issues related to medical discrimination against PLHIV. Asia Catalysts supports participants to form coalitions with their national peers and conduct preliminary analysis on medical discrimination in each country.
- 3 Research:** Asia Catalyst will facilitate and coordinate participants' documentation of medical discrimination against PLHIV in China, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Cambodia. The research will be published in 2015 with a regional report containing testimony, analysis and policy recommendations to end medical discrimination in Asia.
- 4 Implement Strategic Advocacy:** 4 joint advocacy plans, developed in the workshops, will be implemented in the 4 participating countries to combat discrimination in healthcare settings against PLHIV. All participants will receive subgrants to conduct planned advocacy activities, with support and monitoring by Asia Catalyst.
- 5 Generate a Best Practices Guide:** Asia Catalyst will publish a freely available resource memo on best practices and lessons learned for CBOs and HIV/AIDS networks and organizations working on medical discrimination, which can be used for advocacy by CBOs across the region.

Tailored Coaching:

Asia Catalyst's Tailored Coaching program delivers specialized issue specific training to CBOs through workshops at the CBO's office just for members of their staff.



Asia Catalyst photo, Coaching 2014

Asia Catalyst instructs a participant during a tailored coaching program designed for the Xishuangbanna Red Ribbon Home, a PLHIV CBO focusing on minorities and HIV in China, in March 2014.

In 2014, Asia Catalyst designed and implemented individualized coaching programs for 5 different community based organizations from 4 cities in China. At the organizations' request, program topics this year included: program management, fundraising, internal communications, volunteer management, human rights documentation, and strategic planning.

Coaching partners this year serve communities of people living with HIV/AIDS, men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, sex workers, women and children, and minorities.

Research, Documentation, and Advocacy

Advocacy:



International New York Times

Buyers rush to Colorado as marijuana sales begin

Old rivalries put flame to a fuse in South Sudan



Chinese prostitutes sent to labor camps

Asia Catalyst's advocacy campaign following the release of our December 2013 report on Custody and Education resulted in global media coverage throughout much of 2014.

In 2014, Asia Catalyst's advocacy focused predominantly on the issue of **Custody and Education**, an arbitrary detention system for female sex workers and clients in China.

Asia Catalyst's **December 2013 report, Custody and Education: Arbitrary Detention for Female Sex Workers in China** was groundbreaking, the first publication to look at the detainee's experiences in the Custody and Education (C&E) system, including testimony from formerly detained sex workers. With global media coverage on the report extending well into 2014, Asia Catalyst's subsequent advocacy strategy has continued to catalyze developments on the issue.

The Advocacy Campaign

In early 2014, The Red Ribbon Forum— A platform for the Chinese government and civil society to discuss human rights and HIV related issues —used Asia Catalyst’s research to work with a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference(CPPCC)to develop **a proposal to abolish the system for the ‘Two Meetings’, the Chinese government’s annual Congressional meetings.** The Voice of Women’s Rights, a Beijing-based CBO, also used the research to help a National People’s Congress representative to submit **a similar proposal.** In addition, a Guangdong province CPPCC member submitted **a comparable proposal at the province’s ‘Two Meetings’ in January.**

Adding to the momentum, more community groups joined Asia Catalyst in calling for the system’s eradication. In May 2014, **Asia Catalyst facilitated more than 100 legal practitioners and scholars to sign a coalition letter** (pictured below) that urged the National People’s Congress to conduct a legal review of the C&E system. Voice of Women Rights, Asia Catalyst’s Chinese partner organization, delivered the letter to the National People’s Congress of China.



Advocacy strategies included operating within China’s own legal framework, including the Open Government Information (OGI) Act, which mandates that government organs be transparent and grants citizens and social groups the right to acquire information from the government. **One Beijing CBO submitted nearly 400 requests to the Chinese government through the OGI Act, demanding the release of data on the C&E system.** After one provincial government refused to release the information on the system, the CBO decided to continue the advocacy campaign by **suing the local government** for failure to abide by the OGI regulations.



A coalition letter, signed by more than 100 legal practitioners and scholars, urged the Chinese government to conduct a legal review of Custody and Education.

Concurrently, **a Chinese lawyer also applied for information through the OGI Act**, through which he verified the number of C&E centers in China: 116. As of November 2014, at least three appeal letters to the government from lawyers and scholars have been submitted, advocating for the end of C&E.

