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Regional Analysis Report

A Capacity Assessment of national **MSM and transgender** organisations and networks in Southeast Asia

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jumpstart

JumpStart is APCOM's flagship capacity strengthening programme for community organisations. We work to improve, and build on an organisation's existing management and advocacy, while encouraging leadership for a community-led HIV response. The project serves as well as a catalyst for regional, sub-regional and national networks to explore their core competencies that they can build on and, at the same time, explore skill development areas that they still need. JumpStart started as a partnership of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) and APCOM.

JumpStart developed two unique tools to assess the network or organisation: the Rapid Assessment Apparatus (Rap App), a scoring tool which assesses a community organisation in its operations and performance against programmatic and organisational criteria and the Dissemination Plan Template (D-Plate), a tool to assist community organisations to use the available strategic information in doing more systematic and planned advocacy.

rapapp

The Rapid Assessment Apparatus is an assessment tool jointly designed by APCOM and AFAO under the JumpStart initiative to assess the core competencies of an organisation or network against eleven programmatic and organisational areas. The networks undertook a facilitated self-assessment process to identify their capacity and technical needs.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapidly rising rates of HIV infection among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people is one of the biggest challenges in the fight against HIV in the Asia region. Estimates indicate that the regional population of MSM who are at risk of HIV infection ranges from 10.5–27 million, with HIV prevalence among MSM more than 10% in at least 10 major urban centres . An epidemic model developed by the UN Commission on AIDS in Asia in 2010 showed that unless effective prevention measures are intensified, by 2020 around 46% of new infections in Asia will be among MSM, up from 13% in 2008 . Transgender people are also highly vulnerable but little research has been done on their specific risk factors, and disaggregated data on HIV prevalence among transgender people in the region is limited.

Countries which prioritise funding for focused HIV prevention among Key Populations (KP) have the highest impact and return on investment . However, in Asia it is estimated that only 8% of total spending on HIV and AIDS is on HIV prevention among KP. According to AIDS datahub , all 38 countries in the Asia have laws that impede the HIV response: 37 criminalise some aspects of sex work and 18 criminalise same-sex relationships. Networks and organisations representing KP therefore have an important role to play in advocating for changes to these repressive legal environments and an increase in funding for focused HIV programming. Often the most effective HIV testing, prevention, treatment and care programmes are led and implemented by affected communities, and the meaningful involvement of KP in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of HIV services is key to programming success.

Networks and organisations representing MSM and transgender communities are making important progress in responding to HIV, but technical and organisational capacity challenges remain barriers to effective engagement and advocacy by regional, sub-regional and national MSM and transgender people's organisations. For an effective regional HIV response, these barriers must be removed.

In order to contribute fully to the HIV response in the region, MSM and transgender networks and organisations need support to build their technical capacity in a number of areas, including policy analysis, effective regional/sub-regional/national representation in decision-making, programme monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy. If they are to fulfil their vital role in advocacy, they need to strengthen their capacity to identify key messages, select target audiences for these messages, produce appropriate advocacy materials and use these materials in their advocacy work.

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INTRODUCTION
(continued)

The Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM), launched in 2007, advocates regionally and globally for:

- increased investment in line with the need for scale-up
- increased coverage of evidence-based, targeted HIV intervention programming
- research to address gaps in knowledge
- individual rights for MSM and transgender people in the region.

In 2013 APCOM, in partnership with the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), applied for AusAID funding under the Regional HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Programme, with the goal of strengthening the role of organisations and individuals in the Asia region to respond effectively to HIV and AIDS. The purpose of the JumpStart programme is to foster strategic partnerships and linkages between Australia and the Asia region, and between regional and country level in Asia, in order to increase the capacity of partners to contribute to effective HIV responses. It aims to develop the capacity of MSM and transgender networks in Asia to actively participate in national and regional responses to HIV. The first phase of JumpStart took place from 2013-2014, with a second phase from 2014-2015. In the first phase the RapApp was conducted on 8 regional, sub-regional and national organisations, with a summary report produced. During the second phase the following 5 national partner organisations and networks took part in the JumpStart RapApp process. The national partner organisations and networks which are part of this programme are listed below.

Bandanh Chaktamok (BC), Cambodia (completed Rap App in February 2015)	Established in October 2006 with a focus on supporting MSM and transgender people. A national network which aims to protect and promote the rights of MSM and transgender people in Cambodia by advocating for health services that meet their needs.
Malaysian MSM and Transgender National Network (myISEAN) (completed Rap App in May 2015)	Founded in June 2012. A national network of community-based organisations (CBOs) and self-help groups dedicated to the enhancement of sexual health and well-being of MSM and transgender people in Malaysia.
Myanmar Youth Stars (MYS) (completed Rap App in May 2015)	Founded in early 2013. A national membership network representing young Key Populations aged 15 to 30 years including MSM, transgender women, people who use drugs (PWUD), sex workers and people living with HIV (PLHIV).
The Poz Home Center Foundation, Thailand (completed Rap App in July 2015)	Founded in 2005. The only community-based organisation providing HIV care and support services specifically for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people living in Bangkok, Thailand.
Vietnam Network of MSM and Transgender (VNMSMTG) (completed Rap App in December 2014)	Founded in July 2013. A national network which advocates for and represents communities of MSM and transgender people in Vietnam.

Under JumpStart, a Rapid Assessment Apparatus (RapApp) was developed to assess the current strengths and weaknesses of these organisations against 11 organisational and programmatic criteria: governance; finance; staffing; resource mobilisation; partnerships and networking; membership; project design and management; technical capacity; advocacy; communication; and strategic information. In the second phase, organisations were assessed on 6 additional criteria focusing on their engagement with Key Populations (with MSM, transgender people, young people, sex workers, people who use drugs, and young people).

METHODOLOGY

This report provides an overview and analysis of the findings of the RapApp assessments conducted in the second phase of JumpStart, with recommendations for prioritising regional technical support and funding.

The Rap App was completed by the five organisations listed on page 6 using facilitated self-assessment, with external support provided by APCOM where necessary. Each of the 11 + 6 criteria had three questions for which organisations had to allocate a score of 0-4. The maximum score per component was therefore 12. The Rap Apps were completed in 2014/5, and should be considered as snapshots of the organisations at a given time. The situations of the organisations will change over time and these changes should be assessed when planning for provision of technical support.

Use of facilitated self-assessment without external verification has its limitations, and the scores should be seen as indicative rather than as sets of comparable data. However, facilitated self-assessment has value as a process in itself, allowing organisations to identify, consider and rate their current strengths and weaknesses. It is recommended that the Rap Apps be repeated in a few years' time so that any changes in self-assessed scoring can be observed.

N.B The term 'organisation' will be used throughout the report as one of the APCOM/ AFAO partner organisations is not a network. Where the term 'member' is used to refer to network members, this should be taken to refer to clients in the case of the non-membership organisation.

