Annual Update 2012

Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health
Introducing APCOM

Who we are:

Founded in 2007, the Asia-Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) is a coalition of constituents – governments, UN partners, non-profits, academics and community based organisations – concerned with improving the sexual health and human rights of men who have sex with men and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific.

We represent a diverse range of interests working together to advocate on, highlight and prioritise HIV issues that affect the lives of men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people, including rights, health and well-being. Our overall organisational goals are:

1. Increasing investment in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in the region
2. Scaling up coverage of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in the region
3. Strengthening the development and availability of the evidence base that supports our mandate

By influencing governments and opinion leaders, we are generating positive, enduring change.

What we do:

APCOM performs a critical role of community liaison.

We review and track the degree of inclusion of MSM and HIV issues in the national AIDS plans for different countries. We monitor violation of rights of MSM. We work with MSM and HIV community networks and organisations by offering support and mentorship, and technical expertise. We also nurture and help grow supportive networks.

Finally, we advocate for qualitative research and extensive studies, which help policy makers and service providers in their work. As a community of excellence, we emphasise sharing data and insights to build capacity, knowledge and recognition.

We bring all of that together in our online resource centre called “The Source.” There you will find a wealth of searchable data and information related to HIV, MSM, transgender and a range of related issues.

At our core, we are on a mission to shift attitudes and sensitize society to the needs of this diverse and vibrant community. Together, we are sharing knowledge and real-life stories that support and promote the sexual orientation and gender identity rights of MSM and transgender people.

What we believe:

As a coalition, we believe in collaboration. We have faith in ideas. And we advocate for change. We are focused on creating a world where men who have sex with men and transgender people live life fully, free of stigma and discrimination, a world where everyone is treated equally.

We believe in sharing knowledge and experiences so that outcomes are stronger and impact is greater. Committed and passionate, we anchor our work in understanding and facts.

Founded in 2007, the Asia-Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) is a coalition of constituents – governments, UN partners, non-profits, academics and community based organisations – concerned with improving the sexual health and human rights of men who have sex with men and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific.

We represent a diverse range of interests working together to advocate on, highlight and prioritise HIV issues that affect the lives of men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people, including rights, health and well-being. Our overall organisational goals are:

1. Increasing investment in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in the region
2. Scaling up coverage of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in the region
3. Strengthening the development and availability of the evidence base that supports our mandate

By influencing governments and opinion leaders, we are generating positive, enduring change.

APCOM performs a critical role of community liaison.

We review and track the degree of inclusion of MSM and HIV issues in the national AIDS plans for different countries. We monitor violation of rights of MSM. We work with MSM and HIV community networks and organisations by offering support and mentorship, and technical expertise. We also nurture and help grow supportive networks.

Finally, we advocate for qualitative research and extensive studies, which help policy makers and service providers in their work. As a community of excellence, we emphasise sharing data and insights to build capacity, knowledge and recognition.

We bring all of that together in our online resource centre called “The Source.” There you will find a wealth of searchable data and information related to HIV, MSM, transgender and a range of related issues.

At our core, we are on a mission to shift attitudes and sensitize society to the needs of this diverse and vibrant community. Together, we are sharing knowledge and real-life stories that support and promote the sexual orientation and gender identity rights of MSM and transgender people.

As a coalition, we believe in collaboration. We have faith in ideas. And we advocate for change. We are focused on creating a world where men who have sex with men and transgender people live life fully, free of stigma and discrimination, a world where everyone is treated equally.

We believe in sharing knowledge and experiences so that outcomes are stronger and impact is greater. Committed and passionate, we anchor our work in understanding and facts.
In what has been a busy year, 2012 can be summed up as consolidation year for APCOM. A new base for APCOM’s operations was found in Bangkok – centre for international and regional community networks, and our leadership was renewed, providing much-needed stability.

APCOM has contributed to the strategic information development to advocate on the enabling environment for men who have sex with men and transgender people; breaking down the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS from the perspective of MSM, producing a policy brief on the shared responsibility for HIV prevention between HIV positive and HIV negative MSM, and producing a policy brief on understanding the needs of young MSM. On transgender people, APCOM provided technical input into the WHO WPRO regional assessment on HIV and STI and other health needs of transgender people, due to be released in 2013.

