

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ONLINE PEER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Building local capacity to protect public health and promote social justice with stigmatised populations disproportionately at risk of HIV infection is difficult regardless of context. There is need for a non-colonising approach that respects local knowledge and expertise in ways that strengthen community-based initiatives to HIV prevention alongside education about human and legal rights. Building local capacity means coming together in partnership and standing in solidarity with marginalized groups and listening to and responding to their needs. This paper documents an international collaboration's approaches to integrate sexual rights and community legal education into a new HIV/AIDS online outreach and prevention programme (OPOP). Paramount to this process was actively listening to and including the voices of key stakeholders in the community. We report on the collaboration, research and authoring of a sexual, human and legal rights manual to be used by OPOP workers at a local grassroots community-based HIV/AIDS prevention organization in Chiang Mai Thailand. We highlight how a legal internship programme can provide an opportunity for law students to make an authentic contribution to assisting others, very different from themselves, in overcoming legal injustices in Thailand. We argue this critical experience provides a productive framework for future lawyers to achieve a greater understanding of the dynamic relationship between academic knowledge and its practical application to the legal and justice issues that will arise in the diverse communities they may work in the future. Furthermore we also argue, that the technology is part of a suite of resources when it comes to HIV prevention and promoting human, legal and sexual rights, it is not simply the solution.

KEYWORDS: Human rights, HIV/AIDS, online peer outreach and prevention (OPOP), legal rights

1. INTRODUCTION

Current research points out that responses to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and the way it manifests itself locally, cannot be effective unless the human and legal rights of those infected with, and affected by, HIV are clearly and undeniably addressed (amfAR, 2008). This issue is highlighted in a recent issue of the American Bar Association's "Human Rights" (Spring, 2010) magazine, which is dedicated to HIV/AIDS and the rule of law. In the issue, the editors discuss human rights issues in relation to HIV in the United States and around the world. Articles in the issue point to the need to focus attention on the human and legal rights of woman and girls, sex workers and racial, ethnic, and sexual minority groups, to name a few.

Globally, three decades into the HIV/AIDS epidemic, many countries, including Thailand, have negative or unfriendly legal environments that undermine HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention programmes. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2010) rightly points out:

Where the law does not advance justice, it stalls progress. Laws that inappropriately criminalize HIV transmission or exposure can discourage people from getting tested for HIV or revealing their HIV positive status. Laws which criminalize men who have sex with men, transgender people, drug-users,

and/or sex workers can make it difficult to provide essential HIV prevention or treatment services to people at high risk of HIV infection.

This points to the fact that HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention workers, service providers and lawyers must understand the legal, social, political, economic and cultural environment in which sexual behaviours take place in their target communities to be effective. Many local HIV/AIDS community-based organisations (CBO) often don't have the resources or capacity to undertake this kind of legal and human rights education on their own. This situation reflects the documented divide in biomedical and social approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention globally, with an almost exclusive focus on biomedical prevention (Kippax and Holt, 2010). There is not enough research on how HIV is a social disease, and how its' causes and consequences are embedded deeply in localised contexts and processes. In many ways the same can be said about certain aspects of law practice. Regardless, research is needed that involves investigating the manner in which individuals and communities understand HIV alongside their human and legal rights. Biomedical and legal understandings, while essential and important do not always provide localised insight into the medical, public health and legal responses to the epidemic because:

researchers in HIV, who mostly read medical or specialist HIV journals, are unlikely to be well informed about current developments in social and political research, particularly research investigating the contexts and the drivers of sexual and other risk practices and related HIV transmission (Kippax and Holt, 2010, ¶10).

Acknowledging this reality with an additional lens on legal studies and law, our project was dedicated to uncovering the localised and contextualised understandings of the social contexts and drivers of HIV transmission that might, or could be related to not understanding or not being able to access legal rights in the local community (Chiang Mai). Many of these issues were raised in Bangkok in February 2011 at the regional dialogue that the UNDP hosted as part of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law. At this meeting sex workers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons spoke on how criminalization affects their ability to access sexual health services and protect themselves from HIV. We believe integrating this contextualised approach into both off and online HIV/AIDS prevention can precipitate a more effective enabling environment for also realising the human, legal and sexual rights of men that have sex with men (MSM), male sex workers (MSW) and transgender (TG) communities in Chiang Mai.

Funded by The AIDS Research Foundation (amfAR, 2010) we represent part of an international collaboration that came together to author an HIV/AIDS prevention resource that simultaneously addresses the social, legal and educational barriers to accessing HIV prevention. The manual specifically helps online peer outreach workers understand their communities' human, legal and sexual rights. Furthermore the manual provides guidance for peer educators to provide information to clients about what to do if their rights are violated and where to turn (referrals) for legal and/or medial help in their local community.