SUMMARY

The JumpStart Rap App was used to assess the organisational capacity of five MSM and transgender networks and organisations in Southeast Asia. The findings indicate capacity gaps in all 11 organisational and programmatic components of the Rap App, although the five organisations vary widely in their reach, capacity and technical support needs. The biggest and most immediate challenge across the region is resource mobilisation, and in particular how to access long-term sustainable funding to cover core costs. All but one of the organisations are struggling to fund paid staff positions, and this has a massive impact on what the organisations can achieve, as well as on their governance, financial management and communication capacity. Resource mobilisation must be a priority if any of the other capacity building needs outlined in this report are to be met. Important capacity gaps were also identified in financial management, project design and management and advocacy, while governance, membership and partnerships and networking were generally strong. All five organisations are very strong in their engagement with MSM, transgender people and PLHIV, but more variable in their engagement with sex workers, young people and people who use drugs.

SUMMARY
(continued)

DIAGRAM 1: The diagram below shows the average scores for the organisations in the five organisational components of the Rap App.

Scoring in the organisational criteria of the Rap App
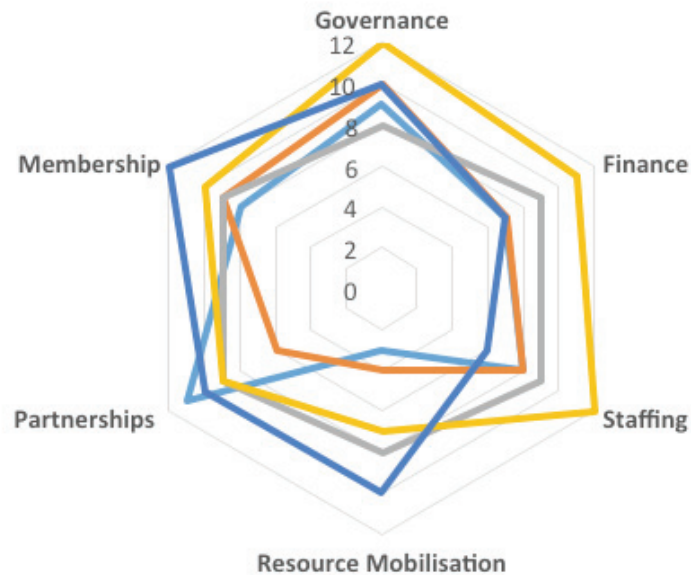
The diagram below shows the average scores for the organisations in the programming components of the Rap App. It shows that the technical capacity and communication in the region is reported to be relatively strong, with weaker capacity in advocacy. Influencing the legal and funding environment is a key role for MSM and transgender people's organisations, so technical support to build advocacy capacity should be a priority. Project design and management is also a vital area requiring significant strengthening. All five organisations are keen to be more involved in the development and production of strategic information, and with access to the experiences and opinions of KP they have great potential to do so, but current capacity varies widely.

DIAGRAM 2:

Scoring in the programmatic criteria of the Rap App

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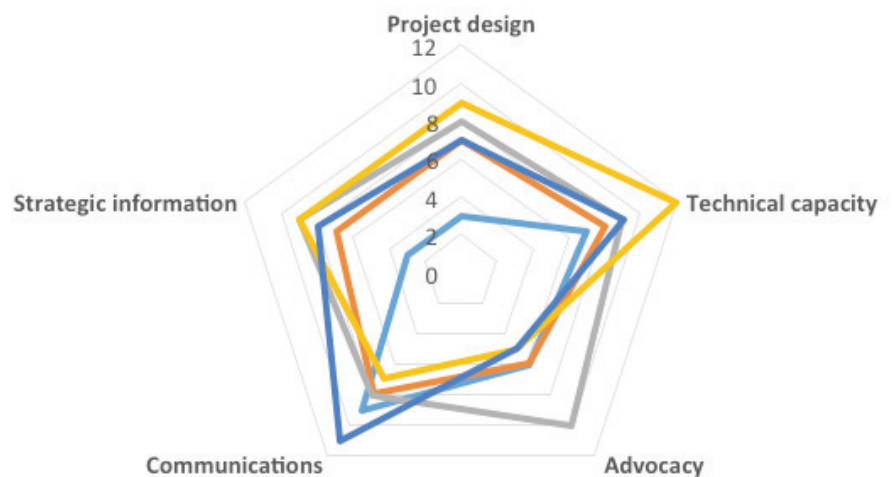
SUMMARY
(continued)

The chart below presents the minimum, maximum and mean scores from the Rap App for the 11 organisational and programmatic components (with minimum and maximum possible scores in the Rap App being 0 and 12 respectively). The graph shows the wide range of capacity across the five organisations, particularly in staffing, resource mobilisation, strategic information and project design capacity. In most components (with the exceptions of strategic information and project design) at least one of the organisations has strong capacity, providing opportunities in the longer-term for peer support, training and mentoring, depending on staff and resource availability. However, it is likely that for the foreseeable future technical support will need to come from technical support providers and international agencies through trainings, workshops etc., via targeted investment from donors.

DIAGRAM 3: Minimum, maximum and mean scores from the Rap App for 11 criteria
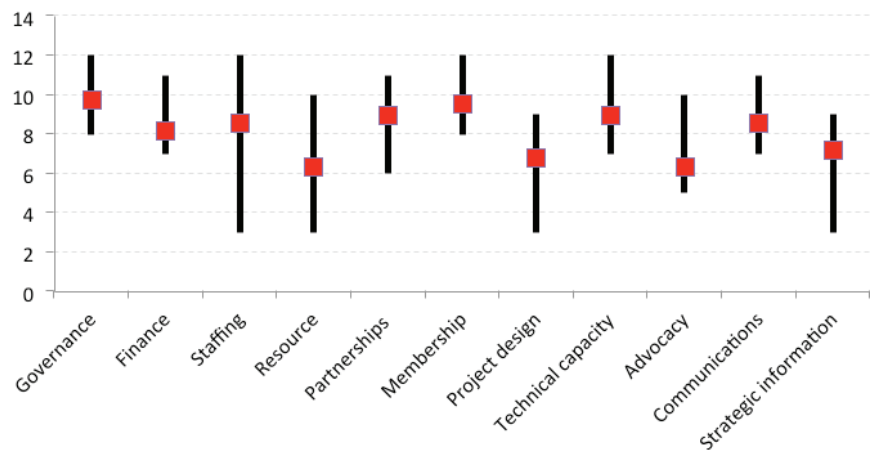
The chart below presents the minimum, maximum and mean scores from the Rap App in the 6 different components of the engagement with KP (with minimum and maximum possible scores in the Rap App being 0 and 12 respectively). The organisations vary most widely in their engagement with young people and people who use drugs, but the chart also shows the excellent engagement all five organisations have with MSM.

