



# 2014

## ANNUAL UPDATE



**apcom**.org

Equity.Dignity.Social Justice

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# about apcom

## Who we are

Founded in 2007, the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) is a coalition of 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 the Asia and the Pacific Region.

We represent a diverse range of interests working together to advocate on male sexual health. We 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.

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## What we do

As a coalition, APCOM performs a critical role in community liaison. We review and track the degree of inclusion of MSM and HIV issues in the National Strategic Plans of different countries in the region. We monitor violations of MSM rights. We nurture the growth of supportive networks by working with MSM and HIV community networks and providing support, mentorship and technical expertise.

We also advocate for quality research to guide policy makers and service providers in performing their duties. As a community of excellence, we emphasise that data and insight sharing are key elements in building capacity, knowledge and recognition. This information is brought together in our online resource centre called "The Source", where a wealth of searchable data related to HIV, MSM and transgender is found.

Our core mission is to change attitudes and sensitise society to the needs of our 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.

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## What we believe

As a coalition, we believe in collaboration. We have faith in ideas. 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.

**For 2013 the word that best described APCOM was consolidation. Keeping that tradition, this year we chose another word “spark”. APCOM’s 2014 was a year of many new and exciting sparks for the coalition, the organisation and our work.**

A very important step for the coalition was the official registration as a Thai Foundation at the end of April. The registration will allow APCOM to operate fully independent and autonomous in every aspect of our work and organisation. This brings also new responsibilities and with support provided under the Global Fund Multi-Country South Asia HIV programme, APCOM was able to strengthen our internal systems in the areas of governance, finance, human resources, resource mobilisation, project monitoring and evaluation of all our programmes and projects.

With our newly “sparked” organisation and systems, APCOM started implementing its new strategic plan in which clearly lays out how we will work to achieve our mission through four distinct strategies, all indicating and guiding the new layout of our work.

A good example of how we now operate was the launch of the TestBKK-campaign in which we advocate for regular HIV-testing of our target groups at MSM and friendly health clinics in Bangkok, Thailand. A campaign to call for HIV-testing in itself is not new, but the way in which we organised it, was new and innovative. APCOM brought together a broad partnership of community organisations, the government, local health clinics and the private sector. This is a new and exciting model to share with many colleagues around the world. The campaign was the largest ever seen and unique for Bangkok and Thailand in general. Given its success, the campaign will for sure be repeated.

Another spark was the re-launch of JumpStart. JumpStart is a capacity strengthening initiative for 8 MSM and transgender networks in Asia and the Pacific implemented by APCOM and our Australian colleagues from the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO). Using a peer-to-peer approach, the project provides technical assistance to MSM and transgender networks working at various levels to strengthen an effective HIV response.

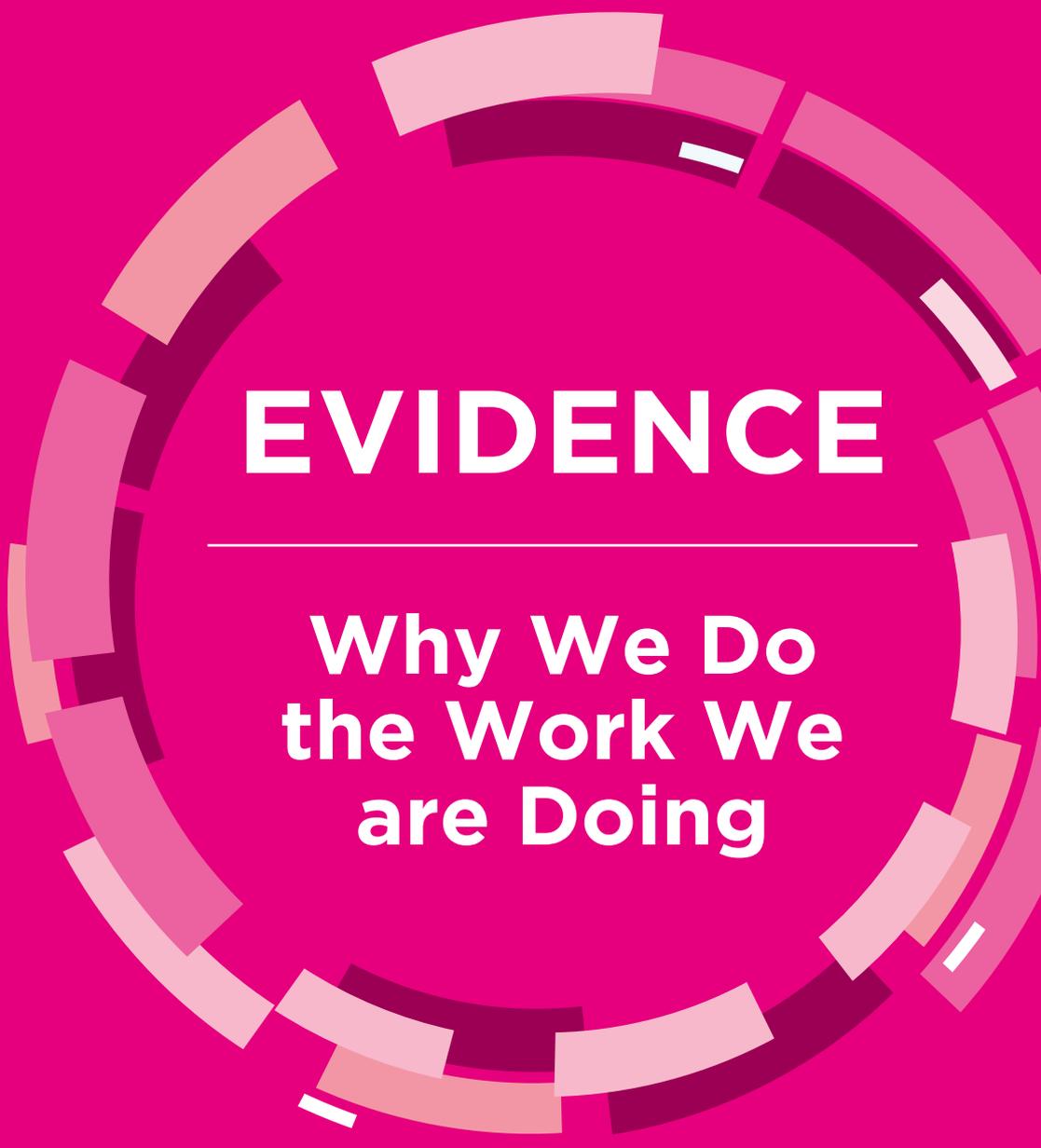
Young MSM and transgender people are in the core to fight and end the HIV epidemic in our region, and therefore, as APCOM, we sparked the iGNITE! mentorship programme to build a cadre of new young community leaders. In 2014 ten young people started the programme. These new leaders will complete their programme in 2015.



