

Asia Pacific Interagency Task Team for HIV & Young Key Affected Populations

Annual Report of Activity
2011



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The Asia Pacific Inter-Agency Task Team for HIV Young Key Affected Populations was established in 2009 to promote coordinated support from UN agencies and civil society partners to meet the HIV prevention, treatment, care and support needs of young key affected populations (YKAPs, including: young men who have sex with men, young transgender people, young people who inject drugs, young people living with HIV, and young people involved in commercial sex.)

The Task Team includes as its members a wide range of UN and civil society partners including: IOM, Save the Children, Seven Sisters, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC and YouthLEAD; other UN agencies and civil society partners have engaged irregularly in Task Team activities, and receive e-updates regularly on the Task Team's work.

The Task Team was chaired at its inception by Dr Josephine Sauvarin, Technical Advisor on HIV and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health at UNFPA's Asia-Pacific Regional Office. For most of 2011, the Team was jointly chaired by Mr Scott McGill, Asia Regional HIV/AIDS Advisor, Save the Children USA and Ms Margaret Sheehan, Regional Adolescent Advisor, UNICEF. Rotation of the chairing functions was undertaken in September, with Mr Vince Cristosomo, Executive Director, Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (Seven Sisters) and Ms Justine Sass, Regional AIDS Adviser, UNESCO, taking over this role.

As highlighted in this annual report, 2011 was a significant year for the Task Team. During this year, the Task Team was successful in raising the profile of YKAP issues through various national, regional and international fora; developing capacity to address the needs of YKAPs, including among YKAPs themselves; and strengthening and sharing the evidence base, including compiling good practice and advocating for the need for

1. Ensuring the meaningful engagement of YKAP in relevant strategic processes

better strategic information on YKAPs.

The Task Team's activities for 2011 are highlighted below under key guiding goals:

1. *Ensuring the meaningful engagement of YKAP in relevant strategic processes*
2. *Developing the capacity of policy makers and programmers working with YKAP*
3. *Ensuring that capable and effective young leaders from key affected populations are collaboratively engaged in the response to HIV&AIDS*
4. *Ensuring that YKAP are prominently featured at important international forums*
5. *Ensuring that the data are available to further support the need for YKAP-specific programming*

1.1 Supporting youth engagement in regional and global policy dialogues

The Task Team, through its member agencies, provided technical and financial support to enable young people from throughout the region to engage in critical regional and global efforts. Over 25 young people representing or working with YKAPs participated as planners (e.g. on the Steering Committees or Technical Working Groups), speakers and resource persons, and attendees in the following events:

- Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on Universal Access in Bangkok, March 2011;
- Mali Youth Summit on HIV, April 2011;
- UN High Level Meeting on AIDS, June 2011; and
- UN High Level Meeting on Youth, July 2011.

Youth participants supported by the Task Team reported the following outcomes: a) an improved understanding of high-level dialogues and negotiations, particularly for those that attended as members of their national delegations; b) greater attention to the importance of addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of YKAPs through advocacy, and demonstrated examples of how YKAPs are contributing to national AIDS responses; c) strengthened capacity, including in public speaking, networking and advocacy skills; and d) expanded networking opportunities.

The Task Team also finalized preparations to host a side event on "*Engaging with young people: removing legal and access barriers*" at 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 (MDGs). The event, initially scheduled for November 2011, was postponed due to the floods in Thailand, and will take place with support from the Task Team in February 2012.

1.2 Supporting the HIV Young Leaders Fund: Southeast Asia & the Pacific Community

The HIV Young Leaders Fund's (HYLF) small grants programme for 2011-2012 focused on support to youth-led initiatives addressing the needs and rights of young people most affected by HIV in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. In collaboration with YouthLEAD, the HYLF launched a call for proposals in July 2011 for youth-led initiatives providing peer-based services, advocacy, and community mobilization for young people most affected by HIV with a focus on six priority countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam). Seventy proposals were received for review and funding decisions were made through a Community Review Panel (CRP) comprised of young leaders under the age of 30. UNICEF and UNAIDS, on behalf of the Task Team, supported a two-day CRP meeting in October that included six young leaders. Members critically reviewed proposals following agreed criteria and clarifying questions about each proposal. After careful consideration, the CRP selected seven youth-led initiatives, each receiving between \$8,500 and \$10,000 depending on their proposal. The seven funded initiatives are:

- i. Family Planning Organization of the Philippines Davao (FPOP~Davao):* FPOP~Davao's project aims to increase the knowledge of young men who have sex with men (MSM) on STIs and HIV, and increase the access of young MSM to health services.
- ii. Kid's Sun Group, Vietnam:* Kid's Sun Group is a youth-led organization of young people living with HIV based in Hanoi working on increasing treatment literacy for young people living with HIV who have Hepatitis C co-infection.
- iii. Pioneer Institute for Social Change, Indonesia:* This youth-led project will work with young women migrant sex workers in Baturraden to know their rights, including health rights, legal protections and right to information.
- iv. Raks Thai Power Teen Network, Thailand:* Raks Thai Power Teen Network is a youth-led initiative based in Chiang Mai that works with YPLHIV to reduce stigma, provide psycho-social support, and conduct peer education and psycho-social support to YPLHIV adolescents.

- v. Youth AIDS Filipinas Alliance (YAFA), Philippines:* YAFA will build on their 2010 grant from HYLFF to strengthen their ongoing work at mobilizing young people affected by HIV and providing critical services to young people affected by HIV through a drop-in center in Manila.
- vi. Young People Living with HIV Speak Up! A youth-led initiative of the Southern Self-Support Groups Network of PLHIV (SPN+), Vietnam:* their campaign aims to improve the quality of services and policies related young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) in Vietnam, especially in Southern Vietnam.
- vii. Vietnam Youth Network for HIV Prevention (VYPN), Vietnam:* VYPN is a new network established to connect and coordinate different youth-led groups and youth-serving organizations working on HIV.

For more information on the HIV Young Leaders Fund, visit their website:
<http://www.hivyoungleadersfund.org/>



2. Developing the capacity of policy makers & programmers working with YKAP

The Task Team reacted to a well-documented need to build understanding and capacity of policy makers and programmers to the particular needs of young key affected populations. In 2010, with financial support from UNICEF and UNFPA, a short course was developed by a consortium at the University of Melbourne entitled "*Understanding the focus on young key affected populations in concentrated and low risk HIV epidemics*" (referred to as the YKAP short course, formerly referred to as MARYP).

This course was updated and rolled out in 2011 with support from UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO and in collaboration with other members of the Task Team. The course is highly interactive, using a variety of participatory approaches, information, case study analysis, storytelling and games. It provides up-to-date information about the situation of YKAP and various models and promising practice for working with YKAP.

Two courses were held in 2011 (14-18 March 2011 and in 19-23 September 2011) with participation from over 50 government counterparts, UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs working to support YKAP in the areas of research, policy and programming and/or service provision in the Asia-Pacific region. The course is also open to young people working in a significant capacity to advance young people's issues at different levels and across sectors, although young people have identified the need for further capacity development targeted specifically at young people from (or working with) YKAPs (see Section 3).

Evaluations have been excellent and many countries are interested in country based training in 2012. To support this, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO supported a training of trainers 26-30 September to build capacity to deliver the short course at regional and national levels.

3. Ensuring that capable & effective YKAP leaders are collaboratively engaged in the response to HIV&AIDS

The short course materials are now finalized and include: a Facilitator's Manual; a set of PowerPoint presentations; a number of case studies regularly updated from countries in the region that exemplify good practice; extensive additional resource materials. The course will be available online by early 2012. UNFPA, in partnership with the Task Team, will continue to document the outcomes of the course.