An Outcome Assessment of APCOM’s first 5 years of work was conducted. It provides a blueprint for us to remain relevant in the fast-changing environments in which we work, and to continue to grow to become the leading advocacy network for MSM and transgender populations in the region, informed by realities on the front line. Our new brand and website, developed through consultations with various stakeholders, is one of the direct outcomes of its recommendations. We have received very positive feedback so far, which confirms that our strategic approach, including the process of engagement with various constituents has brought out a clearly recognised and appreciated identity that connects with various stakeholders.

Our current strategy is coming to an end, and we are developing our next strategic plan 2014-2019 with consultations set to take place throughout 2013.

We’ve been successful in securing funding from the Robert Carr Civil Society Network Fund to implement the Communication Causes Change project, and in partnership with AFAO (Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations) secured AusAID funding for an initiative to further strengthen MSM and transgender networks in the region.

On behalf of APCOM, we would like to say thank you to Hivos, an organisation that understands the needs of community networks, and therefore puts real investment into core operating costs. We are grateful to UNAIDS and UNDP for helping to strengthen our governance- and strategic information development functions, and to IDS, our new partner, for helping us develop the policy brief on positive MSM. We also thank all our other stakeholders who have helped guide APCOM during this period.

2013 is shaping up to be another busy year for us, and we are particularly looking forward to the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP), which will be hosted in Bangkok. We hope to see you there, joining in one of our many planned activities!
What do we need to know to inform a strong response among key populations?

18 out of 38 member states in Asia and the Pacific criminalise same-sex sexual activities. There are many other criminal offences that are selectively enforced against MSM and transgender people in a further 8 countries that do not have specific criminal offences for male-to-male sex. (Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam)

---

**Epidemiology**

- Geographic location of at-risk populations
- Role of the internet and social media in sexual networking
- Size of at-risk & vulnerable populations
- Disaggregated data, including on HIV prevalence and incidence, access to treatment, care and support, access to condoms and other prevention means for different populations of MSM (young MSM, MSM involved in sex work, MSM in different classes, and from different religions, different identity groups) — and importantly the disaggregation of transgender people from the MSM category
- HIV-related risk in different populations of MSM — Sexual risk levels and frequency of unprotected commercial sex, and of unprotected anal sex between men who have sex with men

**Social science**

- The role of ‘identity’ and ‘community’ in how MSM and transgender
- How ideas about (homo)sexuality change over the life cycle, as heteronormative concepts are slowly un-learned and replaced by new ideas, and what the consequences are for providing health services
- How ideas about (homo)sexuality differ between different populations of MSM and transgender people and why, and what the consequences are for providing health services
- How stigma and discrimination influence the lives of MSM and transgender people, including how they can or cannot maintain their health
To strengthen advocacy efforts that improve social protection and provide enabling environments for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific.

Over the past 12 months, collaborating with the United Nations and other key institutions, we have been able to participate in a variety of meetings that have brought people together from Asia and the Pacific region including governments and their law enforcement agencies, judiciary and lawyers to promote and push for more legal and equitable social policy reforms.

We have represented the region in global advocacy efforts, led by the Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF).

Key activities included:

January 2012 – MSMGF Steering Committee Meeting

February 2012 – Asia-Pacific high-level intergovernmental meeting on the assessment of progress against commitments in the political declaration on HIV/AIDS, Thailand

February 2012 – UNDP regional HIV, Health and Development programme for Asia and the Pacific Steering committee meeting

July 2012 – Hosted a Getting to Know APCOM Session at the XIX International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. Produced four policy briefs on the legal environments of men who have sex with men in East Asia, Pacific, South Asia and Southeast Asia

Moving forward, we aim to:

Convene a joint meeting regarding Ending AIDS in Asia: Re-strategizing the MSM Response 20-22 January 2013 – Bangkok, Thailand (UNAIDS and UNDP)

Advocate at the National HIV/AIDS and STI Programme Managers Meeting for Asian Countries in the Western Pacific Region, 25-28 February 2013, Kunming City, China (WHO)

Produce a discussion paper on Islam, sexual diversity and access to health services. Recognising the need to conduct advocacy with faith-based leaders and religious groups, especially in countries where religion and homosexuality make uneasy partnership. The aim of these efforts is to support the many MSM and transgender people that struggle with the contradictions posed by their sexuality and gender identity in the context of their faith and religious customs and norms.

