ANNUAL REPORT 2019

CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  3

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT  5

THE STATE OF DRUG POLICY IN ASIA TODAY  10

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN IN 2019  13

OUR WORK IN CHINA  16

CHINA ENDS ARBITRARY DETENTION OF SEX WORKERS  21

BUILDING AN ONLINE HUMAN RIGHTS COURSE  24

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION  26

OUR FALL ‘FRIEND-RAISER’ AND TRIP TO DC & NYC  27

FINANCIALS AND SUPPORTERS  28

STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS  30
Dear Friends,

For Asia Catalyst, it would not be an exaggeration to say that 2019 went out with a bang.

In late November, the Chinese government declared we “conducted illegal activity” under the 2017 Overseas NGO Law, which treats foreign NGOs as a potential security threat. This came as a shock, but not a surprise. The writing was on the wall; we spent years seeking registration, to no avail. The space for our work there had already effectively closed. The government had made it clear that human rights work, health-related or otherwise, was not going to be tolerated, and we were increasingly concerned for the safety of our staff and partners in China.

So when the government threw down the gauntlet, ensnaring us in its geopolitical crosshairs and making us the first group to be publicly charged under the law, we accepted that our decade-plus run of work on the ground there was officially over.

Change is the only constant, as the adage goes. We spent years preparing for this moment and had already shifted our compass beyond China, increasingly working in other countries. Asia Catalyst is a resilient organization; I am proud of how we, and especially our China staff, handle crisis. I know, having worked alongside activists on the frontlines in Asia for more than 30 years, that their spirit and drive towards justice can never be vanquished. Over time, as the climate has changed in China, we have learned so much about how to safely work in restrictive and repressive environments—knowledge we continue to share with grassroots groups across the region.

“AT ASIA CATALYST, STAFF AND PARTNER SECURITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN PARAMOUNT.”
While 2019 ended on a somber note, 2020 has begun full of inspiration and celebration. Our work training community-based organizations Myanmar is flourishing. We’ve nurtured new relationships across the region, which we hope will spark much-needed support to grassroots activists building new movements. We’ve worked with next-generation leaders in Thailand building social justice facilitation skills, and LGBTIQ advocates in Vietnam proposing a comprehensive national agenda to promote their rights.

So I invite you to read on, about how we support marginalized community activists, from women living with HIV to transgender people and ethnic minority opium farmers; about the impact of our year-long training project in which community groups lead their own research, publish policy documents, and use them to fuel local and national change; and, how our intersectional work and coalition building gives rise to pioneering advocacy strategies and campaigns.

We also look back at some of the highlights of our 15 years of work in China and what our partners there have accomplished. The unique model we developed there—intensively supporting, training, and coaching grassroots activists—has been adapted across the region in ways we never dreamed of when Asia Catalyst started, like with opium growers in eastern Myanmar.

Training and connecting groups to find common ground and unleash their power is how we fight injustice. We’ve been breaking new ground, and there are so many new ideas and projects to support—so many brilliant young leaders and experienced activists to engage with in this world-remaking project over the next decade.

I look forward to seeing what we can do together. Thank you for standing alongside us in this bumpy journey and for your support through these difficult, and also exciting, times.

Karyn Kaplan, Executive Director

“The activist spirit can never be vanquished. The work will continue as long as we do.”
In 2019, Asia Catalyst expanded its Human Rights Documentation and Advocacy Program in Myanmar to serve four new community organizations representing women in rural areas, LGBT people, people living with HIV, and people who use drugs.

We led a series of tailored workshops for each organization, covering:

- The legal landscape surrounding their issues;
- How to document rights abuses in their community;
- Strategies for leading winning advocacy campaigns; and
- How to help activists grow and sustain healthy organizations by embracing best practices around fundraising, good governance, and transparency

Throughout the year we provided one-on-one coaching to each group through site visits and phone check-ins, gave small grants to supplement their projects, and offered hands-on help to turn the data they collected and analyzed into practical advocacy materials.
PROTECTING WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS FROM VIOLENCE

*Future Light* is a women-led organization with a small staff and team of lawyers who provide support to survivors of gender-based violence. In Myanmar, women in rural areas often face violence from partners, but village administrators rarely take any action if women report abuse.

