



IBJ Leads in Providing Training on Major Legal Reforms in China

Also initiates innovative pilot projects

Mobilizing our national network of partners, our activities brought a spectacular end to a fruitful year of programming.

Capitalizing on nine years of partnership development in China, IBJ significantly increased the scope and reach of its work in 2010. Our growing list of partners includes the All China Lawyers Association, the All China Women’s Federation, law firms, bar associations, and professors from the country’s most prestigious universities.

IBJ organized 25 lawyer trainings and 14 roundtables

in seven different provinces and two of China’s four federally administered cities. We trained 1,396 defense lawyers, including 302 Legal Aid lawyers (about 5% of the 6,000 in China). We also trained approximately 2,060 police officers in non-coercive investigative techniques in Shandong and Liaoning provinces.

IBJ was the first organization in China to provide

trainings on major legal reforms, including new rules on exclusion of illegally-obtained evidence announced in July and new sentencing guidelines announced in October. We held three trainings and two roundtables, led by some of China’s most respected legal thinkers, on the new evidence rules. We also held a conference in Suizhou, Hubei Province and a roundtable with judges



Law student distributing IBJ rights awareness materials

JUSTICE FACTS:

China

Rule of Law: 45.3/100

2010 Prison Population:

1.57 million,

190 per 100,000



Police officer explaining the right to counsel to a resident of Liaocheng during a rights awareness campaign

from the Supreme People's Court in Beijing on how best to implement the new sentencing guidelines. With proper training, both new regulations will significantly enhance the role of defense attorneys in the criminal justice system.

IBJ also initiated pilot projects promoting the rights of juvenile defendants and access to rehabilitation. After participating in an IBJ-sponsored study tour of a system of probation for juvenile offenders in Yunnan and attending a roundtable on social background investigations in Xincheng District of Shaanxi Province, the Beilin District Prosecutor's office of Shaanxi implemented a program incorporating both approaches that will be expanded throughout the province, if successful.

Additionally, IBJ held a conference on juvenile record sealing in April, which promoted two pilot projects we have supported since 2008 in Dezhou City, Shandong Province and Licang District, Qingdao. These projects, which may be adopted by other local governments, are quite possibly the most significant advancement in juvenile justice reform underway in China.

To engage leaders in civil society, we initiated a monthly roundtable in

Beijing with the Yipai Public Interest Team. Lawyers gathered to discuss topics such as "Risks Faced by Criminal Defense Lawyers" and "Lawyers and the Media." These lawyers also mobilized their colleagues in Inner Mongolia and Gansu provinces to participate in IBJ rights awareness activities.

In addition, reaching out to more remote locales, IBJ initiated a national eLearning project, which will use Internet-based instruction to train defense lawyers. We posted five modules on client interviewing to the website of the All China Lawyers Association, our partner in the project. We also began production of three modules on the new sentencing guidelines.

Finally, we conducted our annual December 4 campaign to promote rights awareness among ordinary citizens. Entitled "Spirit of Cooperation", it included Street Law campaigns offering free advice in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, and Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, film screenings on criminal justice, and the distribution of a comprehensive family rights brochure by police, law firms, and students. Mobilizing our national network of partners, these activities brought a spectacular end to a fruitful year of programming.

"IBJ, my mentor and friend in my growth as a defense lawyer"

Although IBJ's Defender Resource Center in Northwest China has only been operating for three years, there have already been notable improvements in the quality of representation and the confidence of criminal defense attorneys who have attended IBJ trainings. Recently, one attorney shared her gratitude toward IBJ in a six-page letter, which bore the heading: "IBJ, my mentor and friend in my growth as a defense lawyer; thank you for all your help."

In the letter, Ge Chunrong detailed her history as an attorney. She began practicing law in 2001 and in 2005 began volunteering with the Shaanxi Women's Federation to serve those in need. The problem, she explained, was that at the time she began, there was a lack of skills trainings. Lawyers like her were ill-equipped to properly defend their clients. This changed three years ago when Ge met IBJ. She has since attended ten IBJ trainings and workshops. In her words, "The defense skills and ideology IBJ passed to me revitalized me and broadened my way of thinking," helping her to achieve positive results in many of her cases.

Ge's letter listed in detail the skills that IBJ has imparted to her, including respect for clients, client interviewing techniques, and how to investigate client backgrounds in order to apply for bail. She further praised IBJ for bringing together all judicial stakeholders to bring about change: "IBJ sets up bridges for all sections of judicial departments and builds platforms for the Public Security Bureau, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers to sit together to communicate and promote the mutual understanding and support of each other. Communication is the best way to solve problems."

Finally, Ge described how she recently defended a death penalty case successfully, using the skills she learned from IBJ. A young man was charged with intentional murder of his father. Ge took the case from the District Court all the way to the Supreme People's Court, tirelessly gathering evidence and fighting for her client. Several times, the client lost hope and wanted to end his life, but Ge gave him courage. In the end, she was able to prove that the death had been an accident, thus sparing her client execution. She said, "IBJ's trainings not only gave me the skills to use, but also gave me the spirit of persistence to fight for the interests of my clients."



Chinese Lawyer Ge Chunrong