And a good step forward and recognition of the role that we play and work that we do, APCOM was appointed as a Regional Sub Recipient in the second phase of the Global Fund Multi-Country South Asia programme, led by UNDP. As a Regional Sub Recipient, APCOM carries out a mandate to support high-level regional and national-level policy development and advocacy initiatives in the countries in South Asia, initiate research activities and deliver technical support to the national Sub Recipient (SR) organisations in the South Asian countries.

Last but not least was the great opportunity to present our work and organisation in the bi-annual International AIDS Society’s, International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014), which was this year hosted in Melbourne, Australia. The conference provided us the ideal platform to advocate for our issues on a global stage in our own backyard, the third time after Yokohama (1994) and Bangkok (2004) that the conference was hosted in our region.

Therefore we can safely say that 2014 was a year of many new sparks for APCOM and our work. We are confident that these APCOM sparks will lead to a renewed passion and determination among all stakeholders involved in ending the HIV epidemic among MSM and transgender people in our region.



# EVIDENCE

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**Why We Do  
the Work We  
are Doing**

# The 2014 Latest Research

Globally the HIV epidemic amongst men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people has expanded, especially in urban settings. Where MSM have been included in the HIV surveillance efforts, it has shown that this key population bears a disproportionate burden of HIV.



**MSM alone account for more than 33 percent of new infections in China and projections indicate that MSM could make up half or more of all new infections in Asia by 2020.**

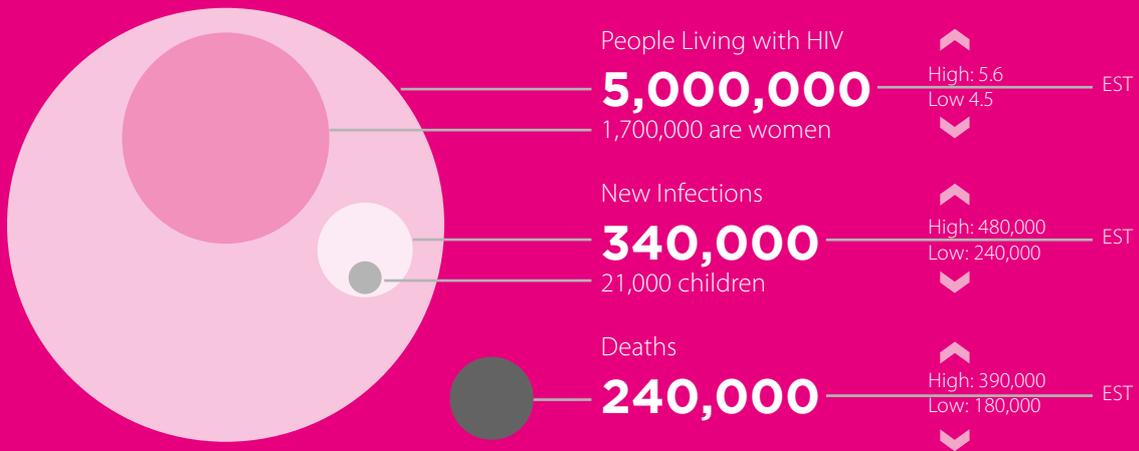
Even with the staggering figures MSM continue to be excluded, sometimes deliberately, from HIV prevention, treatment and care services because of stigma, discrimination, and criminalisation.