The women in Future Light joined Asia Catalyst’s program to figure out how to go from simply delivering services to advocating for structural change to protect women over the long term. They started by collecting testimonies from women in five villages who had experienced sexual, physical, or emotional violence from partners. All had reported the abuse to their village leaders; none had received any help.

Next, Future Light developed a plan to sensitize village administrators to the violence women face and train them on offering assistance to survivors. They began by approaching one female administrator, and with her as an ally, the male administrators have said they are open to training too. Future Light will soon share their findings in workshops with village administrators.

“We developed an advocacy strategy for the first time.
We shared our strategy with the community to gain their trust and support.
Now we are in a position to raise women’s issues that have been neglected with authorities and push for change.”
ENDING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

*Transmen Association Myanmar* is a volunteer group of transgender men, founded in Mandalay, where there have been rampant arrests of LGBT people in recent years. The organization had been coordinating with LGBT and women’s rights groups, but joined Asia Catalyst’s program to develop their own strategic direction and workplan.

Members quickly decided they wanted to focus on how LGBT students are mistreated and discriminated against under university dress codes. This is an issue no one else was working on. With our support, they interviewed 50 LGBT students—collecting evidence that those who do not conform to gender norms have been asked to leave classrooms, denied entrance to campus, and publicly humiliated by teachers and other students.

Next, they plan to organize a panel discussion with university teachers and administrators to discuss the way LGBT students are treated. For many students, it will be the first chance they’ve had to share their story publicly. As word of their work has spread, the group has begun receiving requests to document discrimination against trans students at other universities as well.

“BEFORE ASIA CATALYST’S PROGRAM, WE WERE WORKING ON BROAD ISSUES LED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ... NOW, WE’VE IDENTIFIED THE URGENT ISSUES MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUNG LGBT PEOPLE AND HAVE A SPECIFIC ADVOCACY STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THEM.”
ADVOCATING FOR BETTER TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

*Aye Nyein Metta* is a community organization of people living with HIV (PLHIV) that has been providing HIV prevention, care, and support services in Yangon since 2009. With 10 full-time staff and 15 peer educators, they distribute condoms, refer people to government clinics for testing and treatment, and share information on preventing sexually transmitted infections and mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

When Aye Nyein Metta joined our program, they were aware of the barriers to health care in their community, but were unsure about how to advocate for change without damaging their working relationship with government service providers.

Throughout the year, they interviewed 60 people living with HIV about their experiences at antiretroviral therapy government clinics in Yangon. People reported a host of serious problems: verbal abuse from service providers; clinics failing to provide routine counseling or check-ups; patients not receiving treatment for other HIV-related infections and not getting explanations for lab tests performed on them.

Now Aye Nyein Metta is compiling their findings into a policy brief that will be used to advocate for evidence-based, medically sound practices. They will set up regular meetings between service providers and patients in Yangon so that people living with HIV can raise their concerns with healthcare staff and work with them on improving HIV care and management.

“AS PART OF THE PROGRAM, WE’VE DONE A LOT OF INTERNAL SHARING ON HUMAN RIGHTS, DOCUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY GOALS. NOW OUR STAFF HAS A MUCH GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THESE BY GETTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS.”
Asia Catalyst, drug policy and harm reduction

The rights of people who use drugs continue to be neglected by the mainstream human rights movement. That’s why Asia Catalyst remains at the forefront of drug policy and harm reduction, supporting people who use drugs to use their voice as effectively as possible and arm themselves with community data to influence national, regional, and international debates.

Our programming includes joining forces with cis- and transgender women who use drugs in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand on a project to empower these doubly- and triply-marginalized groups to do effective self-support and advocacy.

