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Developing standardised guidelines on knowledge, attitude and skills of peer/outreach workers involved in HIV prevention for MSM in Southeast Asia

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<http://www.unescobkk.org/hiv>

Lessons learned:

- Multi-stakeholder engagement through consultative processes supported the development of widely-adopted common quality standards for peer / outreach education aimed at improving the sexual health of men who have sex with men (MSM) in Southeast Asia

Recommendations:

- Bringing stakeholders around the table early and agreeing on a joint product and process for its development can lead to an effective partnership and reduction of duplication
- The inclusion of partner logos on a final product can enhance broad ownership and result in strengthened partnerships for implementation

Background:

- A 2005 regional meeting of outreach workers and peer educators on HIV prevention for and by MSM in Southeast Asia concluded that there is an urgent need to create normative guidelines that ensure quality standards, appropriateness and variety of messages provided. The consultation, held in Lao PDR, also demonstrated that current and past work have been so far project-based, scattered and uncoordinated.

Methods:

The Purple Sky Network (PSN) in the Mekong sub-region, FHI/USAID and UNESCO developed a standardised Reference Manual for peer and outreach workers involved in HIV prevention programmes for and by MSM. The Manual was developed through a consultative process engaging a diverse range of MSM and organizations who work with them in the region. The initial draft was reviewed by technical experts from the organizations involved and a consultation meeting of the final draft with involvement of all organizations was held. Each of the organizations chaired a part of the meeting. At country level the translated version was reviewed and edited by peer workers from different organizations in a local level consultation workshop and then finalized. Agreed-upon standard contents include, among others: sexuality, relationships, HIV and STI transmission and prevention, positive prevention, ART, and substance abuse.

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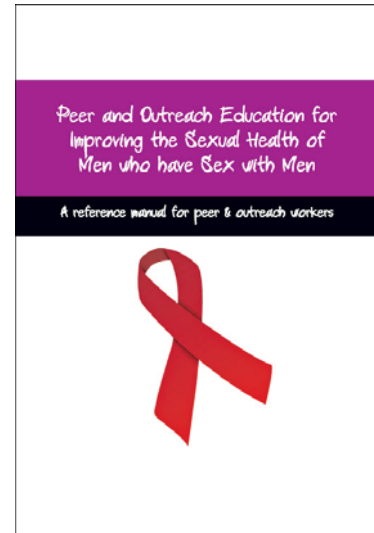


Figure 1. Cover page of the English version. Source: UNESCO Bangkok 2008

Results:

The manual was translated into local languages and adapted through collaborative workshops with local NGOs and CBOs in Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar and China.

The Manual has been translated in Urdu (Pakistan), Bahasa Indonesia and Vietnamese; a collaborative adaptation workshop is planned for the latter two countries.

The English version is being used in Malaysia and Singapore.

It is being made available through multi-donor support to all outreach workers working with MSM in Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Pakistan and parts of China, Indonesia and Malaysia.