Build a comprehensive MSM conference agenda for the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP), to be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Participants at the ‘Getting to know APCOM’ session held at the International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C.
Goal two

To advocate for increased access to rights-based, comprehensive HIV prevention, care, treatment and support services for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons, including people living with HIV.

Key activities included:

Policy briefs produced
- 2011 Political Declaration and men who have sex with men
- Addressing the needs of young men who have sex with men
- Men who have sex with men living with HIV and Prevention

On transgender issues, in collaboration with APTN (Asia Pacific Transgender Network) and the World Health Organization (WHO WPRO), APCOM contributed to the development of the ‘Regional assessment of HIV, STI and other health needs of transgender people in Asia and the Pacific’ and the Consultation on HIV, STI and Other Health Needs of Transgender People in Asia and the Pacific. These efforts led to the publication entitled ‘Joint Regional Technical Brief on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Other Essential Health Needs among Transgender People in Asia and the Pacific’.

Moving forward, we aim to:

Developing a policy brief on transgender people in collaboration with APTN
Release a joint publication on a regional study of young men who have sex with men in partnership with UNDP, UNICEF and YVC, and follow up this publication with another policy brief

In collaboration with APASO (Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations)
In collaboration with IDS (Institute of Development Studies) and APN+ (Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV)
Goal three

To increase the production and utilisation of strategic information to strengthen HIV and sexual health intervention programming, as well as regional and national level advocacy efforts to improve the sexual health of men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific.

We have made it our top priority to ensure that strategic information on MSM, transgender and HIV in Asia and the Pacific moves beyond behavioral and epidemiological knowledge. While still maintaining the importance of epidemiologic data for advocacy with policy makers and donor agencies to increase funding and programmatic efforts to prevent HIV and improve the human rights of MSM and transgender populations, we have pushed for epidemiological data to be complemented with anthropological, sociological and ethnographic information. We believe this will help to better inform programming and the design of more acceptable and diversified, and therefore more effective HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services.

As a coalition, we have continued to advocate for, encourage and promote the importance of social research amongst MSM and transgender communities in Asia and the Pacific. Where possible we have continued to advocate for the production of such knowledge to centrally engage with the affected communities and service providers, particularly where no research has previously been done.

Key activities included:

- The release of 15 updated Country Snapshots in partnership with UNDP, UNAIDS and HIV and AIDS Data Hub for Asia-Pacific. These country snapshots are aimed to document and circulate good practices, share progress, stimulate discussion, and inform priority interventions and advocacy efforts to address the rising HIV epidemic among MSM in Asia. Countries released in this series included: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, from South Asia and Southeast Asian countries included: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

- Formation of the APCOM Knowledge Reference Group, consisting of representatives and experts from research institutions and APCOM board members, to guide APCOM’s strategic information development.

- Partnering with knowledge institutions such as Hivos Knowledge Programme, Institute of Development Studies Knowledge Services, Australian Research Center in Sex, Health and Society/La Trobe University (Melbourne), Mahidol University (Bangkok) and HIV and AIDS Data Hub for Asia-Pacific.

Moving forward, we aim to:

- Release:
  - A scoping paper on assumptions behind, and key principles of, HIV prevention and care programming for MSM and Transgender in Asia and the Pacific.
  - A scoping paper on MSM and transgender information in Asia and the Pacific.

- Rebrand, upgrade and relaunch APCOM with a new look with new website to be the regional platform to facilitate knowledge sharing, integrating with social media including Facebook and Twitter. It aims to profile more information and activities that happen at the front line in the countries.
To strengthen the capacity of APCOM and sub-regional networks to support national community efforts to effectively advocate and participate in national planning processes.