In Myanmar, we work with the Youth Empowerment Team, a drug user network, to document the impact of harm reduction drop-in center closures by the government. We conducted a first-of-its-kind legal review on the Dynamic Control System in China, a national surveillance system levied at people who use drugs, which restricts their rights and access to social services and presented this work with our local partner at the International Harm Reduction Conference and International Society for the Study of Drug Policy. These efforts empower local activists, influence policymakers, and propel the fight for equity, making sure the rights of people who use drugs can no longer be ignored.

Securing Services for People Who Use Drugs

The Regional Drug Abuse Reduction Network (RDAR) includes people who use drugs, lawyers, and others working together for rights-based drug policy in Mon State, where the use of stimulants is a real problem, especially among young people.

RDAR is concerned with how Myanmar’s new National Drug Control Policy will be implemented. The policy has the potential to vastly improve services for people who use drugs with a focus on expanding treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs for people who use amphetamines.

RDAR collected evidence on gaps in the current healthcare system’s response to drug use. They interviewed people who use drugs, their family members, and healthcare providers and found there is only one treatment center and no rehabilitation center in Mon State, prohibitively high costs for services, and no harm reduction for people who use stimulants.

People who use drugs have limited access to information on overdose or toxicity protection, and they are afraid they’ll be arrested if they go to the hospital. RDAR will use this information to press the Drug Abuse Control Committee and Ministry of Health to increase access to health and harm reduction services and make sure that people who use drugs and NGOs are included in the government’s process to expand treatment for addiction and drug use.
IDPC is a network of 190 NGOs across the globe advocating for policies to promote health and human rights, and the inclusion of people who use drugs in the response to drug use and addiction. Asia Catalyst is a proud member.

Tell us about the focus of your work in Asia.

Asia has some of the most punitive drug policies in the world. Many countries in ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, still use compulsory drug detention—where people who use drugs, or are even suspected of being on drugs, are detained without due process in the name of “treatment” or “rehabilitation.” Several countries still sentence people to death for drug offenses. There is widespread police abuse against people who use drugs, and little access to health and harm reduction services.

We work with our members to try to improve the situation and change laws. Right now, we’re working with organizations in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia on a project looking at how to reduce incarceration of women for drug offenses. It started with a conversation in August aimed at understanding how women end up behind bars, and why they get involved in the drug trade in the first place.
We brought women who had been incarcerated, women who use drugs, civil society groups, policymakers, and prison workers from all three countries together.

What we found is that women have limited ways to be part of the economy but are under great pressure to earn an income; that’s often how they get involved in selling drugs. Women end up getting serious prison sentences for low-level offenses. Prison conditions are terrible in terms of overcrowding. We need to address the structural issues—the reasons women get caught up in the prison system in the first place. Women need access to harm reduction and drug treatment without having to fear being arrested. We need programs that are gender-sensitive. And drug laws should make a clear distinction between high-level trafficking and minor offenses such as couriering and low-level dealing, which affect women more, and take socioeconomic factors and the pressures women are under into account.

What drug policy trends do you see in Asia right now?

We have a very worrying situation in the Philippines where President Duterte started a harsh and deadly war on drugs three and a half years ago. 30,000 people have been killed already—almost all without a trial or formal charges brought. That’s 33 murders a day, with no signs of slowing down. So many of these people have just been gunned down in the street.

In 2017, we held a meeting between the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions to discuss how we can support Filipino activists, and stop this approach from spreading across the region. This past year, we published “10 years of Drug Policy in Asia: How Far Have We Come?” to evaluate the impact of drug policies in Asia. We found that a lot of policies dedicated to “eliminate or reduce significantly” the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking, sale and consumption of drugs have
not achieved their aims, but have caused real health, public security and economic harms like we see in the Philippines.

Many leaders want to follow Duterte’s strongman tactics; despite the complete dissolution of the rule of law in the Philippines, he is very popular. Thankfully we haven’t seen that happen, but there are some problematic policies emerging in Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, where the crackdown on drugs has increased prison populations and human rights violations.