Finally, the **United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women** met on October 23, 2014 to review China’s compliance with the Convention. In the Concluding Observations on the Combined Seventh and Eight Periodic Reports of China, the Committee formally recommended on November 7, 2014 that the Chinese government should **“consider ,abolishing the Custody and Education programme, which may be used to justify the arbitrary detention of women.”**

Documentation and research:

Asia Catalyst's advocacy is part of a **collaborative process that starts with marginalized communities identifying for themselves what their most pressing issues are.**

In 2014, Asia Catalyst worked with two community based organizations in Shanghai and Beijing to document **the daily realities of transgender female sex workers** in those two Chinese metropolitans. Shanghai CSW & MSM Center and Beijing Zuoyou, both provide services to men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender sex workers in the two cities. Through a year-long capacity building and documentation project, Asia Catalyst worked with these two organizations to interview 70 transgender sex workers, a broad array of stakeholders and complete desk research to publish a ground breaking report on this most marginalized and hidden of groups.



“When you talk to a transgender sex worker, she will always smile and look beautiful and tell you that her life is perfect, giving off confidence. It is *only once a trust is built* with her that she will then tell researchers what her life is really like.”

-Haibin, Asia Catalyst documentation partner

Asia Catalyst photo, 2014

Transgender female sex workers are among the populations most at risk for HIV; they are 49 times more likely to acquire HIV than all other adults of any reproductive age. The report, published in December 2014, fills the significant gap in data on the needs and daily realities for transgender female sex workers in China.

Significantly, the transgender sex workers interviewed face **discrimination in all aspects of their life**, including in education, housing, employment, and access to healthcare.

One major challenge for transgender people in China is **the pre-condition of Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) in order to change the gender on their ID.** For those who have not undergone the expensive and lengthy medical procedure, or for those who do not wish to do so, this presents potentially a lifetime of barriers and means they do not have any means of obtaining legal recognition of their gender identity. On a practical level it also creates daily obstacles when trying to access a broad range of services for which ID is required, including banking, air or train travel, renting housing and insurance coverage for healthcare.

Transgender sex workers also face a **high risk of HIV/AIDS and other STDs** due to punitive law enforcement practices, such as arrests and fines, which drive the community underground, facilitating high-risk behavior and impeding health outreach.

For full findings, please visit www.asiacatalyst.org and read the report.

The transgender sex workers interviewed face discrimination in all aspects of their life, including in education, housing, employment, and access to healthcare.



“Transgender sex workers are isolated and marginalized by society. They experience double discrimination for being both transgender and a sex worker.”

-Preliminary findings, July 2014

Campaigning to reduce the vulnerability of students with HIV

Written by Xiaomi, Lingnan Partners Group, Summer 2014

In 2012, there were more than one hundred students living with HIV who lacked local household registration in China's Guangzhou province, a fifty percent increase from 2011. Lacking household registration, which determines access to the city's healthcare system, meant that non-local students—even those who had lived in Guangzhou for many years—did not receive the same access to treatment as locals and needed to bear much of the treatment costs themselves. Because of this barrier, **one third of the non-local students who needed to take standard antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) on a regular basis were unable to;** they lacked the funds to pay for the checkup and treatment fees.

The challenges of this system are particularly substantial when students living with HIV experience co-infections. I remember one student calling me on his 18th birthday and telling me that he had just found out that he had another STI, which would cost more than 7000 RMB (\$1141 USD) to treat. He was worried that he wouldn't be able to find the money for treatment, and that the STI would further weaken his immune system and expose him to other illnesses. However, **not treating the STI would put him at risk** of needing an operation, which would put him in an even more vulnerable financial situation.

I also remember another student happily telling me that he was finally able to pick up his ARV medication once every three months. This was significant because, when he was first put on ARV, he had to go to the hospital on a regular basis for expensive checkups. This had cost him between 2000 and 3000 RMB (\$326-\$490 USD) in the previous six months. Afraid to tell his family that he was living with HIV, he had saved money for almost a year after his diagnosis to begin treatment. However, **this delay in treatment had caused his immune system to reach dangerously low levels**, and he had nearly missed the best time to treat his HIV. These encounters, among others, made me realize that **such cases weren't isolated**. There was a large group of non-local students suffering from these issues, unaware of what they should do.

Through participating in the Asia Catalyst's program in 2011, I learnt a lot about organizational management and advocacy. These were subjects that I knew almost nothing about before – especially advocacy. **Asia Catalyst's trainings allowed me to better understand the strategies and possibilities of advocacy, and how to build alliances.** Because of this training, my CBO, Lingnan Partners, began to assess how advocacy

could improve the lives of non-local students in our province. Subsequently, **we applied for and were awarded Asia Catalyst's small grants [subgrants] advocacy project.** This gave us the opportunity to put our new knowledge into practice, and to strive to reduce the financial barriers to HIV treatment faced by non-local students.