This is at the very heart of the APCOM coalition: Close collaboration with and nurturing of our regional and sub-regional networks. We are actively engaged in advocating for an increased investment and amplified coverage of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for MSM and transgender people at the national level.

Over the past 12 months, the APCOM Secretariat has worked closely with our regional and sub-regional networks to increase their visibility and solidify our own organisation, and coalition membership. New policies and operational procedures have been developed, increasing APCOM’s productivity and laying a solid foundation for the APCOM Secretariat’s many functions.

Most notably, there has been significant investment in, and consequently improvements in APCOM’s internal and external communications work. This was made possible through Austraining International, an AusAID funded volunteering programme. APCOM was successful in securing a full-time Communications and Advocacy Officer.

As a coalition, we continue to provide support and develop the capacity of our regional and sub-regional networks. As you will see in the pages to follow, many of the networks, our coalition partners, are now well established and moving towards providing greater support to national and local MSM, transgender and HIV organisations within their region.

Key activities included:
- APCOM Secretariat established in Bangkok Thailand, February 24, 2012
- Release of the APCOM Outcome Assessment
- Executive Committee Meeting, October 2012 – Bangkok Thailand
- Redevelopment of organisation branding, website and knowledge hub
- Addition of a new coalition network, Youth Voices Count (YVC)

Moving forward, we aim to:
- Third Governing Board Meeting to be held in January 2013
- The launch of our strategic plan, 2014 – 2019, expected in December 2013
- Finalisation of APCOM’s Advocacy Strategy
- Development of APCOM’s Communications Strategy
- Continue to explore new avenues of funding and resource mobilisation
- Organisational Registration in Thailand
- The hiring of an Advocacy Capacity Development Officer – AFAO/APCOM AusAID Project
- Hiring of Robert Carr Project Managers – This will include 3 staff within Sub Regional Networks, focusing on advocacy and communications.
Moving on in a strategic way: Outcome Assessment

An external evaluation of APCOM was requested to assess impacts and progress of APCOM since its founding in 2007, as well as to provide guidance for the future. The evaluation took place in early 2012. The methodology consisted of 1) a desk review of project documents, 2) key informant interviews and 3) an online survey. Key evaluation questions related to APCOM’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and equity.

The evaluation noted that overall, the environment to address HIV vulnerability of men who have sex with men and transgender people has become more supportive in the region in the period 2007-2010. APCOM, as a coalition of community representatives, programme planners and policy makers has undoubtedly been at the centre of this positive development, however, it is impossible to attribute impact to APCOM alone relative to other key players.

Conclusions of the evaluation were:

• APCOM as a coalition and APCOM’s goals remain relevant to the needs of MSM and transgender people in the region. APCOM needs to continue to operate, supported by a clearer vision and strategy to achieve its goals.
• APCOM is probably effective in terms of achieving its stated objectives, but APCOM needs to work towards better identifying these objectives, making use of clearer indicators and means of verification, and it needs to better monitor and report progress.
• APCOM needs to improve the efficiency of its governance and management systems. APCOM also needs to ensure cost-effectiveness of operations, as future international funding for HIV and social development is set to decline.
• APCOM needs to sustain the momentum created by its current leadership for the movement through identifying and supporting new community leaders.
• APCOM needs to develop strategies on how to deal with equity, especially vis-à-vis transgender people and other populations.

