

**Plenary Session 4**  
**Prevention in the rapidly changing MSM communities of today.**

Monday, 29 August 2011 (09.00 – 10.30)

*Chair: Stuart Koe, APCOM and Developed Asia Network (DAN), Singapore*

**MoPS4-04: Climb Every Mountain – Community Mobilisation for Rapid Change: The South Asia Experience**

**Shivananda Khan OBE, NFI; APCOM, India**

**Climb Every Mountain**

Supporting community mobilization and leadership for rapid change: The South Asia experience

Afghanistan                      Maldives  
Bangladesh                      Nepal  
Bhutan                              Pakistan  
India                                 Sri Lanka

Combined population of about 1.5 billion people

**Diversity and complexity**

Main religions: Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Animism, many sects

Main languages: over 50, with hundreds of dialects

Socio-cultural value systems that involve compulsory marriage, adulthood defined by social obligations, shame culture, gender segregation, male bonding, male honour, and political and religious conservatism.

- Male-male sexualities defined primarily around gender performance, not sexual orientation.
- Thus men and not-men
- Self-identified MSM as feminized male
- Their masculine partners perform as men

NFI estimates that in this context, there are some 50 million males engaged in male to male sex across South Asia. These figures are of course disputed by governments.

The Indian government believes that there are some 2.5 million MSM who are at risk of HIV, while some 100,000 are highly risk. This in a population of over 1 billion people.

**Prevalence**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Data</b>
Afghanistan	No information

Bangladesh	2010 – less than 1%, but prevalence of active syphilis among MSM estimated at 4% and hijras, 6.5%
Bhutan	No information
India	7.4% nationwide, with 17.4% in Andhra Pradesh
Maldives	No information
Nepal	6% (2009/10)
Pakistan	4% in Karachi among male sex workers, 27% among hijras in Larkhana
Sri Lanka	Reported that 11.3% of total HIV infected are MSM
Poor data	

### The struggle

Invisibility, denial and exclusion in Asia

1992: the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICAAP in New Delhi, India – our place in the sun!

Only one session on “alternate sexualities” Request for breakout room denied, held parallel meeting in park opposite the venue

1994: 10<sup>th</sup> IAC, Yokohama: Oishi but are our voices heard?

1995: 3<sup>rd</sup> ICAAP, Chiang Mai, Thailand only one session on “alternate sexualities”,

Again

1999: 5<sup>th</sup> ICAAP at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, more sessions on MSM and HIV. Final declaration read by a gay men from Fiji, explicitly mentions MSM and TG, Formation of Asia Pacific Rainbow (APR).

And now the 10<sup>th</sup> ICAAP with a full plenary on MSM issues, 30 years after the epidemics amongst gay men and other MSM, A painfully long and winding road, but will our voices be heard?

### South Asia seeds planted

India	1992	Ashok Row Kayi	Humsafar Trust
Sri Lanka	1995	Sherman De Rose	Companions on a Journey
Bangladesh	1997	Shale Ahmed	Bandhu Social Welfare Society
Nepal	2001	Sunil Pant	Blue Diamond Society
Regional	1996		Naz Foundation International

### Achievements since 1992

From the first MSM CBO providing HIV services in 1992, coverage increasing across Bangladesh, India, Nepal – but still a way to go.

Strong advocacy and significant studies conducted by advocates from sexual minority communities has led to government engagement and UNAIDS support, with national networks and new leaders emerging.

*(Delhi High Court ruling on section 377, 2009)*

*(Nepal Supreme Court ruling in 2009)*

## Achievements

Increased donor support

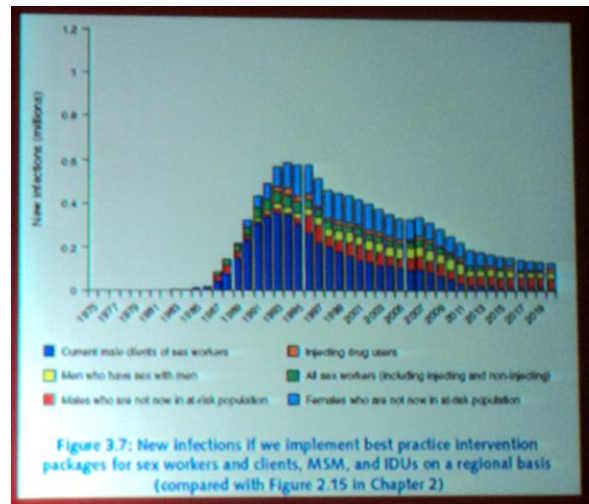
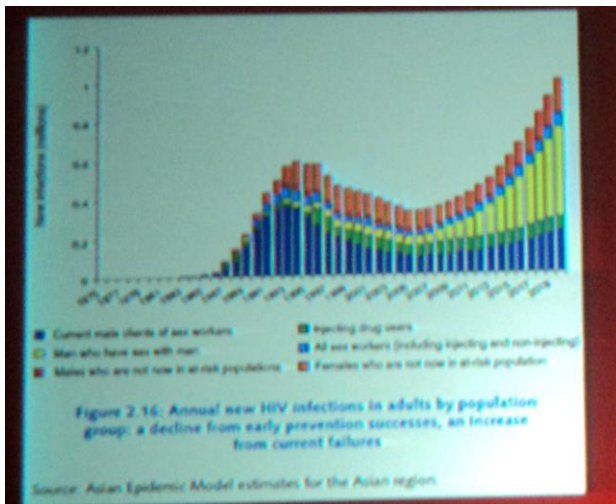
GFATM in-country funding for Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka: 70 million USD

GFATM South Asia Regional Project: 45 million USD

## Good practice to challenge HIV-lessons learnt

- Supporting the development of strong sexual minority communities and leadership
- Partnership and alliances between community based organizations and leaders, with government, UN system, donors
- Scaling up coverage
- Knowledge generation
- Addressing stigma, discrimination and punitive laws

## Together we can make a difference



The 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific  
26 -30 August 2011, BEXCO, Busan, Republic of Korea