**This situation must change if global control of the HIV epidemic is to be achieved. On both public health and human rights grounds, expansion of HIV prevention, treatment, and care to MSM and transgender people is an urgent imperative.**

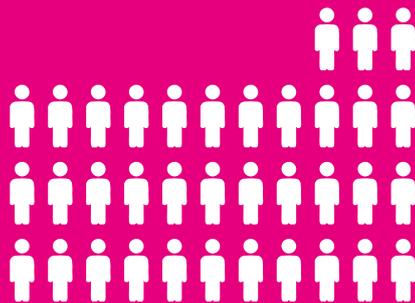
APCOM is working on the ground to advocate for increased investment in order to scale up services for MSM and transgender people. We work alongside community based organisations, governments and development partners to ensure that MSM and transgender people have access to safe and friendly environments ensuring they are able to access the services they need when they need it.

# HIV burden in Asia and the Pacific

After sub-Saharan Africa, the Asia and the Pacific region has the largest number of people living with HIV. It has been estimated that by the end of 2013, there were almost 5 million people living with HIV in this region. With the vast majority of people living with HIV in 11 countries: Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Viet Nam.



The AIDS Data Hub reports that there were 340,000 cases of new infections and 240,000 deaths last year.



New Infections Clock:

**39 Persons**

Every Hour

**932** Every Day

Source: AIDS Data Hub

"AIDS spending is domestically sourced in 20% of the region's low and lower middle income countries and in 87% of the upper middle income countries."



Source:  
AIDS Data Hub

Most countries in the region retain laws and policies or allow practices that effectively prevent people living with HIV, and key populations at higher risk, from accessing life-saving HIV services.

**37**

**criminalize  
some aspects  
of sex work**

**11**

**have compulsory  
detention centres for  
people who use drugs**

**15**

**have the death  
penalty for  
drug-related  
offences**

**18**

**criminalise same-sex  
relations**

**10**

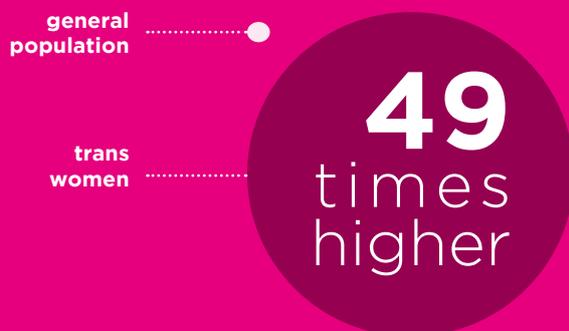
**impose some form of restriction on the entry,  
stay and residence of people living with HIV  
based on their HIV status**

Source:  
AIDS Data Hub

# HIV among transgender people: the lack of robust health research data

In general, health data, including HIV prevalence data, are less robust for transgender people than for the general population in Asia and the Pacific due to challenges in sampling, lack of population size estimates and issues of stigma and discrimination. Research and surveillance data that include transgender people frequently fail to disaggregate the data by gender identity and involve sample sizes too small to draw strong and general conclusions. Advocacy for continued and increased research efforts along with ensuring in general that the health and human rights for transgender people are respected and implemented remain a key priority for APCOM.

## Risk of HIV Infection



Worldwide, transgender women bear an extraordinarily heavy burden of HIV. Transgender women are 49x more likely to get HIV than the general population.

HIV prevalence among transgender men appears to be low, but further research may be needed in order to determine the risk, particularly among transgender men who have sex with men.



HIV vulnerability among transgender people is embedded in the structural contexts of stigma and discrimination in employment, education, housing and health care.



Transgender people have multiple health needs beyond HIV; therefore, holistic care is needed.



Funding must be dedicated to interventions tailored for transgender people, particularly transgender women, who bear the brunt of the HIV burden.



Health-care systems need to be knowledgeable about transgender health issues and provide quality and respectful services to transgender people.





**KEY  
ACTIVITIES**



**Advocacy  
for sexual health  
services for our  
communities**

The evidence is overwhelming. HIV is overly present among MSM and transgender people in the region. Over the past year, APCOM has therefore been dynamically engaging with policy makers, programme planners and services providers, along with the community partners, to scale up and improve the investment, coverage and quality of sexual health services among the key populations.

## KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- o launching the pilot city-based HIV testing campaign TestXXX in Bangkok in April. The TestXXX Project is a series of community-led campaigns aimed to encourage young MSM based in big cities with alarmingly high HIV prevalence among MSM, the campaign encourages YMSM to regularly test for HIV. With funding from UNAIDS and the Populations Services Institute (PSI) Thailand, TestBKK – the given name for Bangkok’s campaign – was the largest advocacy and communications campaign focusing on HIV testing for MSM ever seen in Thailand.
- o providing essential HIV prevention information and tools to young MSM, locally and regionally, throughout the year. Under TestBKK, we distributed more than 150,000 HIV prevention kits including condoms and water-based lubricant
- o over numerous MSM outreach activities such as during local and regional Songkran events, New Years Eve regional events like Sundance Party, which were known to be Asia’s largest gay dance parties.
- o presenting investment cases on sexual health services to a wide range of donors, national governments and governmental agencies, in order to reverse the diminishing funding amidst the epidemic’s growth.
- o engaging in dialogues with key decision makers and technical agencies on widening coverage for sexual health services for MSM and transgender people and ensuring their quality to live up to a standard set by the prevailing policies and guidelines.

## MOVING FORWARD ON THIS STRATEGY, WE AIM TO:

- o co-organise a workshop with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) and UNDP on the role of National Human Rights Institutions in promoting and protecting the rights, including health rights, of LGBTI People in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2015;
- o attend the 8th International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in July 2015 to advocate for our issues on a global level; and
- o conduct a regional dialogue exploring the feasibility of the roll out of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for self-identified gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, in September 2015.