The recommendations will guide our work in a more strategic way:

1. Develop a strategic plan for APCOM.
2. The working groups to develop a strategic plan on how to engage and respond to prioritised key emerging issues in their respective areas.
4. To develop an advocacy agenda that incorporates human rights and evidence based public health best practice approaches for MSM and transgender people.
5. To develop a strategy that articulates how APCOM can support further capacity development of the sub-regional networks.
6. The APCOM website should be overhauled and redesigned to act as a portal for the storage and dissemination of strategic information. Maintenance and regular updating of the website should be incorporated into work plans and appropriately resourced.
7. To conduct a restructuring of the APCOM governing board. This process should be conducted in tandem with the strategic planning, to ensure that the board structure complements the articulated vision of APCOM. In addition, guidelines and criteria for selection and nomination of governing board members and observers, along with reporting and accountability processes and mechanisms should be established.
8. Develop a strategy to outline roles, responsibilities and resource requirements of the secretariat.
9. To transfer APCOM’s fiscal management to a Bangkok based fiscal agent, whilst APCOM undergoes a process of organisational development with the aim of registering as an independent organisation.
10. To develop a communication strategy for APCOM.
11. To develop a resource mobilisation strategy, with resources allocated to achieving set outcomes that area attached to prioritised programmatic areas.
12. To develop a leadership and executive management plan for APCOM.
13. To initiate a consultative process within APCOM and APTN to determine where and how the transgender community can sit within APCOM.
14. Develop policy papers and strategies for how the sub-regional and national MSM and transgender networks can engage with the various populations of key affected populations across their respective regions.
Our new branding

Throughout 2012, APCOM performed a major overhaul of its organisational branding and website. This process involved an in-depth development phase, during which internal and external stakeholders and partners were consulted extensively. We went back to the basics of the organization, as we reviewed our mission, vision and organisational history.

Our aim for this development was to create something new and fresh, an identity that showed the importance of networks and communities coming together. We wanted to develop a strong identity, representing a strong community.

Our new branding is bright and vibrant in colour and feel, with brick-textured circles used to symbolise our multiple identities, to show movement, energy and solidarity - just like the organisations and the communities we represent. The circles clearly depict a sense of connectivity strengthened via a strong chain - a strong network, a strong coalition.

Beyond the look there is also a lot of substance. At the heart of the new website is a knowledge center, which we call The Source. The Source will develop into a one-stop shop for information on MSM and transgender people, focusing on HIV, sexual health, human rights and other advocacy-related issues and content within Asia and the Pacific. The website and The Source will provide strong links to other quality content within the region, as well as expanding linkages to other partners outside Asia and the Pacific such as the Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF), the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), the African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR), ASICAL (Latin-American MSM coalition), and Caribbean Vulnerable Communities coalition (CVC).

As we began to launch our new brand and website, we pushed forward into the social media space, exploring new uses for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. It is through this development that we are able to reach further into the heart of the communities we represent. They have become a communication channel for the organisation, where people are able to connect to our website and be referred to The Source for more information.

Our new identity, website and the possibilities we are able to deliver to our communities through The Source have been very well received so far.
Our coalition:

As a community of change-makers, people are the critical ingredient of our success. We are fortunate to have skilled board members and staff to help us advance our mission.

APCOM’s governing board, comprised of community representatives from across the two regions, directs its overall strategic direction. The Governing Board also includes coalition sector advisors from government, donors, technical experts and United Nations agencies.

Our staff:

APCOM’s talented Secretariat staff team consists of our Executive Director, a Communications and Advocacy Officer, Programme Assistant and Office Coordinator.

Executive Director
Midnight Pookasetwattana

Communications & Advocacy Officer
Matthew Vaughan

Programme Assistant
Vaness Silpakhon Kongsakul

Office Coordinator
Wattana Kirangga (‘A’)

Our Governing Board members are:

- China
  - Lin Fan (“Colin”) Meng Gang (“Roger”)

- India
  - Aditya Bondyopadhyay Paoli Patankar

- South Asia
  - Shale Ahmed

- Greater Mekong
  - Rapeepun Jommaroeng (“Ohm”) Vieng Ahrone Souriyo

- South Asia
  - Developed Asia
    -(prod) - Jae Kim

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- MSM PLHIV
  - Sean Slavin
  - Vijay Nair

- Pacific
  - Joleen Mataele
  - Restira Apa

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Australasia
  - Jason Myers
  - Robert Lake

- Islands of Southeast Asia
  - Ferdinand V. Buenaventura

- Youth
  - Niluka Perera

- Transgender
  - Kharnini Samath
  - Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