In what follows we report on the collaboration, research and authoring of the manual to be used by online peer outreach and prevention (OPOP) workers at Mplus, a local grassroots community-based HIV/AIDS prevention organization. We describe the initial reactions of international legal interns had working with MSM, MSW and TG stakeholders and volunteers from a number of frontline community-based organizations dedicated to preventing HIV/AIDS (Mplus and Rainbow Sky Association Thailand¹ (RSAT)), providing services to people living with HIV (Violet Home²), and promoting HIV prevention and overall sexual health for Chiang Mai's MSM and TG populations (Mplus³ and RSAT). We then highlight how the legal internship programme provided an opportunity for law students to make an authentic contribution to assisting others, very different from themselves, in overcoming legal injustices. We conclude by briefly outlining how the manual is being used in current HIV/AIDS OPOP at Mplus.

2. A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH MSM, MSW AND TG

¹ For more information see <http://www.rsat.info/>

² For more information see <http://www.violethome.org/>

³ For more information see <http://www.mplusthailand.com/>

Our project understands that community-determined and led actions, through online peer education-based outreach and prevention, have the potential to change individual and social behaviors that reduce HIV infections. In order to work with Mplus to improve their already existing outreach and prevention programs, as well as their newly initiated online programmes, The Open University (UK) worked with the Bridges Across Borders Southeast Asia Community Legal Education Initiative (BABSEA CLE) to research and design a sexual and legal rights manual—context specific for Chiang Mai’s MSM, MSW and TG communities. Mplus understood that their online outreach workers would need resources of this kind to refer to when involved in online HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention. The manual provides Mplus outreach and prevention workers and volunteers with information about human, legal and sexual rights under Thai law. This was especially needed when stigma directed towards MSM, MSW and TG caused the cancelation of the 2nd Annual Chiang Mai Gay Pride Parade on January 21, 2009 (Friday, 2009). Before the parade started, Mplus (the primary organizers) and parade participants were locked in a compound and subjected to public harassment and prejudice by the Rak Chiang Mai 51 political group, or ‘Red Shirts’. Parade participants suffered discrimination, some were injured, and all were prevented from leaving or entering the compound for over 4 hours while 150 police officers looked on (The Nation, 2009). In June 2009, Mplus was invited to present information about their work to the BABSEA CLE interns. During the presentation, Mplus described the circumstances of the cancelation of the 2nd gay pride parade and their non-violent Buddhist response. Immediately, this raised questions for the legal interns about the rights of MSM, MSW and TG and provided first hand and example of these individuals’ rights being violated due to their sexuality and gender identity.

Mplus feared this extensive public display of inequity, stigma, discrimination and violence towards Chiang Mai’s MSM, MSW and TG communities as well as accelerate risk factors which could result in increased HIV infections. As a result of this experience Mplus brainstormed ways to combat some of its own programmatic vulnerability to fight HIV/AIDS. They realised they needed more information about human and legal rights and that it needed to be made available to their organizations’ more than 1200 members. They also believed making this information available online through peer outreach would provide an immediate impact for their local community that would be measurable (by the number of chats, repeat chats, etc.) and replicable by other regional CBOs. Needing resources to do this, Mplus applied for, and was awarded a grant from amfAR (2010). The grant provided funding for the 2010 BABSEA CLE interns to work with Mplus to understand the legal issues they face and co-author a manual that educates MSM, MSW and TG about their rights. The project worked with stakeholders from other local frontline community-based organisations dedicated to preventing HIV/AIDS and reducing stigma and discrimination against as well as volunteers from the three targeted communities (MSM, MSW and TG).

2.1. THE BABSEA CLE Internship

Because the BABSEA CLE conducts an international legal studies programme where future lawyers and access to justice advocates participate in a three month structured internship⁴ focusing on strengthening community legal education in Southeast Asia, it offered a unique opportunity to collaborate with Mplus. Interns from different countries worked alongside the Thai BABSEA CLE team with Mplus and stakeholders from the MSM, MSW and TG communities. Challenged with different cultures, languages and legal systems, the interns were supported to turn these challenges into a unique cross-cultural learning opportunity. Interns were required to question how the legal theory and actual ‘on the ground practices’ in their own country are different or similar to those of Thailand (and those of other interns’ countries). As a result, the interns found themselves working in a ‘real’ life comparative legal class.

A primary aim of the internship focused on engaging in legal research to uncover discrimination, conflicting laws and barriers to accessing to the judiciary system in Thailand for MSM, MSW and TG, but specifically in Chiang Mai. Along with BABSEA CLE staff, most of the interns completed university coursework on research methods, giving them a strong framework for the research needed to assist organizations such as Mplus, RSAT and Violet Home in capacity building exercises that helped them understand their legal, sexual and human rights in tandem with personal risk to HIV/AIDS. The legal challenges and issues faced by the clients of Mplus, RSAT and Violet Home around human, legal and sexual

⁴ For more information see http://www.babseacle.org/legal_studies_internship_program

rights are not regularly addressed in university law courses in Thailand, or for that matter internationally. For example, very few cases that a law student will study in their own countries discuss the legal realities of a transgender (male-to-female sex change) individual faces when having to be incarcerated in a male only prison due to her biological birth or a stateless MSW living in a different country's efforts to get an HIV test and medication in the event he tests positive for HIV.