**Advocacy for  
an enabling  
environment for  
sexual health and  
supportive  
policies**

Over the past 12 months, APCOM has been actively engaging with national governments, in particular with policy makers and law enforcers, to create a supportive legal environment for MSM and transgender people in order for them to have access to relevant and appropriate sexual health services, and be freed from structural barriers like criminalisation, stigmatisation and discrimination.

## KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- advocating for a strong community involvement within the UNESCAP member States' national reviews and consultation on legal and policy barriers to universal access to HIV services at the designated **Experts Group Meeting** (4-5 March, Pattaya, Thailand). 
- acting as a member of the civil society planning committee for **the 2015 Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV and AIDS**. 
- contributing to the development and roll out of the WHO Consolidated Key Populations Guidelines in the region by:
  - attending the Expert Consultation on the WHO Guidelines and the MSM Implementation Science Agenda (20-21 May, Washington D.C., USA)
  - producing and submitting a report **"MSM and HIV Counselling and Testing in Asia and the Pacific"** as regional input for the formulation of the new Guidelines. 
  - co-organised **a satellite-session** in the International AIDS Conference (IAC) 2014 with WHO and UNAIDS on the rolling out of the Guidelines (23 July, Melbourne, Australia) 
  - producing and disseminating a summary of the Guidelines **"Headlight Series: Understanding WHO's Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations"** to community advocates in the region. 
- providing strategic information on good practices and lesson learned on enabling environments through a dissemination of our highly-researched **Policy Briefs, Epidemic Snapshots and other publications** that assessed national laws, policies and the wider legal environment in various countries in the region.
- conducting "A Hidden and Positive MSM" consultation – a national consultation addressing the most pressing issues in HIV programming and human rights abuse towards PLHIV and MSM population in Yangon (22-23 May, Yangon, Myanmar)
- organising specific transgender community consultations highlighting the on-going human rights violations among transgender communities in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam (27-29 March) and Yangon, Myanmar (25-26 June).
- bringing together a unique coalition of local government, community organisations, donors and the private sector for an effective response towards the growing HIV epidemic among MSM in Bangkok through TestBKK campaign and follow-up activities. It was the first time a partnership of this kind was brought together in a joint and coordinated effort to stop the epidemic among MSM in Bangkok.

## MOVING FORWARD ON THIS STRATEGY, WE AIM TO:

- organise a "Christianity, sexual diversity and access to health services" session in the 2015 ILGA Asia conference in Taipei, Taiwan, in October 2015, to map and discuss the barriers and enablers in accessing health services among LGBT Christians;
- develop a discussion paper to highlight the feasibility of implementing HIV prevention interventions for MSM and transgender populations in traditionally conservative settings in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- hold a regional South Asia Strategic Advisors Meeting (ASASIA), consisting of regional technical advisors from India, Pakistan and Nepal in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2015, to revise and formulate recommendations on how to improve their local and subregional MSM and transgender HIV programmes.



**Gathering,  
generating and  
sharing strategic  
information for  
advocacy  
initiatives**

Our evidence-based advocacy efforts continue to ensure relevant research findings are made available and accessible to community advocates and our wide array of allied networks and partners. "The Source", our online knowledge platform, has been serving as an important source of strategic information for a wide range of stakeholders in the region.

## KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- o establishing five working groups on specific topics to feed evidence and quality information to our advocacy efforts and provide strategic information to the community and other stakeholders in the fight against HIV and human rights abuse. We currently have working groups on Social Research, Faith and Sexuality, Communications and ICT, Engaging Health Sector and Human Rights.
- o enhancing structural knowledge dissemination strategy that comprehensively utilise variant communication channels (e.g., APCOM website, list serve and social media ) on strategic information targeted to national and sub-regional advocates.
- o producing the following publications:



Headlight Series: Understanding Young People and the Law in Asia and the Pacific



Regional Analysis Report: A Capacity Assessment of Regional, Sub-Regional and National MSM and Transgender Organisations and Networks in Asia and the Pacific



Where to from here? Identifying priorities for strategic information development



Headlight Series: Understanding WHO's Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations



MSM and HIV Counselling and Testing in Asia and the Pacific



The State of Investment in HIV Prevention for MSM In Asia and the Pacific



17 Global Fund's NewFunding Model Country Dialogue Fact Sheets for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, PNG, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam

- o writing 3 Limelight pieces, a series profiling the unsung individual community advocates:



Sudha, a former sex worker transgender activists from India 



Diana, a transgender spiritual dancer/trans activist from Myanmar 



Parker Hou, a sex workers' rights activist from Papua New Guinea 

- o writing 5 Spotlight pieces – a series highlighting organisations, networks and other groups working for the community:



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. Lhak-sam BNP+ (Bhutan) 
2. Blue Diamond Society (Nepal) 
3. FPA Sri Lanka 
4. Voluntary Health Services (India) 
5. the Humsafar Trust (India) 

## MOVING FORWARD WITH THIS STRATEGY, WE AIM TO:

- o develop a scoping paper examining the assumptions and principles of HIV programming for MSM and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific. A new programming model and analytical tools will be subsequently produced based on the recommendation of the scoping paper.
- o redefine our own governance model which can serve as a model for other coalitions and networks in the region.
- o organise a community exchange meeting among the recipients and community partners of Global Fund (GFATM) grants in Asia, as well as with stakeholders from the Greater Mekong countries to share lessons learned and formulate recommendations for the development of a new Global Fund regional proposal for the Greater Mekong countries.
- o organise a session in the 2015 ILGA Asia conference in Taipei, Taiwan, in October 2015, to discuss how community advocates can utilise UN reports and resolutions in advancing the basic rights of marginalised LGBT community in Asia.
- o revamp "The Source", along with refurbishing our website.
- o publish a discussion paper on how to improve health service delivery for young MSM and transgender people using evidence collected from these populations throughout the year.