At the same time, we have seen signs of progress elsewhere. Recently there was a reform passed in Myanmar, which brings us closer to decriminalizing people who use drugs. Malaysia is also in the midst of a serious discussion around decriminalization and abolishing the death penalty for drug offenses. These are hopeful developments.

Amphetamines are extremely popular in Asia, and governments are just starting to develop a harm reduction response to them. Our colleagues in Vietnam are doing some great research there, developing model approaches on methamphetamine harm reduction.

Another thing happening in the region is the medical use of marijuana. The Thai government understands how much profit they can make so they want to open up the cannabis market, allowing people to buy it for medical use.

Where do you see drug policy work going?

It’s becoming clearer to me that building an alliance and doing cross-movement work is the direction we need to go.

Asia Catalyst’s experiences of working with marginalized communities on documenting human rights abuses and conducting evidence-based advocacy is what we need more of. Asia Catalyst works with LGBTQ people, sex workers, people living with HIV, people who use drugs, also opium farmers. Drug policy affects all of them, and often the burden of the abusive government policies falls on those people. We need to bring their voices to the table, to advance the debate on drug policy reform. We are consulting with our members on our next strategy and cross movement solidarity will be central to that. I think working with Asia Catalyst on that front will be very fruitful and exciting work.

“We found that a lot of policies ... have not achieved their aims, but have caused real health, public security and economic harms.”

“It’s becoming clearer to me that building an alliance and doing cross-movement work is the direction we need to go.”
“In Vietnam, the law is based on binary genders so LGBTIQ students have no protection at school, work, and in the community.

Transgender people are still not protected by laws or supported by healthcare providers. Same-sex marriage is not permitted.”

Mia Nguyen — Vietnamese counselor, professor, queer activist
ILGA ASIA

We attended the 8th annual ILGA Asia Conference in August in Seoul, South Korea. The focus was on building alliances to strengthen the LGBTIQ movement—and creating connections among groups squeezed by the shrinking amount of funding going to HIV each year. The needs of intersex and transgender people were front and center this year, whether the struggle for legal recognition, or the fact that even in countries with good laws on the books, LGBTIQ youth still face tons of discrimination at school. Over and over, we heard activists say that they need more support to document the problems their communities are suffering, then mobilize the community around advocacy campaigns.

“ONE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY FROM ILGA ASIA: NOT ENOUGH GROUPS ARE WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER SEX WORKERS ON THE ISSUES THEY FACE — HARASSMENT, POLICE VIOLENCE, ACCESS TO HIV AND STI PREVENTION & TREATMENT. THIS IS A REALLY IMPORTANT & OVERLOOKED KEY POPULATION!”

GUO MIAO — SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, ASIA CATALYST
WOMEN DELIVER

In June, Asia Catalyst joined 8,000 people from 165 countries at Women Deliver 2019, the world’s largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights, and well-being of women and girls. Major highlights included Canada’s pledge to raise its annual funding to support girls’ and women’s health and access to safe abortion around the world to $1.4B CAD; and the launch of a Gender Index, to measure progress on sustainable development goals through the lens of gender. We caught up with fellow members of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and participated in exciting sessions such as Feminist Frontline: Strategies for Resistance and Change, where speakers described groundbreaking feminist philanthropy that is gaining momentum and their work disrupting and dismantling the patriarchy.

INTERNATIONAL HARM REDUCTION CONFERENCE

In April, our program staff attended the 26th International Harm Reduction Conference in Porto, Portugal. It was a great chance to connect with allies across Asia on the need for sane drug policy, ending violent approaches to drug control, and encouraging governments to take a people first, health-based approach to addiction. Khine Su Win presented on Asia Catalyst’s work with Youth Empowerment Team (YET). Through our training program, YET documented the closing of harm reduction centers in Yangon and how that limits access to life-saving services like HIV and hepatitis testing, counseling, and clean needles for people who use drugs. On the last day of the conference there was a protest against the brutal drug war in the Philippines, where 33 people are extrajudicially murdered each day and thousands held in over-crowded prisons.
OUR HISTORY IN CHINA

2007

BEGAN OUR WORK IN CHINA

with the Orchid AIDS Project to establish China’s first legal aid center for people affected by HIV/AIDS

- Published AIDS Blood Scandals advising the Chinese government on how to handle HIV outbreaks among blood transfusion recipients.
- Helped organize the International Conference on Blood Disaster, which was shut down by the government.