Early in 2011, consultations with YouthLEAD, the Asia Pacific Network of Young people from Key Affected Populations (Housed within 7 Sisters), raised concern about the lack of opportunities for YKAP themselves to participate effectively and advocate for change in the HIV response. Subsequently, the Task Team has actively supported a number of capacity development initiatives targeted towards YKAP which have collectively become known as NewGen Asia. The initiative includes three key components:

3.1 Support of YouthLEAD, Asia Pacific Network of YKAP

YouthLEAD is a regional network of and for young key affected populations working to advance and accelerate the work in HIV prevention. YouthLEAD's members are drawn from key affected populations with lived experience of the issues around HIV and often with experience working as youth advocates, trainers, or leaders within their existing countries and communities. YouthLEAD aims to develop youth leadership among Key Affected Populations and to improve youth involvement in community, national and regional programming processes. YouthLEAD has been a core member of the Task Team and have received technical and financial support for their work mobilising young key affected populations in the region.

3.2 NewGen Asia Leadership Shortcourse

The NewGen Asia Leadership Shortcourse was developed in close partnership between young people, UN system, civil society and academic institutions. The civil society leadership has been provided by YouthLEAD and has therefore engaged young people throughout the full cycle of the development and implementation of the programme. The vision is to have a highly interactive and engaging leadership course (providing a full learning experience for young participants) that is well regarded and meets the needs of young leaders including, most importantly, young people from key affected



populations including young people living with HIV. The main component of the NewGen Asia Leadership experience is capacity enhancement, developed by an experienced trainer and a writer familiar with the leadership, health promotion and HIV programmes for young people and interactive methods (Dr Helen Cahill from the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne in Australia), in collaboration with Youth LEAD. The development of the course, supported by partners within the Task Team included:

3.3.1 Mapping and scoping consultation: A consultation with a team of nine YouthLEAD focal points was held in Bangkok in March 2011 to determine the specific capacity development needs of YKAP in the region and to explore whether existing training materials on this issue could be adapted or used. It was determined that while parts of some existing courses could be drawn on, the specific needs of this particular group required the development of new materials.

3.3.2 Writers workshop: In July 2011, four YouthLEAD technical training experts met with Dr Helen Cahill in Bangkok to construct a course that responds to the needs identified in previous consultations. A five day course framework was mapped out and individual writers distributed specific tasks.

3.3.3 Sampling of course materials: In late August 2011, at the Tenth Meeting of the International Congress on AIDS in the Asia Pacific (ICAAP10), 30 young people spent two days sampling selected activities from the curriculum and giving feedback. This feedback fed into a refinement of course materials.

3.3.4 Production of materials: Following the sampling in Korea, a draft of the full five day course was completed in August 2011. Lead author was consultant Dr Helen Cahill, an expert in curriculum development and participatory methods. Other authors include Milinda Rajapaksha, Gerard Ompad, Skand Amatya and Thaw Zin Aye.

3.3.5 Full pilot of the Shortcourse: In November 2011, 34 young people from around the Philippines came together in Rizal to pilot the newly developed NewGen Asia Leadership short course. The training was hosted by the Council for the Welfare of Children and supported by UNICEF Philippines in partnership with the Task Team. It was attended by young people (aged 15-24) from various youth networks and

organisations from around the country and was facilitated by seven young trainers, coached by Dr Helen Cahill. Many young people commented on how they would use the skills they developed back to their communities to contribute more strongly to HIV prevention and response work:

"Being part of the New Gen Asia Philippines opened a door for us in Cebu City. We have been sent to facilitate in the training of young people in the rural areas of Cebu City. Looking forward to help[ing] [sic] more young people here!"

"It made me feel strong in the sense that I realised that I can be a good leader."

"Since participating in NewGen, the municipal health centre wanted us to come and be a resource speaker talking about HIV/AIDS at their event for World AIDS Day. So much more to come and we are very excited about this whole week of activities. Thank you NewGen for helping us improved our knowledge, skills and attitudes. Hope a lot of people will experience the same too. KEEP THE FIRE BURNING!"

The course is being refined based on evaluation results, and lessons learned from the pilot of the course. The course will be finalized before the end of year, and rolled out in 2012.