**Building  
a cadre of  
advocates at  
all levels**

As a coalition that amplifies community voices, APCOM has been investing in the emerging leaders while supporting the current community advocates. At APCOM, we believe that building a large number of community advocates and strengthen their capacity will serve as a catalyst for change.

## KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- o developing “iGNITE!” Mentorship programme for young community advocates in the region – in consultation with UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNFPA. The design of the programme is based on a capacity assessment of community leaders throughout the region. The Mentorship will equip the selected young leaders with skills and capacities in leadership, communication, advocacy, programme development and community mobilisation, which will benefit their work in the community they are serving at their home land. 
- o recruiting 10 young community advocates for “iGNITE!” Mentorship programme. The recruited young leaders are from Bhutan, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. 

## MOVING FORWARD WITH THIS STRATEGY, WE AIM TO:

- o build capacity of upcoming young MSM and young transgender leaders in the Asia-Pacific region to take the ownership of the movement, for which we will kickstart the iGNITE! Mentorship programme in early 2015.
- o hold resource mobilisation and sustainability training for South Asian community organisation partners under Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme (MSA) initiative in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2015. The training will be followed by in-country technical visit to further assist each participating organisation to draft and finalize their resource mobilisation strategies.
- o organise a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training for relevant staff from South Asian community partners under MSA initiative in Bangkok, Thailand, in October 2015.
- o conduct a workshop on programme management for programme managers from South Asian community organisations under MSA initiative in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2015.
- o continue to address issues of self-stigma among and stigma and discrimination against young MSM and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific through the Youth Voices Count campaign “Loud & Proud” supported by in-country activities in Sri Lanka, Philippines and China.



# Key Dates

## January:

- o Launch of JumpStart's Dissemination Plan Template (D-Plate)

## February:

- o JumpStart's D-Plate completed by Purple Sky Network

## March:

- o Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of National Reviews and Consultations on Legal and Policy Barriers to Universal Access to HIV Services in Pattaya, Thailand

## May:

- o Launch of HeadLight Series: "Understanding Young People and the Law."
- o Hidden and Positive MSM City Consultation in Yangon, Myanmar

## July:

- o Australian Awards Fellowship Programme in Sydney and Melbourne
- o International AIDS Conference, Melbourne, Australia
- o Launch of the YVC's "Hidden Dimension: Self-stigma Among Young People and the Importance of Building an Ideal HIV Testing Program and Health Services for Young MSM and Young Transgender Persons" publication
- o Launch of the YVC's "Loud and Proud" video series

## September:

- o TestBKK's "Fresh Up" event - the mass young MSM-targeted HIV testing event in Bangkok, Thailand
- o National Consultation on the Global Fund New Funding Model in the Philippines

## November:

- o Introduction of JumpStart's 2nd phase initiative to partners and key stakeholders in Myanmar

## April:

- o UNDP Global Fund Multi City South Asia Grant awarded to APCOM
- o Official launch of the "TestBKK" campaign
- o TestBKK's pilot outreach campaign at the gCircuit party and gay hotspots during Songkran (Thai New Year) celebration

## June:

- o Transgender Community Consultation in Yangon, Myanmar
- o Launch of Joint SOGI Desk Review with AFAO and ISEAN

## August:

- o Launch of HeadLight Series: "Understanding the WHO New Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Testing, Prevention, Treatment and Care"
- o Launch of the HeadLight Series: "Understanding the Global Fund New Funding Model"
- o YVC's International Youth Day event: "Young People Stomp in the Golden Land" in Yangon, Myanmar

## October:

- o Inauguration of APCOM's Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme (MSA) work agenda

## December:

- o TestBKK's Worlds AIDS Day outreach event
- o TestBKK's outreach event at the Sundance Asia Party, Bangkok, Thailand
- o JumpStart's RapApp completed by VNMSMTG (Ho Chi Minh City)



**HIGHLIGHT**



# JumpStart

JumpStart is APCOM's capacity strengthening initiative for MSM and transgender networks across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Conducted in collaboration with AFAO, the project serves as a catalyst for regional, sub-regional and national networks to explore core competencies that they can build on and, at the same time, to explore skill development the networks may devote to.

JumpStart condenses the following supports and instruments to assess, and therefore, improve the networks' policy analysis and strategic information development.

## Rapid Assessment Apparatus (RapApp):

a scoring tool which assesses a community organisation in its operations and performance against programmatic and organisational criteria.

## Dissemination Plan Template (D-Plate):

a tool to assist community organisations to utilize the available strategic information in conducting more systematic and planned advocacy.