Upon arrival in Thailand, the legal interns had little or no understanding of the level of discrimination and lack of legal access to the judiciary system faced by marginalised MSM, MSW and TG communities. Their challenge during the internship was to devise realistic ways to not only educate individuals from these communities about their rights, but also provide them with an enduring resource (the manual) that helps them access those rights into the future. Mplus, RSAT and Violet Home's clients (as well as the wider MSM, MSW and TG communities) benefited from the legal interns' research, understanding and interpretation of the law through the collaborative authoring of the peer educators' manual. More important is how the manual helps these marginalised communities access the legal system in a safe and empowering through an up-to-date list of local organisations that online outreach workers can use to refer peers to in the community.

2.2. Legal Interns working with marginalised communities on legal rights

Most legal interns that join the BABSEA CLE Internship program come with expectations of helping poor and vulnerable communities in Southeast Asia. They are eager to help and learn about the issues faced by people in the region and they are generally open-minded and proactive. As one intern commented about the legal realities any transgender individual could face (being accused of being a sex worker) just because she may have a condom on her person:

I also started the projects with Mplus and Violet Home this week. They both seem like amazing organizations and I learned so much already. I was shocked to find out that transgender people in Chiang Mai were being searched late at night and if they had condoms on them were arrested. I can't even imagine that happening in New York. Condoms!?! Really?

The interns on this project faced unique challenges. Many expressed concerns around not knowing how to talk about certain issues like prostitution, HIV status and male-to-male sexual practices. There was an underlying concern about saying the wrong thing and offending others. Interns discussed how to ask a question like "tell me what legal issues you face as a prostitute?" Suggestions were given to use the terms "sex work" or "sex worker" and avoid 'legal issues'. A major obstacle was also overcoming some interns' moral convictions (or prejudices) and to help them understand that sex work—is work—and sometimes the only available work that an individual can depend on to survive and support his/her family. This cross-cultural way of learning was explicit where Interns and members from the target community meet regularly to discuss what issues were most important and then how they are related to Thai law.

In researching and drafting the legal rights manual for Mplus' OPOP, when Thai law was clear, it was often difficult to explain to MSM, MSW and TG individuals the myriad ways the law both affects and protects their daily lives. During a meeting well into the project, one of the legal interns commented on an ethical debate with a TG and MSW representatives about telling your partner you tested positive for HIV. The TG and MSW representatives wanted to include a section in the manual entitled, "You don't have to tell your partner if you don't want to". But this concept was in direct opposition to Thai law. A dilemma arose. How do you help marginalized individuals disproportionately at risk of HIV infection—understand their obligation under the law—without further stigmatizing them? The intern reflected on the debate:

"Not only will I absolutely, under no circumstances...research, help, endorse, support, or put my name on such a product, but that is the exact OPPOSITE of the law in Thailand! The topic was "rights and obligations of HIV+ people in Thailand," one of these 'obligations' being that it is compulsory for you to tell your partner you have HIV. It's not up for debate about ethics and morals. The representatives wanted to the sections to be softer on their clientele, telling them this is a choice you have, and you aren't required to reveal your serostatus. Sorry, that's just not the case. It doesn't matter if you're scared; it

doesn't matter if your partner will leave you. What matters is, based on your status, you are required, by law, to tell anyone you are currently having sex with, that you are HIV+. No way around it."

The discrimination against and misunderstanding of the difficulties MSM, MSW and TG face on a daily basis was not truly comprehensible to many of the legal interns. The intern's reflection above was correct in a legal sense and illustrated a clear understanding of Thai law and the need for the law. Simultaneously, the comment also demonstrated the need to learn how to deliver empowerment legal lessons in an effective manner that would be understood and appreciated by the transgender and male sex worker. This same kind of understanding and learning need to be made explicit to OPOP workers as well. Simply stating a refusal to work on a product, rather than suggesting or finding a reasonable way to make others understand the need to be clear on the full elements of the law, could be seen as an example of initial naivety. The legal interns needed to understand that it is not only about what the law requires, but how to empower others with this knowledge and how to effectively use this knowledge to help and support them.