2008

LAUNCHED ASIA REPORT

a Chinese-language website on activism and human rights aimed at helping Chinese groups build ties with their counterparts across Asia

- Started our first project with HIV-positive sex workers living in Yunnan.
- Began providing advocacy grants to Chinese groups.

2009

I WILL FIGHT TO MY LAST BREATH

is published, exposing how children living with HIV in China were not getting the treatment and services the government promised them.
Supported the first-ever delegation of Chinese activists to attend the International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, with translation and legal support.

2010
GAVE PRESENTATIONS
on human rights and HIV throughout the year, and trained activists how to document HIV-related rights abuses

2011
PUBLISHED KNOW IT, PROVE IT, CHANGE IT!
Our hallmark curriculum, in English, Thai, and Chinese to introduce activists to the international human rights framework and how to document rights abuses and design advocacy campaigns

2012
OPENED OUR BEIJING OFFICE
Hosted Chinese activist, Shen Tingting, as a research fellow in New York. She then joined Asia Catalyst as our Beijing-based Advocacy Director
2013

**PUBLISHED A REPORT**

entitled Custody & Education: Arbitrary Detention for Female Sex Workers in China

It attracted major media coverage, including a front-page article in the New York Times

- Hired our second China-based staff worker, Guo Miao.
- Started offering one-on-one coaching and advocacy strategy sessions to CBOs across China.

2014

**HELD A CONFERENCE**

on “Women & HIV in the Context of Commercial Sex” in Beijing

- Launched the Regional Rights Training Program for community leaders from Cambodia, China, Myanmar, and Vietnam.
- Presented the group’s findings in First Do No Harm and published policy briefs and recommendations in several languages on stopping discrimination against people living with HIV in healthcare.

Began coaching Asia Catalyst alumni become certified trainers who teach our Know It, Prove It, Change It curriculum to dozens of burgeoning Chinese groups.

Our work to end China’s “Custody & Education” system where sex workers are detained gains momentum as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women follows our lead in recommending the government abolish the system.

Organized a meeting in Beijing creating a legal petition to stop “Custody & Education” that more than 100 legal practitioners sign onto.
2015

**UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

- Holds China’s first consultation on trans people and HIV as a result of our research and advocacy on transgender sex workers
- Revised and expanded our signature organizational management training tool, the *Nonprofit Survival Guide*, available in English and Chinese.
- Our Advocacy Director is invited to serve on the UNAIDS Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights.

---

2016

**THE CONDOM QUANDARY**

- Published *My Life is Too Dark to See the Light*, a report on the living conditions of transgender sex workers in Beijing and Shanghai.
- Launched the first Transgender Leadership Program to train and mentor young trans activists and help build the nascent transgender rights movement in China.

---

2017

**OUR ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED**

- In the Health and Human Rights Journal, about the correlation between oppressive law enforcement and sex worker vulnerability to HIV
Presented the first legal review of China’s Dynamic Control System, a surveillance system targeting more than two million registered users of illegal drugs, at a meeting of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policy.

2018

Sought Legal Registration

and filed temporary activities permits in the hopes of keeping our in-country presence in China.

2019

The Custody & Education System

will be abolished by the government, after 15 years of sustained pressure from Asia Catalyst and allies.
Here is a reflection on this victory from our Advocacy Director, Shen Tingting, who led this work for years.

In December 2019, the Chinese government made an announcement that thrilled rights activists in China: they abolished “Custody and Education,” a system that for more than 20 years allowed the police to detain sex workers and clients for up to two years without a trial.

It’s a rare victory for a vulnerable group in China. It came after a long campaign, led by Asia Catalyst and propelled by Chinese and foreign NGOs, to bring the abuses of “C&E” (收容教育) to light.