DIAGRAM 4: Minimum, maximum and mean scores from the Rap App for 6 components of KP Engagement

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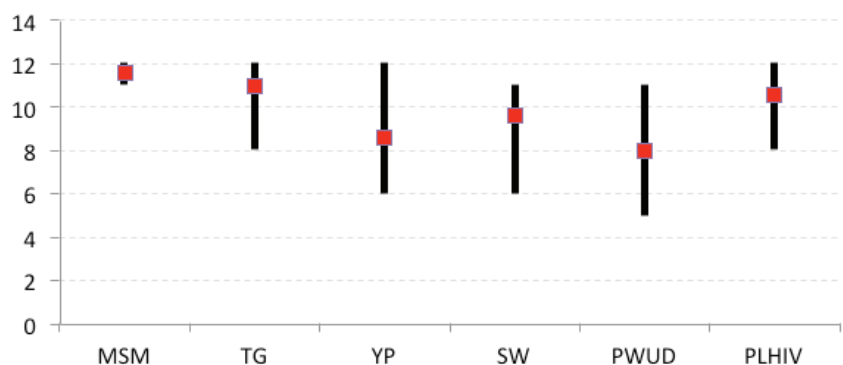
KEY FINDINGS

All of the organisations have some gaps in capacity and corresponding technical support needs. However, most of the organisations have real strengths which provide the opportunity for lesson sharing and sharing of experiences, with some organisations potentially playing a mentoring/coaching role in the future.

- Resource mobilisation is an urgent priority for all five organisations. With no funds to cover core secretariat costs, capacity building will be ineffective as there will not be adequate staff capacity to move things forward.

- Governance capacity varies, but overall there are no major issues of concern. All five organisations have some kind of governing body and system in place, but due to the lack of sufficient staff in most of the organisations there is an unavoidable overlap between the governance and the executive functions.

- Financial management is basic in all the organisations, with three of the five using fiscal agents. However, they all report an understanding of the need to record and monitor expenditures. As the organisations expand and develop there will be a need for external technical support to establish more thorough financial management procedures.

- The organisations seem to have developed good networks of partners and have been relatively successful in building relationships with stakeholders. However, most of the organisations expressed frustration that they were reliant on being invited to participate in activities, meetings etc. by partners rather than leading processes themselves.

- All organisations reported good communication with members, and community representation (including MSM and transgender people) in membership and governance is strong.

- M&E is generally very weak, as is project design and management in general. This is in part due to a lack of funds to employ sufficient project staff.

- A good range of technical capacity exists, providing opportunities for experience sharing and potentially distance support/mentoring in the future (although capacity is not yet strong enough for this). All organisations need to build their confidence in their levels of technical capacity by attending more meetings, workshops and conferences.

- Advocacy capacity is weak across the organisations and there is a need for significant training in planning, carrying out and monitoring/evaluating advocacy work, with subsequent mentoring from stronger organisations.

- Strategic information capacity is limited, although there is clear interest and potential for the organisations to be more active in collecting and disseminating strategic information.

- Engagement with KP and in particular with MSM and transgender people is very strong. This shows the gaps in capacity are very much focused on organisational and programmatic work. There is less engagement with other KP groups, and the organisations need to ensure they are providing support and meeting the needs of MSM and transgender people who also identify as being part of another KP.

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DETAILED FINDINGS AND REQUIREMENTS:

FROM THE ORGANISATIONAL CRITERIA OF THE RAP APP

GOVERNANCE

Rap App scores ranged from 8/12 to 12/12,
with 1 of the 5 organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
The average score was 9.8/12.

Basic governance in all the organisations is good and they all have a governing body in place, whether this is an Executive Committee, Board or Advisory Board. All the organisations' governance structures consist of MSM and transgender community representatives, with most striving for equal MSM/transgender representation (see below for an example from Vietnam).

VNMSMTG: The Board has seven members who are elected as representatives of the three regions of the country: 3 members (2 MSM and 1 transgender person) representing the North, 1 member (1 MSM or TG) representing Central, and 3 members (2 MSM and 1 transgender person) representing the South.
A Chairperson from Hanoi and Vice Chairperson from Ho Chi Minh City are elected within the Board by the network members.

Of the five organisations, just two have a fully endorsed constitution. Two of the five have clear terms of reference for Board members, and they all have a clear process for election of Board members. However, in reality most struggle to carry out the full electoral process and several of the organisations struggle to recruit active Board members. Similarly, most of the organisations have clear procedures relating to achieving a quorum for decision-making, and for how decisions should be made, but in practice this is often a challenge due to lack of funding for regular meetings, and a lack of access to internet/computers the rest of the time. One exception is the Poz Home Center Foundation in Thailand (see box below). Overlap between governance and executive functions in the organisations is also a problem.

The Poz Home Center has Board meetings twice a year. Minutes are taken and shared with all Board members. If decisions need to be made outside meetings this is done by email so that there is a written record, and is followed up with a phone call.

Regional technical support requirements

All five organisations would benefit from support to develop governance manuals that clearly outline the day to day roles and processes of their governing structures. These should include directives on decision-making, both at and outside Board meetings, guidelines for separation of governance and executive functions and ToR for individual Board members for the three organisations that do not currently have these. Funding is needed to provide capacity building for Board members through training in governance and strategic leadership, or an exchange/mentoring programme with other organisations with strong Boards. All five organisations would benefit from support from more established partners through putting into place advisory committees to support the organisations with expertise in areas of particular weakness. Partners and donors should also be aware of the need to provide funding to support regular Board meetings.

FINANCE

> **Rap App scores ranged from 7/12 to 11/12,**
> **with none of the organisations scoring maximum points in this component.**
> **The average score was 8.2/12.**

The Rap App did not highlight any major concerns in terms of financial management capacity, as all organisations report that they closely monitor expenditures and keep receipts. However, despite the relatively high scoring, financial management for three of the five organisations is carried out by fiscal agents. While this ensures adequate management of funds, a lack of internal financial capacity makes it difficult to source long-term funding without working through another partner. As the organisations mature this will become a major constraint. Only one organisation has an established finance system and carries out regular internal and external audits (see box below for an example from Thailand).

> **The Poz Home Center** manages its own funds and has a financial and accounting system. It has a finance policy which includes all of the forms needed for compliance with the policy. All financial documents are kept for five years. The organisation undergoes internal (by staff and Board members) and external audits, done by donors (quarterly) as well as an annual external audit commissioned by the Poz Home Center itself. Financial reports and audit results are shared with the Board and donors but are not otherwise made public.

Regional technical support requirements

In terms of the regional financial management capacity gaps, long-term technical support is needed to develop sound financial systems and procedures, including finance manuals and other policy and procedure documents. Financial management training is needed by all but one of the organisations; a more detailed self-assessment would be useful prior to any training as some organisations will require very basic financial management training initially (for example book-keeping, developing a simple project budget). Weaker organisations may require ongoing mentoring from a stronger partner. The relatively strong finance capacity of one organisation from Thailand provides the opportunity for it to provide technical support to other organisations.

The challenge will be convincing donors to provide adequate funds to employ sufficient staff to ensure good financial management without having a good financial management system in place.

