



## Capacity Building: Supporting Staff and Partners Instead of Changing Lightbulbs!

By Director Wendy Morrish

2012 will be the year BABSEA CLE focuses on building our capacity in the management and coordination of the programs we support, our human resources, the use and availability of equipment and resources and our continued sustainability. As one of the proud Directors of BABSEA CLE making a plan to develop and strengthen our capacity, I needed to address what steps to take and how and why and when we could implement them. What first came to mind was one of those old jokes that circulate about international development workers:

*How many development workers does it take to change a lightbulb? Well, wait a minute! You can't go changing a lightbulb just like that. You need a plan – long-, medium- and short-term. And you need to be clear what you are trying to achieve by changing it – and write that down to hand out to anyone who comes to watch you change the lightbulb. Furthermore, you must account for the lightbulb not being very bright -- you can't just discard it. Then you need to assess your procedure after the event, with an emphasis on taking the bulb-changing process to the next stage. Then ... You get the picture.*

With this in mind, we asked for help from Silvia Ostberg to conduct meetings with our team and volunteers to get a better



understanding of where we are now and what the highest priorities are in terms of strengthening our ability to support our partners. We want to make this happen, not just go round and round as the joke indicates.

### Shaping Up

Our plan started to take shape in February and some of the developments that we've seen so far include the arrival of international clinicians into the region to support our CLE partner programs; one-on-one English tutoring for our Thai team; English-language support for our legal fellows in Laos, Vietnam and Indonesia; Thai language classes for international and regional teams; four new CLE legal fellows, three in Thailand and one in Indonesia; and we moved into the "blue" office to keep our resources and team together, improving

communication and access to each other. We also welcomed U.S. Criminal Lawyer Judy Mandell to the team to support and mentor the International Legal Studies Externship Clinic participants; supported Pimtida Makar on a study visit to Australia to experience travelling and daily life in another country; relocated Vietnamese CLE trainer Trang Le Ivy to Thailand, to support the trainings at BABSEA CLE's training clinic; and expressed our gratitude to Dinah Chung for all her work managing and coordinating conferences, workshops, awareness-raising events, fundraisers and other events.

We're looking forward to evaluating how far we will have come in our capacity-building development over the following months, quarters and year.