Our advocacy campaign began by reaching out to the Guangzhou Centre for Disease Control and the local STI and AIDS Association to be our alliance partners. We then carried out detailed on-the-ground research on the struggles that non-local students living with HIV were facing.

Asia Catalyst photo



We were very open with the students, explaining that our research was intended to improve the living conditions of teenagers like them who were living with HIV and to address the financial problems that they were facing. Although it was a challenge, in the end, more than half the students we approached agreed to participate in our documentation and research.

The data we documented gave us motivation and confidence. We found many opportunities to share our findings at a range of seminars, conferences, and other fora. We even had the opportunity to present on this topic at the provincial government's Guangdong HIV Conference.

Lingnan Partners was the only NGO invited to speak, and found the provincial government officials very responsive to our research – they wrote a memo on the spot instructing health department's to pay greater attention to the growing spread of HIV in teenagers.

On World AIDS Day, **our advocacy partners and we gave interviews to a wide range of local media sources**. We spoke about the growing rates of HIV among teens, and the problems that they experienced in gaining treatment. **This was the first time that this issue was paid attention to by the public, as well as government departments, throughout the province**. In this supportive environment, we also sat down with our partners to discuss a clear plan of action to generate policy change. We knew that, without a clear advocacy plan as taught in Asia Catalyst's program, it would be difficult to achieve our goals.

At the beginning of the year, our advocacy campaign paid off. During a coordination meeting between the Guangdong Centre for Disease Control, local hospitals and community CBOs, a policy change was issued. **This policy change allowed non-local students to receive the same allowances as locals** – 7200 RMB (\$1175 USD) per year for outpatient HIV treatment, and 7000 RMB (\$1140 USD) per year in in-patient care. Since Guangdong launched this new policy, Lingnan Partners has not found any cases of non-local students delaying their ARV treatment.

We are still working with our partners to fight for non-local students' rights to basic health care. For example, we hope that, in the future, subsidized STI and ARV treatment will not only be available to people with CD4 counts lower than 500 who are receiving ARV treatment. Our future advocacy goals also includes ensuring that the cost of treatment will no longer be an obstacle for any person living with HIV, regardless of whether they have formally begun ARV treatment or not.

This advocacy success and Asia Catalyst's training has made me realize that, as a nonprofit organization with direct contact to the PLHIV community, we need to try to find patterns of issues for documentation. Finding resources to conduct **advocacy for policy change is more effective than trying to resolve individual issues over and over again**. Furthermore, advocacy is more effective, because, through advocacy, we are able to create permanent change that will benefit the whole community.



Xiaomi (center), the author of this case study, participates in an Asia Catalyst workshop in Bangkok, Thailand.

Asia Catalyst photo

Where the money came from:

*financial year ending June 30, 2014

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, Asia Catalyst's operating revenues were **\$749,602**. Over the past two years we have seen a marked growth in individual contributions. We are thankful for all of your support. Here is a breakdown of our major sources of funding and a list of individual and institutional donors that contributed more than US \$50 during Fiscal Year 2014:

\$50-500

Reema Khan
Jan Berris
Vishal Kalra
Karyn Kaplan
Louise Lamphere
Stacy Mosher
Rachel Sacks

Dorothy Solinger
Andrea Worden
Jonathan Cohen
Meg Davis
Andrew Goldberg
Cheng Si Tong

\$500-10,000

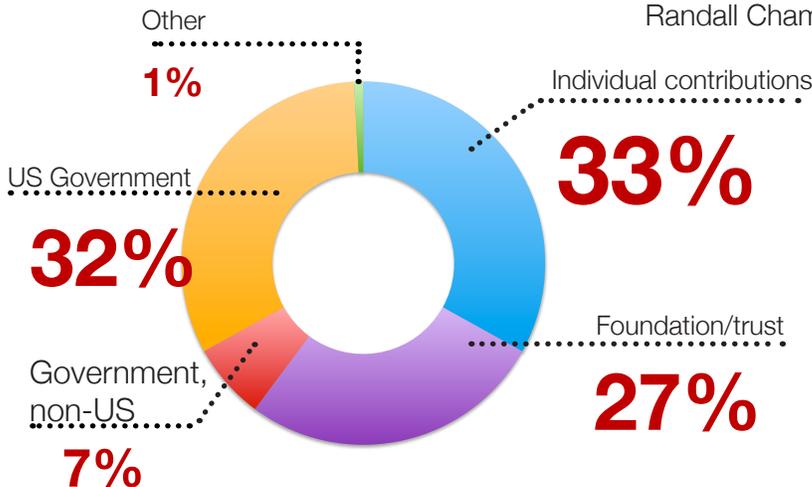
Carolyn Bartholomew
Kelley Currie
Kim Dunbar
Ann Hotung
Sarah Lubman
Bruce Rabb
Embassy of Switzerland in Beijing
Embassy of the United Kingdom in Beijing
Minky Worden
Shannon Wu
Randall Chamberlain