## Highlights in 2014

2014 marks the second phase of Jumpstart. Within the year, JumpStart has established partnerships with the following partners across Asia and the Pacific.

	capacity	scope/coverage
Youth Voices Count (YVC)	regional network	Young key populations
Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV (APN+)		People living with HIV
Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN)		Transgender communities
Purple Sky Network (PSN)	sub-regional network	Greater Mekong countries
Insular Southeast Asian Networks for MSM and Transgender Sexual Health (ISEAN)		Insular Southeast Asian countries
Pacific Sexual Diversity Network		Pacific countries
Viet Community Development Ltd.	country network	Vietnam
Myanmar MSM Network		Myanmar

Additionally, the result of Jumpstart's capacity assessment on community organisation in the previous year was documented, analysed and published into Regional Analysis Report: A Capacity Assessment of Regional, Sub-Regional and National MSM and Transgender Organisations and Networks in Asia and the Pacific. The report indicates that resource mobilisation is the most urgent capacity strengthening need of the organisations. 



# TestBKK

TestBKK is the pilot project of “TestXXX” campaign in Bangkok. “TestXXX” is a community-led testing campaign that aims to increase HIV testing awareness among young MSM in the region, particularly those who are sexually active with different sexual partners and/or not reached by traditional outreach. By using a uniquely memorable and targeted messaging, TestBKK utilises online and social media platforms. Prior to and throughout the campaign, APCOM worked with the implementing country-level partners in developing and executing an effective, evidence-based model. In 2015, TestBKK campaigning model would be imitated in HIV testing campaigns in more cities in Asia.

## Highlights in 2014

### Outreach at gCircuit Party



During Songkran (Thai New Year holiday), the gCircuit party is a large gay annual dance event held in Bangkok with large numbers (approximately 15,000) of gay locals and tourists from around the region. Consisting of five parties over a three-day period, these gay parties are not without controversy. A number of research studies pointed out that there is a high prevalence of drug use, which led

to high risk sexual activities – often with multiple partners, among gay men attending gCircuit. TestBKK occupied the venue to distribute HIV testing site information and condoms and lubricant, while also handing out interesting memorabilia. Throughout the whole event, TestBKK crews distributed more than 40,000 condoms and lubricants.

## Campaign Videos



Campaign videos are the key ingredient of TestBKK's pilot phase. Six YouTube videos have been produced. TestBKK believes that laughter is the best marketing so the campaign videos are made with humour that truly understands the target audiences. "Getting gold" before the sex? Mistaken a bottom as a top? The videos covered all awkward things many young gay audiences can relate to (and laugh at). The premise of the videos is simple: "there are more awkward things that getting tested. To date, the videos almost had a million online views and have been covered by numerous news sites and blogs. 📺

## FreshUp – Men's Health and Mass HTC event

FreshUp is TestBKK's way to bust the myth of HIV testing being frightening. Collaborating with AIDS Control Division of the Health Department of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, private sectors and community organisations, FreshUp incorporated HIV testing as a vital part of general male health elements. Visitors, who were young MSM living in Bangkok, were offered to get a free health check-up package covering fitness test, vision check and skin check, alongside the HIV and STI testing. All of this was conducted in a venue decorated with a playful vibe, accompanied with game booths, drag show, photo booths and door prizes. Eighty young gay men were tested in the 3-hours event. Watch





# Youth Voices Count

APCOM is supporting the development of a future generation of change makers by providing mentorship and support to Youth Voices Count (YVC), a youth initiative led by young MSM (YMSM) and young transgender people (YTG).

YVC brings together the most vibrant, diverse and young community leaders from the region. It is the first community-led and -driven network to fully embrace the voice of young key populations in the region in improving and scaling up the HIV response and other sexual health issues among their own communities. Its 60 young cadres, representing 18 different countries, have been vocal in advocating the cause at national, regional, and global levels.

## Highlights in 2014 Loud and Proud

Loud and Proud is a signature campaign of YVC that facilitates the production of advocacy videos showcasing issues, challenges and success stories of YMSM and YTG in overcoming the structural barriers. From YTG living with disabilities in the Philippines to YMSM who used to sell sex in Vietnam; discussing multilayers of issue from overcoming suicidal thought to a behind-the-scene story of a sexual transition. 



## The Hidden Dimension

Through The Hidden Dimension, YVC explored the experience of self-stigma among YMSM and YTG and its linkages to HIV epidemic in the region, based on surveys and consultations with young key populations Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The Hidden Dimension not only alleviates the voice of young key populations, but also documents a range of suggestions to overcome an issue that's rarely addressed by many HIV programmes. Indonesian and Vietnamese translations of the publication has been published, and will soon be followed by other Asian languages. 📖



## “Youth Friendly Services” session at the 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) in Melbourne, Australia



The outcome of the session, along with the previous consultations conducted before the session, fed in to the discussion paper “Jumping Hurdles” which will be published in 2015. The discussion paper will be used as an advocacy tool to raise awareness on youth friendly services in order to increase the uptake of HIV responses among YMSM and YTG.