The arbitrary detention of sex workers was the first campaign I worked on after joining Asia Catalyst. In 2013 I interviewed a number of women who’d been detained in “C&E” (收容教育) centers, which functioned as profit-making machines for the government. At centers, women worked around the clock without pay. They had to pay for their stays, usually at an outrageous cost, and for medical exams and treatment while in detention. The centers had strict and degrading rules in the name of discipline, like restricting access to restrooms. And they proved to be fertile soil for corruption and abuse: sex workers were often forced to pay large bribes to the police, who routinely put their hands on women. Meanwhile, in the streets, police were searching women for condoms and using them as proof of sex work, which made many women too scared to carry them. The result was that these centers gave sex workers a huge incentive not to practice safe sex in order to stay out of prison.

When Asia Catalyst began working on this issue, few people knew about “C&E” (收容教育), though the system had been operating for years. The main targets were women who work on the street, in small massage parlors, or barber shops—women with nowhere to hide from police. They were routinely dehumanized in the media; the only images the public saw were news reports of raids and anti-vice operations, where women were usually shown handcuffed.

The campaign to end “C&E” (收容教育) evolved into a vast, unprecedented movement in which NGOs, women’s rights activists, lawyers, and government workers came together to demand its end. Asia Catalyst worked with Chinese groups and United Nations agencies to organize a national conference on how police behavior and detention centers were hurting efforts to stop the spread of HIV. We brought sex workers who’d been sent to the centers to talk about how it impacted their life. We organized sex worker and women’s rights groups to persuade 109 legal experts to sign onto a letter demanding the National
People’s Congress review the legality of detention centers. We started a major media conversation questioning the legitimacy of “C&E” (收容教育). Our local partners did the painstaking work of issuing open records requests to get the government to release the number of centers and women held at them, along with how much money was flowing into them. A young activist even took the Guangdong Provincial government to court for refusing to release this information, citing it as “secret policing work.”

The campaign highlighted the great power and potential of civil society and put serious pressure on the government to defend the system. On December 28, 2019, the National People’s Congress voted at last to dismantle “C&E” (收容教育).

Abolishing China’s system is a huge step forward towards protecting the rights of women and sex workers in China. It shows that rule of law, justice, and human rights apply to everyone, not just the powerful or privileged.

But it does not change the government’s fundamental approach to sex work. Sex workers still face detention of up to 15 days and fines of 5000 RMB, or about $714. In addition, the government can charge women with “intentionally spreading venereal diseases,” no matter whether a condom was used or not, or whether a disease has actually been transmitted. The charge, which is frequently doled out, carries a sentence of up to five years in prison.

These laws are unlikely to change any time soon. While the number of NGOs is on the rise in China, organizations like us that focus on human rights advocacy or receive foreign funding have been increasingly under scrutiny. The few that have continued to operate have paid a heavy price. They are subject to non-stop police surveillance and practice strict self-censorship—careful about who they talk to and work with, what kind of activities they participate in, and even the conferences they attend.

The government has also started bringing criminal charges against NGO activists who work on social, cultural, and economic rights more. Since 2012, there have been 14 criminal cases prosecuted against NGOs, which sends a clear message to those pushing the envelope.

As a longtime Beijing resident, I have seen the effects of these policies directly. As the government continues its campaign to drive out migrant sex workers and clean up the streets, sex workers are less visible. Over the past 10 years, I always knew how to find the places where sex workers worked in Hutongs, in the streets, those small, narrow, simple and crude houses. But those places have gradually vanished. No one knows where the women have gone.
Farewell, Tingting Shen and Guo Miao!

Your courage and service at the China office is deeply appreciated and will be remembered.

Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed. —Martin Luther King, Jr.
“AN INTERACTIVE, ONLINE COURSE, AVAILABLE TO ACTIVISTS EVERYWHERE FREE OF CHARGE.”