\$10,000-50,000

Yvonne Chan
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Anonymous

\$50,000-250,000

Andrew Duncan
The Ford Foundation, Beijing
Levi Strauss Foundation
National Endowment for Democracy
US Dept of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

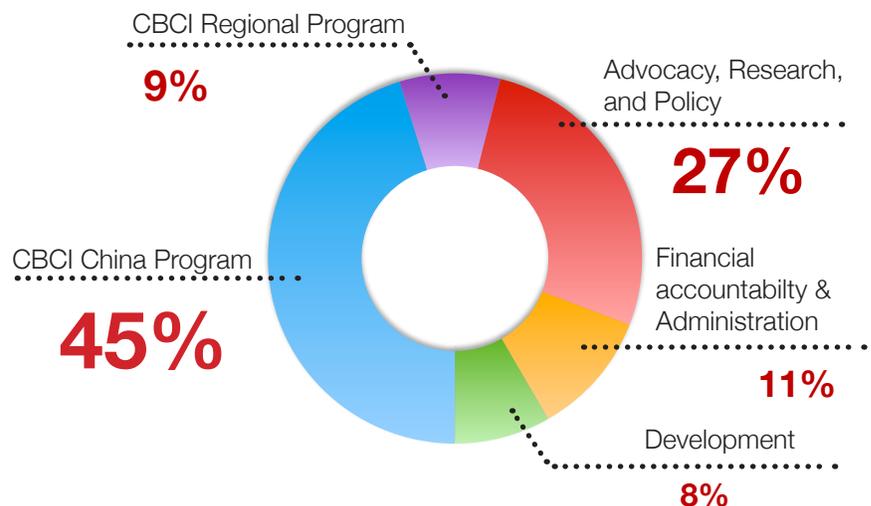


Where the money went:

*financial year ending June 30, 2014

Asia Catalyst has three significant program areas: Capacity Building and Community Initiatives in China, Capacity Building and Community Initiatives Regional Program, and Advocacy, Research, and Policy work. In addition, Asia Catalyst expends for development, financial accountability, and administration. Total expenses in FY 2014 were **\$733,859**.

81% of all expenses were spent directly on program activities.





*Asia Catalyst photo from a Myanmar workshop,
March 2014.*

“Asia Catalyst and the skillset their staff provide through their trainings will help to fill a much-needed void in the development of local civil society organizations. Since Myanmar has opened its doors to the rest of the world, financial and technical support has been flooding into the country. However, we have noticed a continued lack of focus on small grassroots organizations.”

Hla Myat Tun
Equality Myanmar and Colors Rainbow

Goals for 2015:

In order to **facilitate the creation of strong, independent and effective civil society in Asia, with the voices of marginalized groups mainstreamed**, Asia Catalyst needs to develop strategies to navigate the rapidly changing landscape and mitigate risk. These strategies must also allow us to promptly respond to emerging needs from our partners.

In 2015, Asia Catalyst's strategic activities include:

Regional expansion

In 2015, Asia Catalyst's Regional Rights Program will build the capacity of 16 activists from marginalized groups in Cambodia, China, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The participants will learn human rights analysis, documentation and advocacy skills with the goal of tackling the issue of discrimination in healthcare settings for PLHIV in their respective countries and across the region. The program will facilitate domestic and regional coalitions, build capacity in directly affected populations, generate new research and findings, and coalesce community based organizations on the issue. The program will also produce a best practices guide so that knowledge and experience generated from the program can be freely used by others.