STAFFING

Rap App scores ranged from 3/12 to 12/12, with one organisation scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 8.6/12.

Capacity in staffing showed the widest variations in the Rap App. There are serious limitations in staffing due to a lack of core funds in most of the organisations. Just two of the organisations have paid staff (with teams of 12 and 6), others have just one or no members of staff and are running solely on the contributions of volunteers and Board members. One organisation has not had a team in place since 2012. The strongest organisation has job descriptions, contracts and ToR for all its staff, as well as internal policies including on recruitment. For the three organisations without staff, securing funds to cover the costs of a skeleton staff, or at least to cover the costs and maintain a strong team of volunteers, is an urgent priority.

Regional technical support requirements

Providing technical support in staffing to the organisations without staff is a challenge until they have established secretariats. For three of the five organisations there is an urgent need to access core funding which can pay staffing costs of a minimum number of staff. Following that, there will be a need for technical support to develop either staff manuals or operational manuals to include human resources. These documents should include sections on the rights and duties of employees and employers, recruitment, gender and HIV in the workplace, and volunteers, if relevant.

RESOURCE MOBILISATIONS

> **Rap App scores ranged from 3/12 to 10/12.
> The average score was 6.4/12.**

Mobilisation is where the biggest gaps in capacity can be seen, and it is clearly a major challenge for all of the organisations. None of them have more than one source of funding, and three of the five have no external funds (including one which has not received funding since 2012). All five organisations admitted to having no capacity in proposal development, and only one has a (draft) resource mobilisation plan. Building effective relationships with donors and accessing information on funding opportunities is clearly a challenge, and several organisations felt they lack credibility in the eyes of donors. A lack of long-term funding has implications for all other aspects of work, including building staff capacity, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, and networking.

One organisation is trying hard to diversify its funding base, and would benefit from support from a business development consultant to help its efforts to become more effective (see box below).

> **The Poz Home Center** plans to set up a coffee shop to raise funds for the organisation. It has donation boxes in entertainment venues, and a relationship with a bar which provides money from fundraising events. It also receives invitations to speak about HIV from private companies, which generates income through donations from the companies.

Regional technical support requirements

There is an urgent need for technical support for MSM and transgender people's organisations to build more diverse funding bases, focusing particularly on longer-term core funding. This should include support and mentoring in networking and building relationships with donors. Training in resource mobilisation is also needed, including development of resource mobilisation strategies which are clearly linked to achieving organisations' strategic objectives. This could be combined with a participatory training on networking and donor mapping, which would provide a good opportunity for lesson sharing between organisations, leading to potential collaboration on joint projects. Regional networks also have an important role to play in sharing good practices on collecting and using membership fees from networks in the region. They could also share case studies of where non-traditional funding sources have been secured, for example from networks which have developed successful not-for-profit businesses whose income supports the core costs of the network.

There is also a need for support in proposal development to improve the organisations' success rates, in the form of ongoing mentoring to review and edit proposals. A distance proposal support model would be very useful for all five organisations if willing reviewers could be found.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

**Rap App scores ranged from 6/12 to 11/12.
The average score was 9/12.**

This was one of the strongest areas of the Rap App, with MSM and transgender people's organisations listing a broad range of partners including community organisations, government, civil society, INGOs and UN agencies. Most are also part of national, regional and global networks. Three of the organisations have Board members who are on the CCM which provides a good opportunity to get the voices of MSM and transgender people heard. Most are also in discussions with government through attendance at Technical Working Group meetings or other meetings. However, one challenge experienced by all but one of the organisations is that partnerships are led by more established partners – the organisations participating in the Rap App feel they rely on invitations from partners to participate, rather than taking an active lead in networking.

Lack of funding and staff capacity to network and engage with new partners are also common constraining factors. The organisations need to ensure that networking and partnership building activities are included in any organisational or project workplans.

Regional technical support requirements

Participation in regional or national partner mapping and engagement workshops would be of benefit to all five organisations. These should include partner mapping, how to use strategic plans to 'sell' an organisation to partners, use of social media to build relationships with new partners, and writing partnership development plans. Follow-up mentoring from strong regional/national networks would also help build the organisations' capacity. One of the organisations with a focus on supporting young key populations would benefit from sharing lessons and experiences with more established youth networks on how they engage with partners.

MEMBERSHIP

**Rap App scores ranged from 8/12 to 12/12,
with one organisation scoring maximum points in this component.
The average score was 9.6/12.**

The five organisations participating in the Rap App have strong capacity in supporting their membership. The organisations have varying membership status – some have members which are networks or organisations, others have individual members, and one has clients rather than members.

Generally the organisations report regular communication with their members, and the stronger organisations have membership databases and use social media to gather views and priorities from their members. Others use a variety of methods to engage with their members, including ad hoc visits from Board members, using focal points to liaise between members and the secretariat, and social media to share information. One organisation has a secure member database (using codes not names) which is updated regularly, and this organisation should share how it has developed this with other national networks. One organisation has very little consultation with its members and has not held an AGM since 2012, due in part to a lack of staff capacity to engage with members on a regular basis.

Challenges in membership vary by organisation, perhaps due to their differing membership criteria. They include how to ensure the views and priorities of members are collected regularly and used to influence organisational policy, particularly when many members do not have access to reliable internet; reaching harder-to-reach KP due to fear of disclosure; and not being able to carry out regular member visits/meetings due to budget/staffing limitations.

Regional technical support requirements

Despite relatively high scoring in this component, there remain unmet capacity building needs in the region. The over-riding capacity gap is around more regular engagement with members, with technical support needs including:

- support to improve the flow of information between Secretariats and members through training in use of social media and basic internet use.
- support to improve member engagement, potentially including training for more engaged members to become member representatives/focal points who play a more active role in the organisation in representing members (one organisation in Myanmar is already doing this).
- support to develop communication plans to guide information flow from members to the Secretariats and vice versa.
- support to develop secure member databases.
- support to access funding from partners to ensure the organisations can hold annual meetings with members.
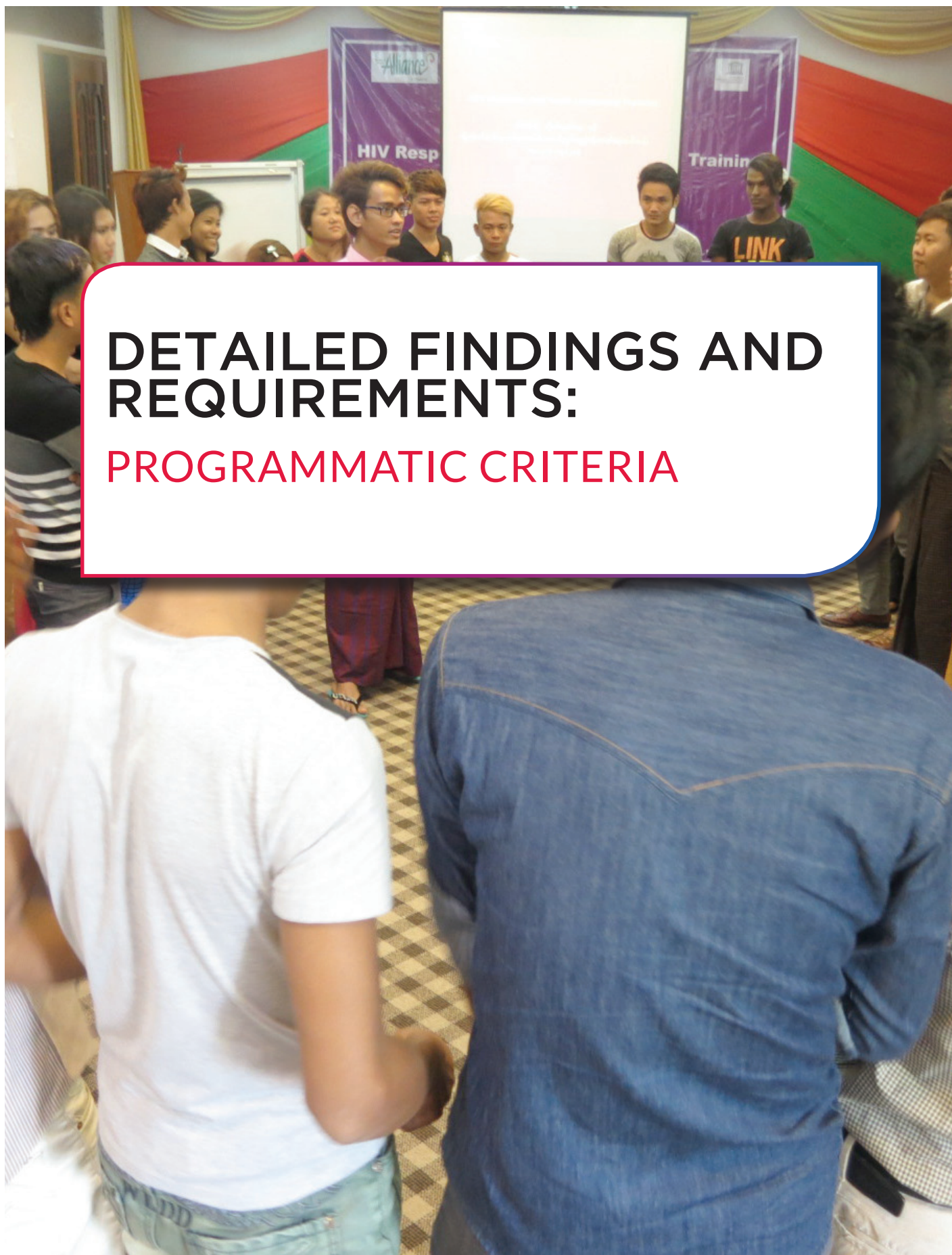
DETAILED FINDINGS AND REQUIREMENTS:
PROGRAMMATIC CRITERIA

PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Rap App scores ranged from 3/12 to 9/12, with no organisation scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 6.8/12.

This was a low-scoring component. The five organisations are at different stages of project management capacity, with some not currently carrying out projects at all and others carrying out multiple diverse projects. The strongest organisation in the region has diverse projects which aim to meet the diverse needs of PLHIV; it has a strategic plan and workplan which is monitored regularly; it has an M&E plan; and it uses quality assurance and a quality improvement system. However, the other organisations lack strategic plans (one has a strategic plan, and two others have planned objectives and activities for projects but not for the organisation as a whole). Without strategic plans to direct their work, it risks becoming project-based and lacking in coherence. A clear strategic plan helps to direct all organisational activities, advocacy, communication and strategic information in the same direction. It also helps to stop organisations' work becoming donor driven, which is a concern for one of the organisations in the Rap App.

M&E is another major gap in capacity. Only one organisation has an M&E system and plan in place, while others monitor activities for projects but do not seem to evaluate or analyse learning from project implementation.

Regional technical support requirements

All five organisations require capacity strengthening in strategic planning, with support to finalise strategic plans where necessary. Funds should be sourced to ensure that members are fully engaged in strategic planning processes, with facilitated planning meetings held prior to finalisation of the plans. This could be combined with training on the development of annual workplans and budgets, as currently the majority of organisations develop only project-specific workplans, with no overview of organisation-wide activities and spending.

There is also a need for comprehensive training in M&E (including the development of M&E plans, how to monitor projects and core organisational work, evaluation, and community participation in evaluation, analysis and documentation of learning), followed by mentoring support to ensure implementation. These training needs could be combined in a results-based approach to programming, and a training workshop on project planning and design for results would therefore be very useful.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY

Rap App scores ranged from 7/12 to 12/12, with one organisation scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 9/12.

Generally the MSM and transgender people's organisations have strong technical knowledge, with good expertise and experience of Board/staff members. Three of the five organisations provide technical support to their members, but this is generally on an ad hoc basis, dependent on funding (see example from Vietnam in box below). One organisation is planning to build its capacity as a technical support provider, providing support to other community organisations.

The Vietnam MSM and Transgender Network (VNMSMTG) Board members have strong technical knowledge on HIV prevention, care and treatment through previous work experience with HIV organisations. VNMSMTG uses research papers and reports available in Vietnamese as sources of information. VNMSMTG occasionally carries out training and workshops for its members organisations when invited by the donor VUSTA.

Key challenges across the region include a lack of staff time to focus on increasing technical capacity; and a lack of consistent access to global and regional information from regional networks and other international bodies.

Regional technical support requirements

Many of the technical support requirements listed in this component are covered elsewhere in the report (for example use of social media, communications, advocacy), but in addition to these, the organisations highlighted human rights, SOGI, early initiation of HIV treatment, and reaching hidden MSM groups as areas needing further strengthening. There is also a need for regional networks (for example APCOM) to support national networks and organisations with accessing and using relevant information and training resources.

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ADVOCACY

Rap App scores ranged from 5/12 to 10/12, with no organisations scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was relatively low at 6.4/12.

This is the component with the biggest gaps in capacity for the five organisations taking part in the Rap App. None of the organisations have an advocacy plan, and all but one feel they have not identified clear advocacy priorities. All feel their advocacy activities are ad hoc without the long-term planning and monitoring that is necessary for effective advocacy. Documentation of advocacy work is a clear capacity gap across the region, with just two organisations documenting their advocacy work and sharing this information with members.