Fourteen years ago, Asia Catalyst brought together activists from China and Thailand to develop a community-driven methodology for documenting rights abuses and leading advocacy. The result was a powerful curriculum called *Know It, Prove It, Change It*. It has been a tool of resistance across Asia, used to train hundreds of community activists who face violence and discrimination everyday – people living with HIV, sex workers, LGBT people, and people who use drugs.

Know It, Prove It, Change It has helped ignite activism and lift up marginalized people on the frontlines of working for change. Activists in China used it to stop the use of gay conversion therapy. Activists in Myanmar used it to stop from police arbitrarily arresting LGBT people. Women in Myanmar are using it to fight for rights-respecting HIV care and stop healthcare providers from inappropriately telling women with HIV to get sterilized. Advocates in Thailand used it to persuade their government to adopt a national, community-led harm reduction program.

Now we are thrilled to embark upon a new partnership to take Know It, Prove It, Change It to the next level. In an exciting collaboration with Drexel University’s Dornsife School of Public Health, Office of Global Health, we have begun transforming our curriculum into an interactive online course on:

- **UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LANDSCAPE AND LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR REALIZING RIGHTS**
- **DOCUMENTING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**
- **DESIGNING AND LEADING ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS**
In January 2020, our friends at Drexel began teaching a beta version of the course in the classroom as we build out the online platform. The online course will include a whole “knowledge platform” of tools and tips to do successful advocacy.

Asia Catalyst’s unique contribution to this collaboration is producing a series of short videos of activists talking about the serious challenges and great successes they’ve had, taking risks and pressing for systemic change. In December, we videotaped 11 activists in Bangkok, including the first LGBT parliamentarian in Nepal, one of Thailand’s premier lesbian activists, and the Indian head of the Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV. In March, we filmed seven more Asian activists working on drug user rights, transgender issues, and access to safe abortion. Many of these people haven’t ever been documented talking about their work or what motivates them to do advocacy. Having an archive of their stories and voices is incredibly important.

As we seek out funding to videotape more activists – from all over the world, in their native languages – our goal is to make this library truly international and reflective of the range of voices fighting to expand health and human rights across the globe.

We have already seen the ripple effect Know It, Prove It, Change It has in jumpstarting change on just about any issue – empowering transgender people, people living with HIV, ethnic minority farmers, sex workers, and many others. Building on our mission of putting activists’ voices first, we are excited to scale it to a much wider audience in 2020 and beyond.

We are still in the process of refining the course modules, creating the videos, building out the platform, and raising money to make the course as sophisticated, smart, and accessible as possible. We are hoping to take this way beyond Asia – filming African, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and Latin American activists. We will also open the library so people can film and submit stories themselves.

When the course launches in Fall 2020, it will be available as an open access course to local activists, community leaders, public health and international policy students, and anyone with access to the Internet who is interested in jumpstarting change.
In February, we celebrated the Lunar New Year at Board Member Minky Worden’s house in downtown Manhattan.

We are grateful to our friends, activist family, donors, and author Leta Hong Fincher for helping us usher in the Year of the Rat.
In September, our Program Officer, Khine Su Win, traveled to the United States for the first time. In honor, we held an intimate cocktail party at Board Member Joanne Csete’s house, and visited Chinatown in NYC, the US State Department, our foundation supporters in Washington D.C. and had a beautiful friend-raiser at Steve Rasin and Joy Hepinstall’s home.
## Statement of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
<td>$657,420</td>
<td>$462,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Contributions Receivable</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>35,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses &amp; Other receivables</td>
<td>2,638</td>
<td>5,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and Equipment, net</td>
<td>1,956</td>
<td>1,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$838,810</td>
<td>$509,068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>15,946</td>
<td>20,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Payable</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>5,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>15,946</td>
<td>50,306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor Restrictions</td>
<td>$347,988</td>
<td>$405,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor Restrictions</td>
<td>$474,876</td>
<td>52,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
<td>$822,864</td>
<td>$458,762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Statement of Activities