Catalyzing Myanmar

In 2014, Asia Catalyst launched the Burmese translation of our advocacy training toolkit, *Change It: Ending Rights Abuses*, through several workshops for community based organizations in Yangon and Mandalay. The response of CBO leaders in the country has been overwhelming. On the cusp of a democratic transition, and HIV on the rise in key populations, civil society in the country needs the tools and skills to effectively advocate for the priority issues affecting their communities. Asia Catalyst is seeking funding to meet the high demand and requests for the technical support we provide, and plans to spend more time in the country in 2015 and beyond.

Advancing program quality

Asia Catalyst is committed to excellence. Our programming methodology and content is constantly evolving to fit the needs of partners and participants of our workshops. Two external evaluations in 2014 highlighted the importance of strong evaluation protocols to measure impact and relevance. We already integrate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks into all our activities. In 2015, we plan to hire more M&E capacity to develop an organizational wide M&E framework to ensure the organization stays focused and meaningful, and continues to deliver high impact and excellent programming.

New Research

The police practice of using the possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution poses a serious threat to marginalized groups, and is often used as justification for the harassment and detention of LGBT individuals, sex workers, health outreach workers and others working on HIV prevention across Asia. In 2015, Asia Catalyst will launch a yearlong documentation project on the impact of the practice on marginalized groups, HIV/AIDS prevention, and treatment strategies, culminating in the release of a rights-based report and advocacy campaign on the subject.



If you would like to support these goals and more, *take action*.

Contact Asia Catalyst and let us know how you can help. Donate by sending checks to 1270 Broadway, Suite 1109, New York, NY 10001, or go to:
www.asiacatalyst.org/donate.



Long-term vision:

Asia Catalyst's programs are *designed with the goal* of facilitating an environment where stable, independent Asian community based organizations have the **space, knowledge, and capacity** to conduct effective advocacy for the **respect, protection, and fulfillment** of the right to the highest attainable standard of **health**.

We aim to see our partners become leaders at the **local, national, and global levels**.

SILENCE
=
DEATH

MSD

Our leadership:

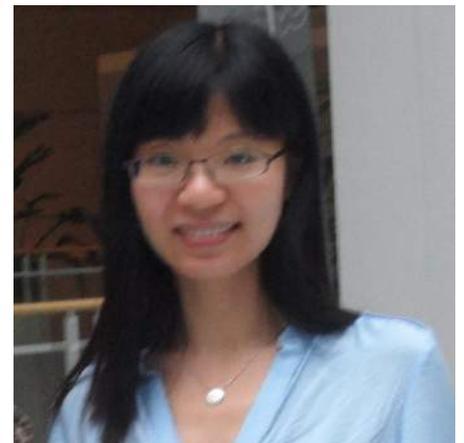


Charmain Mohamed | Executive Director

Charmain is a respected and experienced human rights advocate and activist, who has lived and worked in Asia for most of the past 15 years. She has worked for the UN, Human Rights Watch and the Norwegian Refugee Council, both in emergency contexts and on long-term issues, in countries such as Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and, most recently in Palestine. She holds a Masters in Human Rights Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and a BA (Hons.) in Southeast Asian Studies and Indonesian Language from the University of Hull. Charmain is fluent in English, Indonesian and Malay.

Shen Tingting | Director of Advocacy, Research and Policy

Shen Tingting has been a prominent HIV/AIDS and human rights advocate in Beijing, China, and has been working with marginalized communities since her college days. In 2007, Tingting co-founded the Korekata AIDS Law Center with Li Dan, and until 2012 she was the deputy director of its parent organization, Dongjen Center for Human Rights Education and Action, where she founded and managed an outreach program for sex workers in Beijing. Tingting received her MA in Social Welfare from Renmin University of China in 2009, and served as a visiting research fellow at Asia Catalyst from March -August 2012.



Gisa Dang | Director of Capacity Building and Community Initiatives

Gisa Dang (nee Hartmann) is responsible for developing and implementing the strategic direction of the Capacity Building and Community Initiatives program. Gisa has created and conducted dozens of customized workshops for grassroots NGOs in organizational management and advocacy skills. She has led ongoing coaching of the groups we've trained to ensure integration of fundamental skills into organizational processes. Since joining Asia Catalyst in 2009, Gisa has spoken at top global events such as the International AIDS Conferences in Vienna and Washington DC, and the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in Bali and Busan. Gisa holds an MA in Sinology and Political Science from University of Cologne, Germany and is fluent in German, Chinese, and English.

Brian Bonci | Director of Finance and Operations

Brian joined Asia Catalyst in 2011. He received his BA in Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies from Pace University, where he was a Jeannette K. Watson Fellow. Brian previously worked on political campaigns and volunteered with LGBT and HIV/AIDS advocacy organizations in New York City and Cape Town, South Africa. He has also advised international exchange students in Tunisia and taught English in Central America. Brian is fluent in English and Spanish.