3.4 New Gen Asia Young Leaders Mentoring Program:

This component of the NewGen Asia initiative aims to connect emerging young leaders in the field of HIV with established leaders as one way to facilitate intergenerational transfer of skills and knowledge. It was recognised that many high-level professionals, regardless of their field, go about their work successfully, but without the opportunity to transfer their knowledge and skills to others who would benefit. At the same time, many young people have the capacity and will to make change in their communities, are not presented with opportunities to do so, or come up against various barriers. This

is particularly the case for young people from marginalized groups.

In July 2011, the Task Team approached 30 experienced leaders in the HIV field to commit to being a mentor to a young leader. Mentors from a diverse array of backgrounds are part of this initiative, including leaders from Civil Society, UN, Government and young people who already have strong leadership experience. They made a commitment to their mentoring role activity and to maintain regular and on-going contact with their mentee – at least once a month for the first year and then by individual agreement thereafter.

The Task Team commissioned an initial survey, focus groups discussions, and interviews with select mentors and mentees, and will continue to monitor the process and outcomes. The Task Team is also developing a 'partnership plan' – an informal framework guiding mentoring partnerships – for members of the initiative, and producing periodic newsletters to communicate the outcomes of the initiative.



4. Ensuring that YKAP are prominently featured at important international forums

The Task Team was committed to build on advocacy and communication efforts to date to ensure that YKAP were prominently featured in the Tenth International Congress on AIDS-Pacific (ICAAP10), held in Republic of Korea in August 2011. The Task Team and its individual member agencies submitted a large number of successful abstracts and hosted two high profile launches with excellent media coverage. Informal evaluation from the meeting acknowledged that the profile of youth and young people at ICAAP10 was significant and many people reported that the youth-related events were the highlight of the conference.

4.1 Opening plenary

Youth were represented in the opening plenary of the congress, with a keynote speech provided by members of YouthLEAD. To view the speech, [click here](#).

4.2 Sampling of NewGen Asia

Key partners from the Interagency Task Team helped to fund 30 young people to attend a two day sampling of the newly developed NewGen Short Course.

4.3 Launch of NewGen Asia

The congress was an opportunity to launch the “NewGen Asia” initiative aimed at strengthening the voice and capacity of tomorrow’s leaders by engaging young people from or working with young key affected populations as leaders and active participants and empowering them through a through a multi-faceted capacity-development programme (see Section 3). Over 100 key leaders were guests at a lively long-table lunch, which was also used as an opportunity to launch the associated “NewGen Asia Mentorship Programme”. During the launch, mentors and mentees discussed their backgrounds and expectations and planned various activities they will engage in over the coming year.

5. Ensuring that the data are available to further support the need for YKAP specific programming

4.4 Symposium

The Task Team hosted a symposium, jointly chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children, which was one of seven symposiums included on the main conference program. The symposium, titled “Young and at higher risk of HIV – programming with young people from key affected populations: progressive and positive practices in the Region” shared evidence-based and promising practice in strategic information and programming with YKAPs; and served as another forum to advocate for strengthening leadership and participation of YKAPs in the AIDS response. Five panellists offered brief perspectives on these issues with a short video montage presenting promising programming practices shown. Speakers included:

- ◇ Co-Chairs, Scott McGill, Save the Children USA, Dr Susan Kasedde, UNICEF
- ◇ Dr Susan Kasedde, UNICEF, Welcome and introduction to the issues
- ◇ Margaret Sheehan, UNICEF (on behalf of Dr Josephine Sauvarin, UNFPA): Strategic information: what we know and what we do not know
- ◇ Dr Cheewanan Lertpiriyasuwat, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, Integrating MSM/TG issues into schools: Example of Thailand
- ◇ Gudrun Nadoll, UNICEF Philippines, Applying Strategic Information to HIV Programming Practice and Policy Changes for Young Key Affected Populations, Examples from the Philippines
- ◇ Milinda Rajapaksha, YouthLEAD, Programming with Young People from Key Affected Populations: Progressive and Positive Practices in the Region
- ◇ Le Quang Nguyen, Save the Children, Vietnam, Reaching the most vulnerable young people in Vietnam

Although HIV risk among adolescents and young people is well documented, there remains a need for better strategic information on the young people at higher risk of HIV exposure. Disaggregated data (by age, sex and other characteristics) on risk behaviours and use of services among these groups is crucial for informed programme planning and policy decision-making.