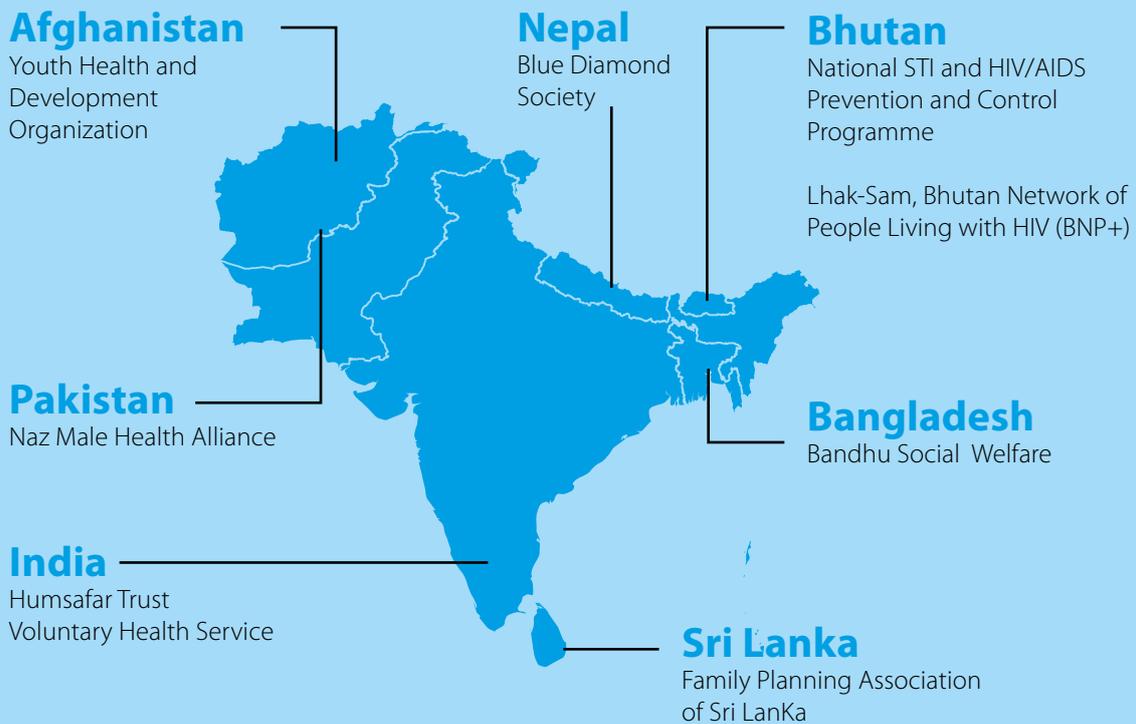
**Multi-Country  
South Asia  
Global Fund  
HIV Programme  
(MSA)**

**Ride**

In 2014, APCOM became a Regional Sub Recipient of the Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme (MSA). UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub (UNDP BRH) is the Principal Recipient of the Grant. The Programme is funded through a multi-year grant from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The overall goal of the Programme is to reduce the impact, and vulnerability to, HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM), hijras and transgender people across seven South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) through community systems strengthening (CSS). The Programme supports building the capacity of in-country and regional community-based Sub-recipient organizations engaged in service provision (HIV prevention, care and support services), policy development and advocacy, partnership building with local governments and health departments, research related to MSM and transgender issues, and on creating stronger community systems to support and sustain this work. 

As a Regional Sub Recipient, APCOM carries out a mandate to support high-level regional and national-level policy development and advocacy, technical support and research activities of the following national Sub Recipient (SR) organisations.



Retrospectively, APCOM's contribution and achievement under MSA can be summarised as below.

## Capacity Building

Sub Recipient Finance Regional Training was co-organized by UNDP BRH and APCOM in Bangkok, 5-7 November, to train finance managers and staffs of sub recipient organisations with tools and resources needed to transparently and effectively manage the finance of HIV service delivery and advocacy.

## Strategic Information

- o Acknowledging the need of peer review for the knowledge products generated under the MSA, a group of South Asian technical experts drawn from diverse background and expertise was created – and titled the APCOM South Asia Strategic Information Advisors (ASASIA). Their first meeting is scheduled on early 2015 with a core objective of reviewing the ongoing research studies under the MSA grant and provide direction on APCOM's core mandate on development of strategic information.
- o APCOM's MSA team served as a reviewing committee for UNDP's "Regional Study on Violence against Sexual Minorities in South Asia." Expected to be finalised in 2016, the study aims to provide an overview of the situation regarding protection of the rights of sexual minorities in South Asian countries.

## Media and Communication Assistance

- o Through online survey, an initiative to identify and assess Sub Recipients organisations' communications needs was conducted. The preliminary results of the initiative suggested that developing advocacy tools, conducting media outreach, and writing press release and opinion piece were the skills in which the organisations need the assistance the most. The results would feed in to both 2015 and 2016 programme planning of APCOM and UNDP BRH.
- o Five Sub Recipient organisations (Lhak-sam BNP+, Voluntary Health Services, Blue Diamond Society, The Humsafar Trust, and FPA Sri Lanka) were covered in APCOM's online Spotlight pieces – a series highlighting organisations, networks and other groups working for the community in Asia and the Pacific.
- o Media and communication assistance was provided to the production and dissemination of two films on the community work of Pakistan's Naz Male Health Association produced by UNDP BRH. 