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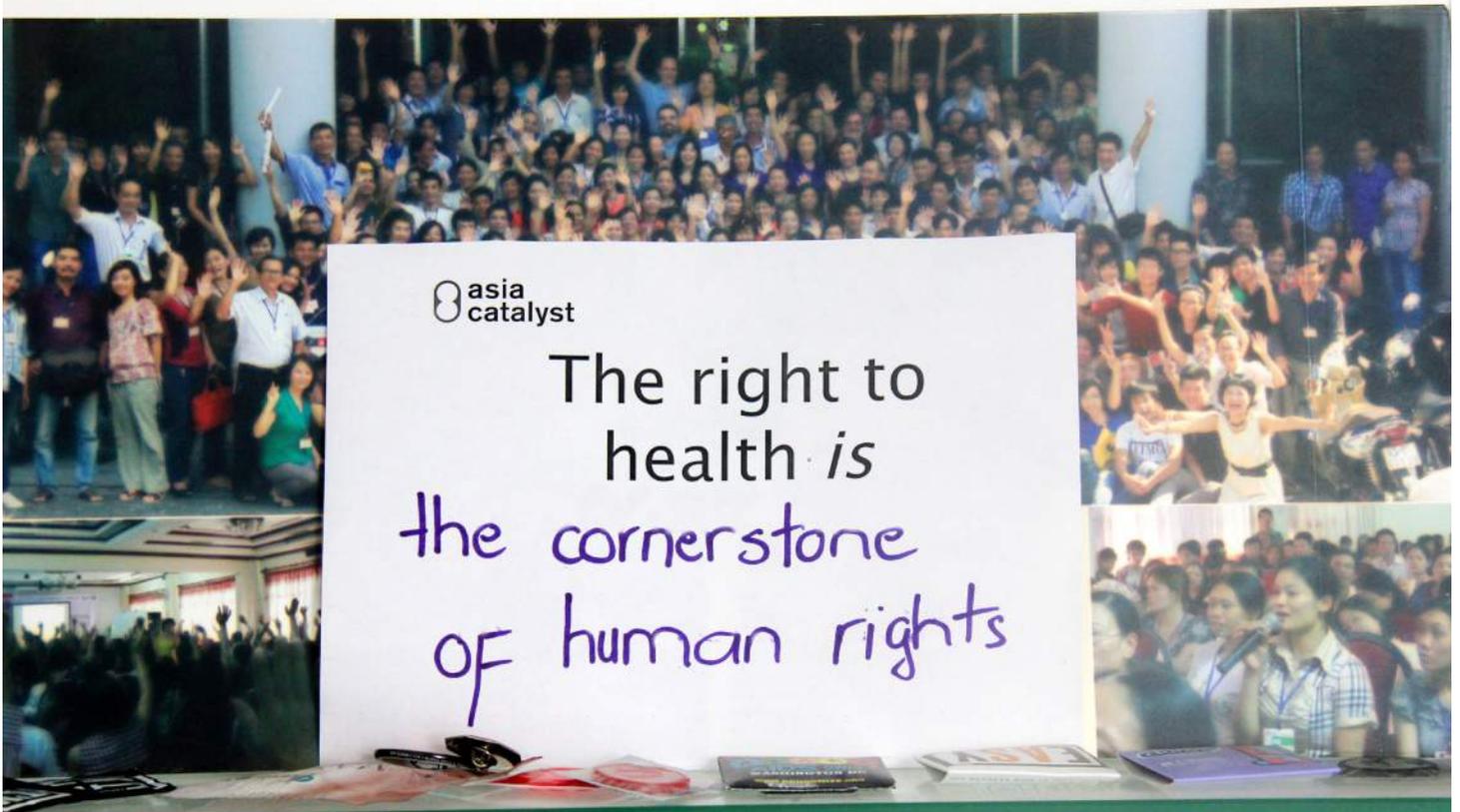


Photo from Asia Catalyst partner, Center for Community Development Initiatives, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Building stronger civil society.

Advancing the right to health.

Asia Catalyst photo, 2014

Asia Catalyst is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization registered in the United States that relies on the financial support of individuals and grant-making organizations. We maintain minimal overhead in the US so that our funds get to Asia, where they are needed most.

To find out more, please visit: www.asiacatalyst.org.