Advocacy challenges include a lack of unified advocacy messages from Board and staff members; a lack of access to and limited capacity to analyse strategic information and therefore develop an evidence base; and a lack of funding for advocacy activities including employment of staff with an advocacy focus. Surprisingly, only one organisation raised challenging cultural contexts and political environments as a challenge in its advocacy work.
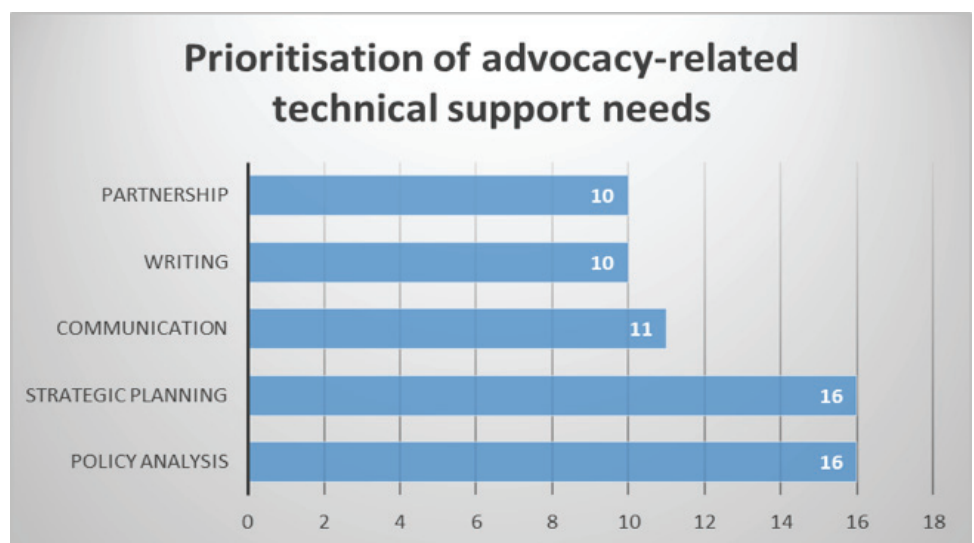
ADVOCACY
(continued)

Regional technical support requirements

All five organisations require support to develop advocacy strategies, with clearly outlined target audiences, advocacy outputs, and outcomes in the short, medium and long term. These should be developed as part of a broader training workshop in strategic planning for advocacy based on a theory of change exercise and incorporating member feedback. The training should include monitoring and documentation of advocacy activities, policy analysis, using advocacy platforms more effectively, using social research in advocacy, and development or adaptation of advocacy tools and materials. This would also provide opportunities for cross-organisational advocacy planning. The training would be helpful for Board members, as well as for staff and members.

One organisation requires support or advice on how to work with the media to promote its work and highlight the issues faced by MSM and transgender people, while at the same time protecting clients from disclosure.

As part of the Rap App process, organisations were asked to prioritise five options for advocacy-related technical support. The chart below shows the results of the prioritisation exercise, with the most important priorities for the organisations being strategic planning and policy analysis, and these priorities should be reflected in any training organised by APCOM/AFAO.

DIAGRAM 5:

Prioritisation of advocacy-related technical support needs

Category	Value
PARTNERSHIP	10
WRITING	10
COMMUNICATION	11
STRATEGIC PLANNING	16
POLICY ANALYSIS	16

N.B figures were determined based on points allocated for first, second, third, fourth, fifth place, with the highest number of points allocated for first place.

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COMMUNICATION

> Rap App scores ranged from 7/12 to 11/12,
> with no organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
> The average score was 8.6/12.

Communication between MSM and transgender people's organisations and their members is generally ad hoc in nature, with more information flowing from secretariat to members than from members to the secretariat. Organisations tend to use social media, emails and phone calls to communicate with members. Communication with external partners is more limited, with most taking place at meetings and conferences. None of the organisations have a communications plan or strategy.

Gathering community inputs to influence organisational decision-making, and ensuring that information gets back to communities, is clearly a challenge. The main role of many MSM and transgender people's organisations is to ensure the voices of their marginalised members are heard at a policy level, and it is therefore vital that accurate information about members' concerns and fears as well as success stories are collected. This is a great challenge for networks lacking adequate staff members, and communication is particularly difficult in areas where individual and network members do not have access to a reliable internet connection.

Regional technical support requirements

All five organisations need support to develop a communications plan which outlines routes of information flow between Board members, staff, community focal points and members. The one organisation that has a draft communication strategy needs support to review it and ensure it fits with its strategic objectives. All but one of the organisations needs funding to support staff members who can prioritise communication, and once they are employed training in how to develop newsletters and other communication materials and use of social media would be beneficial.

Training of members at the community level is also a priority for national organisations, and they should try to source funds for training in basic internet and computer use for community-based organisations and self-help groups, including use of social media.
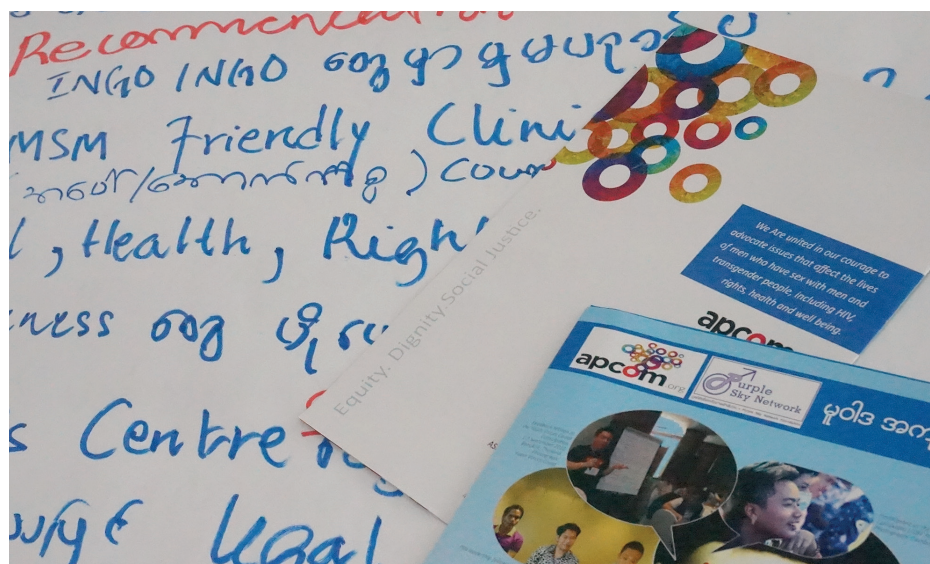
STRATEGIC INFORMATION

Rap App scores ranged from 3/12 to 9/12,
with no organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
The average score was 7.2/12.

Capacity to access, analyse, use and collect strategic information is weak across the region. Only one of the five organisations regularly sources strategic information from meetings, journals and conferences, and uses it in the design of its projects. It distributes relevant strategic information to members through social media, and also uses social media to gather information from its members. The other four organisations access strategic information in an ad hoc way, but generally do not share it with members. None of the organisations translate information into local languages. None are involved in research or developing outputs from any strategic information they collect from members.

Challenges in this component include a lack of access to national information; a lack of availability of strategic information in local languages/lack of staff capacity to translate information into local languages; gaps in the information pathway from global to national level; and a lack of human resource capacity to develop and adapt strategic information products. The organisations in the Rap App showed enthusiasm for working on research projects and were keen to develop partnerships with research bodies.