## Organisational Structure Strengthening

- o With the funding made available through this grant, APCOM was able to apply and receive its official registration as a Thai Foundation in April 2014. This was an important step in the ongoing growth of APCOM. Being officially registered allows APCOM to expand partnership with and seek additional funding from private foundations and donors and to operate autonomously.
- o APCOM has significantly strengthened its organizational governance with the support of the grant. In 2014, APCOM initiated the development of Institutional Manual, Human Resources Policy, Governance Package, Monitoring and Evaluation framework and Finance Manual of the organisation.

A microphone is centered in the background, slightly out of focus. Overlaid on the microphone is a circular graphic composed of several concentric rings of segments in various shades of blue and teal. The text is centered within this graphic.

**Engagement  
at the 20<sup>th</sup>  
International  
AIDS Conference**

The 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) was held in Melbourne, Australia, from 20 to 25 July 2014, attracting nearly 12,000 participants from almost 200 countries. AIDS 2014 finished with thousands of delegates endorsing the Melbourne Declaration. Through the Declaration, APCOM and other delegates reaffirm their unwavering commitment to equality, universal access to health care and treatment services, and support for the inherent dignity and rights of all human beings.

APCOM was strongly represented and presented in AIDS 2014, through participation in and organisation of the pre-conferences, plenary and satellite sessions as well as through the own APCOM booth in the Conference's networking zone. 



## Engagement activities included:

- presenting the outcomes and work of APCOM's Knowledge Reference Group and recommendations from the Scoping Paper on "Social Research and the Response to HIV – legacy and future" in cooperation with the research institutions CSRH and ARCSHS.
- co-organising the session "Faith, Compassion and Acceptance: Addressing Homophobia and HIV-related Stigma through Scripture and Spirituality" – with the networks of religious leaders INERELA+ and AINA.
- presenting two evidence-base researches: (1) Where to from here: Identifying Priorities for Strategic Information Development Read and (2) MSM and HIV Counselling and Testing in Asia and the Pacific. 
- co-organising a satellite-session with WHO and UNAIDS on the rolling out of the WHO's "2014 Consolidated Guidelines for HIV prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations" in Asia and the Pacific. 
- co-organising a press conference on "The future of rectal microbicide STI prevention in Asia and the Pacific" with RIHES, IRMA, AVAC, ASI and Citizens News Service
- presenting the discussion paper The State of Investment in HIV Prevention for MSM In Asia and the Pacific. 
- supporting Youth Voices Count to participate and organize activities before and during the IAC 2014. With APCOM's assistance, the young leaders spoke in the conference panels, represented in media interviews and led other youth advocacy initiatives to ensure that youth specific issues were not overlooked in discourses related to MSM and transgender communities.

See the full report of APCOM activities in IAC 2014 here



# Our Coalition

APCOM is a coalition of community members from Asia and the Pacific, advocating issues that affect the lives of MSM and transgender people including their rights, health and wellbeing.

The APCOM coalition includes further partner representatives from the government sector, donor/development agencies, international non-government organisations, technical experts and advisors, and the UN system (UNDP, UNESCO, UNAIDS and WHO), who all serve as advisers to the governing board, without voting rights.

The network was registered as a Thai Foundation on the 21st April 2014,  
The APCOM Thai Foundation board consists of the following four members:

**Mr Dumrong Sakulpongyuenyong** - Chairman of the board

**Mr Somchai Phromsombut** - Vice chairman

**Ms Paijittra Katanyuta** - Director and treasurer

**Mr Wattana Keiangpa** - Director and secretary

With the registration and the establishment of the APCOM Thai Foundation as the legal entity, the Thai Foundation board commissioned the development of a new APCOM governance structure. An interim Executive Committee was appointed in 2014 to guide and steer this process of transition into a new governance structure. The interim Executive Committee is also responsible for the continued strategic support to the APCOM Executive Director and secretariat. The committee consists of the following four individuals:

**Mr Dédé Oetomo, Chair**

**Mr Rob Lake**

**Mr Roy Wadia**

**Mr Dumrong Sakulpongyuenyong**

(on behalf of the Thai Foundation)

It is envisaged that the interim Executive Committee will complete the process in 2015 and then hand the governance mandate over to a new governing board, the APCOM Regional Advisory Group.



## In 2014, APCOM's Secretariat consisted of fifteen full-time staffs:

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Executive Director

**Midnight Poonkasetwattana**

Programme Manager

**Shankar Silmula**

Senior Programme Officer

**Matthew Vaughan**

Programme Officer

**Vaness Silpakhon Kongsakul**

Office Coordinator

**Wattana Kieangpa (A)**

Finance Officer

**Kularb Khongtaisong (Nim)**

Programme Assistant

**Rangsit Sanguansak (Art)**

Media Communication Officer

**Craig Knowles**

Knowledge Sharing Officer

**Yogie Wirastra**

Advocacy Capacity Development Officer

**Inad Rendon**

Project Officer – Youth Voices Count

**Niluka Perera**

Network Officer – Youth Voices Count

**Lieu Anh Vu**

Campaign Coordinator - TestBKK

**Phillip Limbumrung**

Campaign Officer - TestBKK

**Apiwit Thubumrung (Em)**

Campaign Assistant - TestBKK

**Chaiyawat Chomsa (Plug)**

# Our Gratitude

We'd like to express our thanks and gratitude to the following donors and partners who have made 2014 another remarkable year for APCOM.





**apcom.org**

Equity.Dignity.Social Justice

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