### Revenue & Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Contributions</td>
<td>$58,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Revenue</td>
<td>165,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated Goods and Services</td>
<td>26,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
<td>4,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets released from Restrictions</td>
<td>320,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue &amp; Support</td>
<td>$575,802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>509,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Services</td>
<td>105,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>18,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>633,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>(57,777)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Net Assets, Beginning of Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>405,765</td>
<td>52,997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Net Assets, End of Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$347,988</td>
<td>$474,876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**A heartfelt Thank You to our donors, volunteers, and the experts** who’ve given their time, talent, and resources pro bono to support the work we do together. We are grateful to our interns Julia Klein and Jainaha Srikumar; the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice and the Leitner Center for International Law & Justice at Fordham Law School; Tom Kramer and Renaud Cachia from the Transnational Institute; and Nang Pann Ei Kham from the Drug Policy Advocacy Group.

**We are inspired each day by our community of supporters. Thank you for investing in a strong diverse civil society and supporting grassroots activists across Asia.**

Special thanks to Jessie Torrisi for the production of this annual report.

### $1-$149

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Yuan</td>
<td>Anabella Pitkin &amp; Mallay Occiogrosso</td>
<td>Ari Roth</td>
<td>Brian Bonci</td>
<td>Chris Magnuson</td>
<td>Christie Hubbard</td>
<td>Elena Volkova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Sjödin</td>
<td>Phelim Kyne</td>
<td>Mark Sidel</td>
<td>Michael Mills</td>
<td>Mitchell Steinlicht</td>
<td>Peter Engardio</td>
<td>Sandi Chamberlain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Murray</td>
<td>Stacy Mosher</td>
<td>Steven Beller</td>
<td>Susan Hubbard &amp; James Gannon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### $150-$499

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Murphy</td>
<td>James Ross</td>
<td>Joanne Csete</td>
<td>Joseph Amon &amp; Erin Galbraith</td>
<td>Karin Landgren</td>
<td>Madalyn Ross</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### $500-$999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Goldberg &amp; Karen Putterman</td>
<td>Andy Nathan</td>
<td>Joy Rasin</td>
<td>Dinda Elliot</td>
<td>Heidi Schmid</td>
<td>Network for Good Tina Zonars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### $1000-$9999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### $10,000+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Kahn and Shannon Wu</td>
<td>Linda Laikdhir</td>
<td>Lois Whitman</td>
<td>Linda Laikdhir Michael J. Schmale Leslie Day &amp; Ernie Sander Anonymous Anonymous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board of Directors

Laurence Bates, Panasonic Corporation
Randall Chamberlain, Law Office of Randall Chamberlain, PLLC
Yvonne Y.F. Chan, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP (Board Chair)
Joanne Csete, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Linda Lakhdhir, Human Rights Watch
Leon Mar, CBC/Radio Canada
Bruce Rabb, Legal Advisor
Steve Rasin, Cedar Management Consulting
Minky Worden, Human Rights Watch
Narissara Udomvongsa, Allianz Ayudhya Assurance Public Company Ltd., Thailand
Tina Zonars, Christie’s

Emeritus members

Jerome A. Cohen, NYU School of Law
Sophie Richardson, Human Rights Watch
Sara L. M. Davis, Founder, Asia Catalyst;
Geneva Center for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH)

Staff

Palida Awassadaporn
Chotip Chantraraprathin
Karyn Kaplan
Guo Miao
Jittima Saelao
Tingting Shen
Jessie Torrisi
Khine Su Win
Help Keep Community Activism Alive Across Asia
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.

Asia Catalyst promotes the rights of marginalized communities by supporting a vibrant network of advocates committed to ending stigma, discrimination, and criminalization.

Facebook: Asia Catalyst  
Twitter: @asiacatalyst  
Webpage: www.asiacatalyst.org  

C/O Human Rights Watch  
350 5th Ave, 34th FL  
New York, NY 10118 USA  

Room S 9028, Aia Sathorn Tower  
11/1 South Sathorn Road, Yannawa, Sathorn, Bangkok 10120 Thailand

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.