- Chair Person
  - Dédé Oetomo

- Vice Chair Person
  - Roy Wadia

- Government Sector
  - Glen Cruz, Philippines

- Donor Sector
  - Panus Na Nakorn, USAID
  - Paul Jansen, Hivos

- Technical Advisor
  - Jan Willem de Lind van Wijngaarden
  - Philippe Girault

- United Nations
  - Edmund Settle, UNDP
  - Geoff Manthey, UNAIDS
  - Dr. Pengfei Zhao, WHO-WPRO
Developed Asia Network (DAN)

The Developed Asia Network (DAN) had two main activities during 2012. The first was the Caucus meeting held at the Washington International AIDS Conference in July. This meeting provided members to share their updates on national activities. Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan have made significant progress. The national activities were basically initiated from ‘National Coordination Mechanism’ fund project.

The second activity was the IPPF Capacity Building workshop – Metroplan initiative. This was a 2.5-day capacity building workshop held by IPPF and was held in Kuala Lumpur. DAN was invited to send delegates in the expectation that the skills learned at this workshop could be shared with other organisations once the delegates returned home. The delegates from Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan were joined by delegates from Malaysia, with topics covering the understanding of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity issues, advocacy and resource mobilisation. These topics were decided based on research from 2011 from IPPF’s Metroplan Man initiative. Further to these two activities, DAN held a number of community-based activities focused on MSM and transgender sexual health issues at the national level. The aim of these activities was to facilitate community-led, national coordination mechanisms as well as to help improve communication and collaboration within the network.

Islands of Southeast Asia Network on Male and Transgender Sexual Health (ISEAN)

ISEAN is currently implementing the multi-country Global Fund Round 10 grant called ISEAN-Hivos programme signaling joint proposal submission by ISEAN and Hivos, entitled ‘Strengthening Community Systems to Reduce Vulnerability to and Impact of HIV Infection on MSM and TG in Insular Southeast Asia’. The programme covers Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste and its goal is to reduce the vulnerability and risks of MSM and transgender people to HIV infection and the impact of HIV on their lives in Insular Southeast Asia.

The UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre is the technical assistance provider and the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Hivos) – Regional Office for Southeast Asia based in Jakarta is the Principle Recipient. A formal launch of the programme was held in Manila, Philippines on January 19, 2012. The event was attended by local and regional stakeholders, including representatives from the Sub-Recipients in Malaysia (PT Foundation), Indonesia (GWL-INA), Philippines (PNDC and TLNAC) and partners from Timor Leste (FTH and TLNAC). Several Philippine offices and organisations were represented during the launch including the Centers for Health Development, Philippines CCCM, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Health and Department of Interior & Local Government. After the formal launch an internal inception meeting held in January among its sub-recipients and partners met to discuss programme implementation concerns, sharing of completed activities as well as plans for the coming quarters. In addition, four area workshops were held for the sub-recipients and partners aiming to provide knowledge and skills needed to fulfill the requirements of the Global Fund in terms of financial management and accountability. During this period, a Secretariat was established in Jakarta, Indonesia and appointed full-time staff including the Regional Program Manager and an Administration Officer.

In addition a roadmap for the creation of national networks focused on the health of MSM and transgender people in the Philippines and Malaysia were laid out and are due for completion by the second quarter of 2012. One of the first tasks of the ISEAN Secretariat is to convene a Regional Consultation on BCC Strategy on HIV for MSM and transgender people in June 2012.

Two Secretariats meet: ISEAN secretariat in Jakarta visits APCOM secretariat & PSDN in Bangkok, December 2012

Pacific Sexual Diversity Network (PSDN)

Pacific Sexual Diversity Network (PSDN) is a Pacific regional network of organisations and projects working with men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in the Pacific, especially in relation to HIV/AIDS, supported by Hivos and APCOM.

