

Media release

For immediate release



## **Ghanaian NGO Wins International Advocacy Award**

**3 December 2009 (Cancun, Mexico)** - Integrated Development in Focus (DIF) has won an international award for its innovative and empowering campaigns in uplifting communities affected by tuberculosis (TB) and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB).

DIF was awarded the Tuberculosis Survival Prize today at an event in Cancun, Mexico City. The award is given each year by the Tuberculosis Survival Project, with support from the Lilly MDR-TB Partnership.

The TB Survival Project received entries from organizations around the world. These were reviewed by a jury of six people working in the humanitarian field. The jury was headed by Nobel peace laureate, Betty Williams.

Ms. Williams said DIF was awarded the prize because of the innovative and sustainable mechanisms it used to create awareness about TB, identify potential TB infections, and ensure correct and complete treatment for TB patients.

“It is an honor to be involved with this award and to review the applications from all corners of the globe. This process gives one an understanding and appreciation of the challenging work being undertaken by organizations in remote corners of the world to combat TB and MDR-TB,” said Ms. Williams.

Paul Thorn, Project Director of the TB Survival Project, explained that the prize was created for exactly this reason.

“Many advocates and activists, and the role that they play in the fight against TB and other diseases, often goes unrecognized. The Tuberculosis Survival Prize rewards the innovative work of these unsung heroes and heroines and to make a contribution towards those efforts,” explained Mr. Thorn.

Based in Accra, DIF is dedicated to the reduction of poverty and the empowerment of vulnerable people, especially children, women and young people, who are living in hard to reach, underserved and neglected areas of Ghana. The organization works across the country, focusing on TB and MDR-TB, TB and HIV co-infection, malaria, early childhood care and development, reproductive health, health promotion and education, training, research and psychosocial counselling. DIF has organized and conducted many awareness and education campaigns at community events, which are sustainable via almost 300 DIF-trained volunteers. It also complements the work of the Ghana Health Service by reaching the country’s most remote villages, and has to date referred more than 600 people for TB testing, over 200 of which have proved to be infected with TB and are now under treatment.

For DIF, the award means that it can expand its existing work in Ghana. DIF Executive Director, Josephine Agbo, said the award gave the organization a sense of recognition, fulfillment and motivation to do more in the fight against TB

“Development is all about people. We plant the seeds knowing that they hold future promise. Our work is about laying foundations for development and providing the support to ensure that foundation becomes something that has a lasting and sustainable impact,” said Ms Agbo.

TB is an airborne infectious disease, which is preventable and curable. The disease can be spread when people who are ill with TB bacteria in their lungs cough and expel the bacteria into the air. If TB is detected early and fully treated, people with the disease quickly become non-infectious and eventually cured. MDR-TB arises from interrupted or incomplete treatment of TB, and has become a major global health threat.

**The Tuberculosis Survival Project** was launched in 2006 to raise awareness and provide information about TB/MDR-TB. It offers a peer support service and a web-based facility for people to share their own experience of having TB/MDR-TB. The TB Survival Project also produces self-help publications for those on the TB treatment journey. For more information, visit [www.tbsurvivalproject.org](http://www.tbsurvivalproject.org).

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**For further information, please contact:**

Josephine Agbo, Integrated Development in Focus  
+233 21 671 823/24 437 5937, email : [jossyagbo@yahoo.com](mailto:jossyagbo@yahoo.com) and  
[integrateddevelopmentinfocus@yahoo.com](mailto:integrateddevelopmentinfocus@yahoo.com).

Paul Thorn, TB Survival Project  
+44 1273 555 982, mobile +44 777 528 6471, email: [paulthornlondon@hotmail.com](mailto:paulthornlondon@hotmail.com).