Regional technical support requirements

Training for national organisations in basic community research and data collection would ensure member engagement in strategic information development, as well as the filling of information gaps. Training for members and staff on adapting and using strategic information at the community or national level could also be included. This should include how to analyse data, adapt and present strategic information in a relevant way, contribute to development of strategic information, and engage donors, the media, government and international agencies in dissemination of strategic information. All the organisations participating in the Rap App would benefit from mentoring on how to get involved in the development of strategic information, as well as how to promote themselves to research institutions as potential community partners. To meet these requirements the organisations will need funding to employ adequate staff.

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DETAILED FINDINGS AND REQUIREMENTS:

KP ENGAGEMENT

MSM ENGAGEMENT

Rap App scores ranged from 11/12 to 12/12, with three organisations scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 11.6/12.

Scores in this component were very high. All organisations have integrated the issues facing MSM into their work, and MSM are well-represented in the membership and the governance structures of the organisations. MSM members are encouraged to give feedback on interventions and activities, and organisations try to collect information on the challenges faced by members through social media, phone calls and face-to-face visits.

One challenge facing several organisations is limited engagement by MSM due to fear of disclosure. All organisations also struggle to reach more hidden groups of MSM.

Regional technical support requirements

Two organisations specifically highlighted their need for support to develop innovative programmes: one in order to help it to reach harder-to-reach MSM groups, and the other to develop more creative programmes which better reflect the reality of MSM's lives. The latter organisation feels it has too strong a focus on HIV, and needs to imbed health promotion within the broader interests of MSM.

Three organisations require support to improve engagement from MSM members by improving information flow from MSM members to the Secretariat and vice versa. This issue has been discussed in the communications component above.

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ENGAGEMENT WITH TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

Rap App scores ranged from 8/12 to 12/12,
with three organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
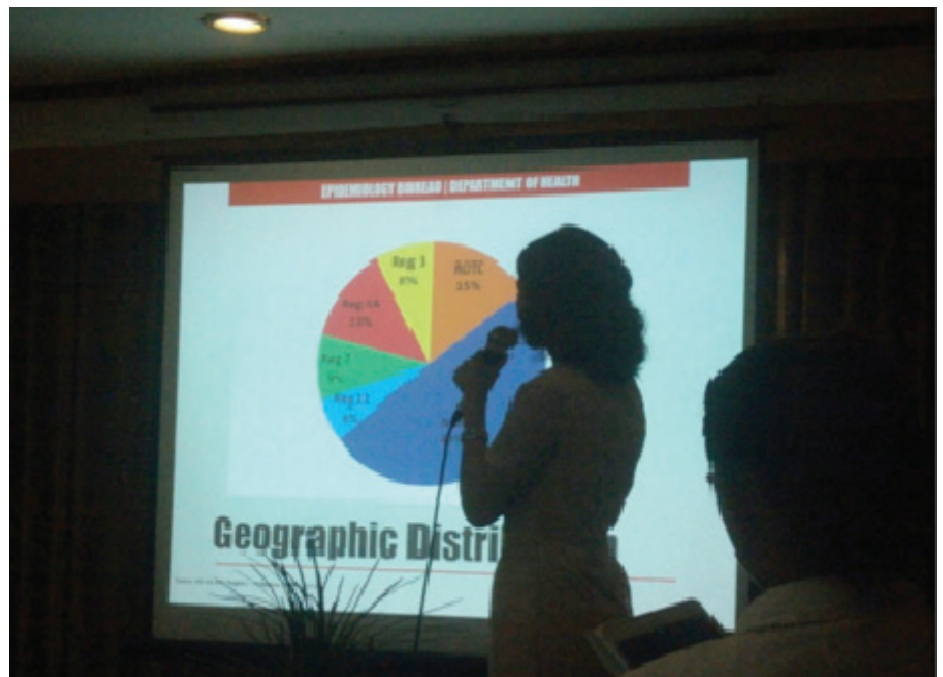The average score was 11/12.

Scores in this component were also very high. All organisations have integrated the issues facing transgender people into their work, and transgender people are well-represented in the membership and the governance structures of the organisations. One organisation has partnerships with APTN.

myISEAN achieved a maximum score in this component (see box below).

The issues facing transgender people in Malaysia are well-integrated into myISEAN's advocacy work including awareness-raising of gender diversity, engagement on laws relating to gender identification, access to testing, access to PEP/PrEP, and health policy relating to hormone therapies. Transgender member organisations are actively engagement in project activities, and membership includes young people, and transgender women who are living with HIV, sell sex or use drugs. myISEAN communicates with its transgender community members through email, social media and an online transwomen's group (MYNETRA).

Regional technical support requirements

Four of the five organisations would benefit from improving their engagement with other transgender networks, and in particular APTN. This engagement would increase their access to information and research shared by the regional network, ensuring their interventions are based on examples of good practices from around the world.

ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Rap App scores ranged from 6/12 to 12/12,
with one organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
The average score was 8.6/12.

The organisations' level of engagement with young people was very variable. Two of the five organisations have a specific focus on working with young people, for example through targeting young members and partnerships with Youth Voices Count (YVC). The other three welcome young people into their membership but do not specifically target or design interventions for this group. One of the organisations is a network for young Key Populations, and it uses online software under the REACT project to share information on prevention, treatment and harm minimisation. This may be a good example from which to develop a case study to share with other networks in the region.

Regional technical support requirements

Although all the organisations claim to welcome young KP into their membership, to ensure they are meeting their specific needs four of the five organisations need support to make their interventions more youth-friendly. This could include supporting the organisations to recruit young KP representatives for the Board, and developing a youth-specific communications plan. The latter should include identifying methods to capture the views of young people, for example a greater emphasis on social media, and how this information can be used in the organisations' advocacy work. All the organisations should undertake a mapping of other national/regional youth organisations and networks and develop partnerships with them to learn from their experiences.

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ENGAGEMENT WITH SEX WORKERS

Rap App scores ranged from 6/12 to 11/12, with no organisations scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 9.6/12.

All five organisations work with sex workers, but through their identification as being MSM or transgender rather than solely on the basis of sex work. Two organisations work closely with the national sex worker networks. Most of the organisations have representation from sex workers on the Board, but often this is not in an official capacity, and full details of representation are not available due to limited disclosure.

Most of the organisations incorporate the issues facing MSM/transgender sex workers into their advocacy work, for example arrests of sex workers, the denial of ARVs to young sex workers in detention and criminalisation.

Regional technical support recommendations

The five organisations would all benefit from strengthening their partnerships with specialist sex worker organisations as a way of sharing learning. Regional networks also have an important role to play in ensuring that national MSM and transgender networks access strategic information, research studies and best practice guidelines on working to support sex workers.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

Rap App scores ranged from 5/12 to 11/12, with no organisations scoring maximum points in this component. The average score was 8/12.