The PSDN coordinates regional communication, capacity development of MSM and transgender organisations, and advocacy and representation on behalf of Pacific MSM and transgender people. Currently it has members in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and the Cook Islands. Thanks to Hivos, the PSDN has been able to sustain its Secretariat through annual core-funding. The PSDN, with assistance from UNDP and NZAF, coordinated a Human Rights workshop for MSM and TG organisations in the Pacific, with an emphasis on sex work, law reform, in-country legal policies and gender identity. NZAF is, and has been strengthening its partnership with the PSDN by providing continuous technical assistance to the PSDN Secretariat.

PSDN identified organisations from non-PSDN member countries such as Guam, American Samoa and Kiribati; these countries have shown interest to become members of the PSDN, and their membership will be tabulated at the PSDN AGM. Members of PSDN were present at the IAC 2012, Washington DC, and were vocal in voicing Pacific issues to the International conference. A booth was set up at the Global Village for PSDN IEC Materials and a cultural performance by the members reflected the challenges and issues across the Pacific for MSM and TG.

Challenges for 2012 were funding and commitment to improve the sexual health and human rights of MSM and transgender populations from local Governments and regional organisations to MSM and TG organisations in the Pacific. Most of the MSM and TG organisations in the Pacific seek funding through the private and business sector at the country level, in order to assist with workshops, vocational training, and HIV/AIDS awareness and drop in centres. The Secretariat is challenged by sustaining its core funding on a yearly basis.
Purple Sky Network (PSN) is a regional community-based network of national networks, organisations and individuals working with other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people (TG) in Greater Mekong sub-region, including Cambodia, China (Guangxi and Yunnan provinces), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

It was the first regional network in the region, established in 2005. PSN is run by its governing board members, who represent national communities from the country level, and is technically supported by its Regional Technical Board, who are international HIV and STIs experts in the region.

In response to UNAIDS’ goals of ‘Getting to Zero’, PSN aims to advocate and build the capacity of countries in the Greater Mekong sub-region so that MSM and TG have better access to prevention, care and treatment services in order to reduce new HIV infections; to reduce deaths due to HIV infection; and to reduce stigma and discrimination in this region.

PSN is working in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) and MSM Global Forum, including other related networks such as 7Sisters and APN+.

In 2012, PSN has revisited its strategies to become more proactive in its Regional Technical Board, who are international HIV and STIs experts in the region.

In 2012, two Regional Steering Committee Meeting (RSCM) of Project DIVA were held and a visioning exercise of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) was carried out to ensure that the community voices remain central to the project. The exercise also aimed to develop the RSC into an institutional structure and become a regional entity aiming to alleviate some of the key gaps experienced by MSM, Transgender and Hijra CBOs working across different South Asian countries.

South Asian MSM and AIDs Network (SAMAN)

South Asian MSM and AIDS Network (SAMAN), a coalition of country level community based organizations dedicated to MSM, Transgender and HIV issues, is currently involved in the implementation of the regional project DIVA (Diversity In Action) supported by the Global Fund.

SAMAN focuses on technical assistance, regional advocacy and policy development, and information and skills sharing with other country partners. Under the Global Fund programme, key in-country community-based organizations have been identified to help build other local organizations.

In 2012 two Regional Steering Committee Meeting (RSCM) of Project DIVA were held and a visioning exercise of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) was carried out to ensure that the community voices remain central to the project. The exercise also aimed to develop the RSC into an institutional structure and become a regional entity aiming to alleviate some of the key gaps experienced by MSM, Transgender and Hijra CBOs working across different South Asian countries.

A working statement on the proposed structure of RSC was also formulated as below:

Community led resource agency for strengthening regional and country specific responses by providing management support, technical assistance, capacity building, knowledge management, research and advocacy support to policy makers and service providers working on issues affecting the lives of MSM, TG and Hijra populations across South Asia.

However, the challenges that the network faced were that Governments in the region have not been investing enough in technical assistance, capacity building, knowledge management, research and advocacy support to policy makers and service providers working on issues affecting the lives of MSM, TG and Hijra populations across South Asia.

The early part of 2012 saw the completion of the Positive Youth Leadership program to develop skills of positive young MSM from Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam. Funding for positive MSM projects finished in May. However new funding from AusAID became available later in 2012. This project will build on the earlier leadership work, and will assist in building capacity in the organisations where the LDS leaders are working.