A recent 17 country review of strategic information in Asia and a 6 country review in the Pacific showed large gaps in the information available on young key affected populations in the region. Other qualitative and quantitative studies (e.g. in Bhutan, Cambodia and Pakistan) conducted recently have provided more information on determinants of risks and vulnerabilities among young key affected populations; however, the methodology for these reviews is still evolving and there is a need to take stock of lessons learned and to assess the quality of these surveys. Similarly, while there is considerable expertise in the region on survey and surveillance methodology for sampling and size estimates of key affected populations, the inclusion of young people (particularly the age group 15-17) in these surveys is limited. Many young people with risk behaviours are not easily identified for inclusion in such surveys and surveillance, and legal restrictions (e.g. age of consent) in many countries further limit their participation.

5.1 Expert group meeting on methodology for strategic information on youth (15-24) at higher risk of HIV exposure

In 2011, members of the Task Team initiated planning for a regional expert meeting on strategic information. This meeting will provide a platform to share information on the country level experience on collecting strategic information on young key affected populations, including data collection protocols & methodologies; identify good practice and lessons learnt including on size estimation of YKAP and address legal issues (e.g. age of consent). Due to a full calendar in 2011, and limited availability of experts, the

6. Key activities and aims for 2012

Task Team agreed to host this meeting in 2012.

Participants will include 20-30 key experts involved in the design and implementation of surveys on young key affected populations which have occurred in the region (including Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Pakistan and several countries in the Pacific) and key experts on inclusion of young people in key affected populations surveys and surveillance in the region (including the Philippines). Participants will also include international organisations (e.g. Family Health International (FHI) and Save the Children) and UN staff working on strategic information from UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC and the World Bank. Other development partners supporting the collection of strategic information for at-risk young people, including the Asian Development Bank and AusAID will also be invited to engage in the meeting.

The Task Team is in the process of a developing its annual workplan for 2012, which is expected to include the following activities:

- Support for YouthLEAD to host a strategic planning consultation with its network members in early 2012. This meeting will bring together 18-20 YouthLEAD focal points to develop a plan for 2012-2015. It is expected that this will enable YouthLEAD to take forward strategic, evidence-based activities, and to mobilize resources through a costed workplan in the coming period.
- The Task Team will deliver the side event entitled: “Engaging with young people: removing legal and access barriers” at the upcoming ESCAP Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the MDGs in February 2012.
- Continued support and expansion of the NewGen Asia Leadership Shortcourse. Several countries have expressed interest in hosting national trainings of the course. YouthLEAD has requested support for a Training of Trainers to allow maximum expansion of the module.
- Communications (e-newsletters) and technical support to the NewGen Asia mentorship programme, and a final evaluation in the third quarter of 2012.
- A desk review of policy and legal barriers to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for YKAP in the region, which includes examples of countries that are addressing these barriers and recommendations.
- Events at the International AIDS Conference in July 2012 in Washington DC. Priorities include:
 - » Showcasing the NewGen Asia Short-course with potential for sharing the model with other regions



- » A reunion of mentors and mentees in attendance and possible expanding of this programme
 - » Showcasing YouthLEAD as the only regional network of young people from key affected populations
 - » Sharing and showcasing the YKAP Capacity Development Short Course for Policy makers, programmers and other personnel working with YKAP
 - » Satellites and symposia to raise the profile of YKAP and highlight concentrated epidemics in the region
- Greater collaboration with the Global IATT on Young People and HIV including providing Asia Pacific inputs into the revised Global Strategy on HIV and Young People, anticipated for 2012 and potentially joint activities for the AIDS Conference in July 2012.
 - Consider establishing a website for materials and tools, including a calendar for YKAP related activities (regional and global).

Asia Pacific Inter Agency Task Team for HIV and Young Key Affected Populations aims to strengthen consensus and collaboration among UN agencies and key INGO partners at regional and country level to support Governments and civil society in accelerating action to achieve the global and national targets to reduce HIV transmission among young key affected populations. For more information, please contact the current co-convenors:

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