Scores in this component were very variable. Two organisations stated that they had no funding to work with PWUD. Others see their role as being to advocate for the specific issues facing MSM and transgender PWUD to be integrated into mainstream PWUD work. Three of the five organisations have good links with other organisations working with PWUD, including the ANPUD. Myanmar Youth Stars (MYS) has strong engagement with PWUD, although it recognizes there are challenges it still needs to overcome (see box below).

MYS addresses legal issues such as the arrest of young people who are in possession of drug equipment, and advocates for provision of information on legal support and the establishment of methadone centres. The network provides education to reduce stigma towards people who use drugs, and uses a peer-to-peer approach to engage with young PWUD. This is however a challenge due to non-disclosure and hard-to-reach groups, and the network tries to overcome this by building a rapport with the community and carrying out frequent outreach.

Regional technical support requirements

It would be useful for other organisations if MYS could document the outreach work it is doing with young PWUD, so that others can learn from its work.

Although all five organisations target MSM and transgender people rather than PWUD specifically, it is important that they ensure MSM and transgender people who use drugs are well-supported. This will require building good relationships with national PWUD organisations and networks, and perhaps carrying out shared advocacy work/projects.

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ENGAGEMENT WITH PLHIV

Rap App scores ranged from 8/12 to 12/12,
with one organisations scoring maximum points in this component.
The average score was 10.6/12.

The average score in this component was high. All five organisations have good engagement with PLHIV and representation on their governing bodies. Several have diverse projects to support PLHIV (in particular the Poz Home Center Foundation, Thailand).

However, one challenge is the lack of capacity to support PLHIV support groups within their membership; a lack of funding and available staff means four of the five organisations are not able to provide the level of support they would like.

Regional technical support requirements

All five organisations need to maintain close links with the national networks of PLHIV. Regional networks such as APCOM have an important role to play in sharing best practices, resources, guidelines and research on HIV to the organisations (several of the organisations highlighted early initiation of HIV treatment as an area where they required technical support to build their capacity).

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Component	Technical Support required	Timeframe	Cost
Governance	Support to establish advisory committees with expertise in areas needing strengthening	Short-term	Low
	Funding to support regular Board meetings	Medium-term	Medium
	Training for Board members in governance and strategic leadership	Medium-term	High
	Facilitated/distance support to develop governance manuals that clearly outline the day to day roles and processes of the governing structures	Medium-term	Low
	Exchange/mentoring programme for Board members in good governance	Long-term	Low
Finance	Securing funds to employ sufficient staff to ensure good financial management	Short-term	High
	Training in financial management for staff and Board members	Medium-term	High
	Support to develop sound financial management systems and procedures including finance manuals and other policy and procedure documents	Long-term	High
	Mentoring in financial management for staff	Long-term	Low
Staffing	Urgent need to secure core funding which can pay staffing costs of a minimum number of staff	Short-term	High
	Support to develop staff/operational manuals to include human resources (including sections on the rights and duties of employees and employers, recruitment, gender and HIV in the workplace, and volunteers, if relevant)	Medium-term	Low
Resource mobilisation	Resource mobilisation training workshop including development of RM strategies and donor mapping	Short-term	High
	Support and mentoring in effective networking with donors and building donor relations (e-support/distance mentoring)	Short-term	Low
	Ongoing distance mentoring to review and edit proposals	Long-term	Low
	Support from regional networks to share good practices on collecting and using membership fees from networks in the region	Short-term	Low
Partnerships and networking	Training in partnership building and networking including writing partnership development plans, use of strategic plans, use of social media and partnership mapping	Medium-term	High
	Follow-up mentoring in networking	Long-term	Low
Project design and management	Support to improve the flow of information between organisations and members through training in leadership, membership engagement, use of social media and basic internet use for staff	Short-term	High
	Support to improve member engagement, including training for more engaged members to become member representatives/focal points	Medium-term	High
	Support to develop secure member databases, through learning from other organisations that have done this successfully	Short-term	Medium
	Support to access funding to hold annual meetings with members	Short-term	High
Technical Capacity	Support from regional networks (for example APCOM) to access and use relevant information and training resources	Medium-term	Low
	Workshop on reaching hard-to-reach MSM groups	Medium-term	Medium
	Training in early initiation of HIV treatment	Medium-term	Medium
	Training in SOGI	Medium-term	Medium
	Training in human rights	Medium-term	Medium
Advocacy	Training in strategic planning for advocacy based on a theory of change exercise for Boards, staff, national and community members, including development of advocacy strategies with clear target audiences, advocacy outputs, and outcomes in the short, medium and long term	Short-term	High
	Mentoring and advice on how to work with the media, while protecting clients, as required	Long-term	Low

Component	Technical Support required	Timeframe	Cost
Communication	Support to develop communications plans which outline routes of information flow between Board members, staff, community focal points and members	Medium- term	Low
	Urgent support to access funding for core staff costs so staff members can prioritise communication; once they are employed, training in how to develop communication materials and use social media	Short-term	High
	Training in basic internet and computer use for CBO members, including use of social media	Medium-term	High
Strategic Information	Training in basic community research and data collection, including adapting and using strategic information at the community or national level, analysing data, contributing to development of strategic information, and engaging with donors, the media, government and international agencies through dissemination of strategic information	Medium term	High
	Mentoring from partners in how to promote themselves to research institutions as potential community partners	Long-term	Low
	Support to access funding to employ adequate staff who can focus on strategic information	Long-term	High
MSM Engagement	Mentoring and exchange with other organisations to support development of innovative programmes for harder-to-reach MSM groups, and more creative programmes which better reflect the reality of MSM's lives	Long-term	Low
	Improve information flow from MSM members to the Secretariat and vice versa (see communications section, above)	Medium- term	Low
Engagement with transgender people	Support to increase access to information and research by improving engagement with other transgender networks, and in particular APTN	Medium- term	Low
Engagement with young people	Support from partners to recruit young KP representatives for the Board	Short-term	Low
	Support to develop youth-specific communications plans, including identification of methods to capture the views of young people through social media	Medium- term	Medium
	Support to carry out mapping of national/regional youth organisations and mentoring to develop strong partnerships with them	Medium- term	Low
Engagement with sex workers	Support from regional networks to strengthen partnerships with specialist sex worker organisations as a route of sharing learning	Medium- term	Low
	Support from regional networks to ensure that national MSM and transgender organisations can access strategic information, research studies and best practice guidelines on working to support sex workers	Medium- term	Low
Engagement with PWUD	Organisations to document the successful work they are doing with PWUD and share with others	Medium- term	Low
	Mentoring to build good relationships with national PWUD organisations and networks, with the potential to carry out shared advocacy work/projects	Medium- term	Low
Engagement with PLHIV	Encourage organisations to maintain close links with the national networks of PLHIV	Long-term	Low
	Support from regional networks to ensure that national MSM and transgender organisations can access strategic information, research studies and best practice guidelines on working to support PLHIV	Medium- term	Low
	Training on the initiation of HIV treatment – this could be done by a national or regional network of PLHIV	Medium- term	High

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