From January 2013 over until June 2014, APN+ carry out the MSM and Transgender Network Capacity Building Strengthening Initiative in collaboration with six in country partners, namely CPN+ Positive MSM Project, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Rainbow Sky, Kunming, China, Beautiful Life Health Center, Shanghai, China, Myanmar Positive Group, Yangon, Myanmar, Youth Dream Club, Hanoi, Vietnam, VNP+ Positive MSM Project, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Additional to financial support, technical visits to in-country partners will be regularly made to ensure timely and efficient programmatic delivery. Activities implemented by in-country partners include group meetings, counseling, home visits, referrals, trainings on topics related to the health and wellbeing of positive MSM and transgender people.

APN+’s input of strategic information into the development of APCOM’s policy documents is expected to be ongoing. APN+ and APCOM are also seeking possible synergies in current intersecting sites, namely Yangon and Ho Chi Minh City, to better address programmatic gaps and joint advocacy efforts.

The Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) is a regional network working with Transgender men and women. Their aim is to enable transgender people throughout Asia and the Pacific to organise and advocate for improvements to health, the protection of their human rights, the enhancement of their social wellbeing and improvements to their quality of life.

APTN coordinates regional communication via email, list servers and via its Facebook page, and provides capacity development, advocacy support and representation of transgender people at regional and global meetings. APTN is receiving no sustainable funding for its secretariat’s duties and network coordination; it is entirely managed by volunteer members from the core-working group.

Throughout 2012, APTN was invited to participate in a number of meetings and consultations, including the Asia Pacific High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals in Bangkok in February 2012, the AWID Conference in Istanbul in April 2012, and it contributed to the Consultation on HIV, STI and other Health needs of Transgender people in Asia and the Pacific in Manila in September 2012.

After the successful uptake of the key publication ‘Lost in Transition’, APTN will release a follow-up policy brief that can be used to further the advocacy efforts for APTN and other transgender organisations within Asia and the Pacific.
Networks update

Youth Voices Count (YVC)

Building on the key recommendations from the initial YVC consultation in 2011, the focus for 2012-2013 has been on re-structuring the network, building capacity for their membership and building new strategic partnerships. Project activities have been focused on addressing the various self-issues concerning young MSM and transgender people and in particular self-stigma, which affects the confidence and self-esteem of young MSM and transgender people. This has been a focus for YVC as issues of self-stigma have been associated with higher risk behaviors that can result in contracting various STIs and/or HIV.

In 2012 YVC enhanced their membership with new young people from 18 countries within Asia and the Pacific. The solidarity among the YVC members was shown clearly during the governance meeting in October regarding the endorsement of network management documents and directions.

In late December 2012 YVC began conducting in-country research on self-stigma among young MSM and TG communities in 11 countries. This community research has been implemented by local teams who participated in a short training in late November 2012, and which was themed around understanding and conducting community research.

Moving into 2013, YVC will continue to advocate for this issue by developing a policy brief on self-stigma, incorporating inputs of participants from the second consultation and key findings from community research reports from 11 countries. YVC has also planned to conduct an advocacy campaign that will utilise community friendly short videos and other relevant YVC developed documents in 3 countries. It is planned that this advocacy campaign will be launched on May 17 International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) to call for action on the situation at a country level. Using the momentum of this movement, Youth Voices Count is expanding its activities of advocating for self-stigma and wellbeing issues faced by young people to more countries, communities and stakeholders to help reinforce the impact.

Thank you

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support throughout 2012:

- Alliance Regional Technical Support Hub, Southeast Asia and Pacific
- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)
- Austraining International
- Avert
- Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (7 Sisters)
- FHI360
- HIV/AIDS Data Hub for Asia-Pacific
- Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingsaanwerking (Hivos)
- International HIV/AIDS Alliance
- Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
- Naz Foundation International (NFI)
- The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF)
- UNAIDS
- UNDP
- UNICEF

We look forward to working with you and building new partnerships in 2013.