Interns came to understand that as a lawyer helping others, one needs to build trust and understanding for their client's situation to be truly effective. This is why the partnership between Mplus, the BABSEA CLE and The Open University was conceptualized. The idea was to build the knowledge base and capacity of OPOP workers while simultaneously having the legal interns work through real-life legal issues around justice and access to the law. Furthermore it provided them the opportunity to not compromise their principles, but to consider how the law affects the daily lives of people different from them and how to support them in understanding their legal obligations under the law without further marginalising or stigmatizing them. This critical experience then provided them with a productive framework to achieve a greater understanding of the dynamic relationship between academic knowledge and its practical application to the legal and justice issues that may arise in their future work. It also helped Mplus achieve its goal of understanding how Thai law affects their target populations' lifeworlds through the co-authoring of the legal rights manual to be used in Mplus' new OPOP (launched in September 2011).

2.3. A productive framework for future lawyers

Sometimes the law is perceived as steadfast 'rules' for society that can be circumvented by the rich who can afford lawyers. Thus, lawyers have the reputation of only wanting to make money. Conversely, lawyers that do help those on the margins of society must do so because they were not able to succeed in a large firm. These perceptions put up barriers between the people who need help and support in accessing their legal rights. The BASEA CLE legal internship is a productive framework that challenges these rather narrow constructions of what it means to be a lawyer and dedicated to working for human and legal (and sexual) rights. In Thailand MSM, MSW and TG communities have rights under the Thai law that are not always acknowledged or protected by the wider Thai society. Many individuals do not know their rights when it comes to housing, healthcare, being infected with HIV or how to access antiretroviral therapies (ART). Also many individuals do not know what to do if their rights are violated or where they can turn for free legal help and assistance. Collaborating to produce a human, legal and sexual rights manual with stakeholders from the affected communities and future lawyers helped to address these critical issues.

The BABSEA CLE internship is a structured program that exposes law students to marginalized communities. It also provides a real opportunity for interns to listen to and understand the struggles, aspirations and concerns of individuals who often live difficult lives and suffer injustices regularly. These issues can range from discrimination, unfairness and misunderstanding of the law to issues that affect them emotionally, psychologically and physically. Connecting these future lawyers to individuals' whose lives are completely different to their own reinforces the notation that being a lawyer is more than just working as an attorney, counsel or solicitor who is practicing law. It is about developing a more humanised, deeper understanding of who their client is and the full extent of the issues he or she is facing. It is this exposure to 'real' individuals facing serious issues that have the strongest impact on the future lawyers. Having them participate in the internship and project helps them understand they can help and support marginalized groups, and that empowering people to access justice is not just about the law. It is about a person's life and their right to live in safety, without fear and enjoy all the rights (legal, human and sexual) they are entitled to under the law.

3. THE SEXUAL, HUMAN AND LEGAL RIGHTS MANUAL

The manual entitled, *Sexual, human and legal rights for Chiang Mai's men that have sex with men (MSM), male sex workers (MSW) and transgender (TG) communities*, was produced to supplement UNESCO's publication entitled, *Peer and outreach education for improving the sexual health of men who have sex with men: A Reference manual for peer and outreach workers* (UNESCO, 2009) currently used by Mplus. The manual was designed because offline and online peer education and outreach workers need information about the sexual, human and legal rights of MSM, MSW and TG in addition to having knowledge about HIV/STI and sexual health issues. The project collaborated to produce this manual to increase the quality of information, particularly sexual, human and legal rights. It is hoped the access to, and sharing of, this knowledge via online peer outreach and prevention will battle the stigma and discrimination around sexuality, sex work, sexual orientation, and legal and human rights in Chiang Mai. Paramount to this endeavour was providing peer and outreach workers with information on where to refer MSM, MSW and TG to free local resources if, and when, they have questions about their rights, or feel that their rights have violated.

The manual also responds to one of the eight United Nation's Millennium Development Goals that specifically targets the issue of HIV and AIDS. Addressing HIV among MSM, MSW and TG is proven to be an effective strategy to avert larger rates of HIV in the wider population. However, stigma towards MSM, MSW and TG creates affective and social barriers, driving the problem underground. Additionally, many HIV prevention programmes in Thailand may often fail to reach MSM, MSW and TG populations. This is because they remain highly stigmatised, vilified and shunned members of Thai society. This stigmatisation of MSM, MSW and TG undermines both their self-worth and capacity to protect them from HIV. This manual aims to recognise the efficacy of rights-based approaches to HIV prevention amongst groups who are victims of stigma by integrating it into face-to-face and online HIV/AIDS peer outreach and prevention. The right to health is considered an inclusive right, extending not only to timely and appropriate healthcare, but also to the underlying determinants of health, as well as social determinants such as gender, racial and ethnic discrimination and disparities.

The manual consists of different units which allow each individual peer/outreach worker to choose the materials he/she needs in relation to the possible questions that may be posed to them during their peer/outreach work. The information in this manual is presented in a question and answer format to enable peer and outreach workers to easily find answers to questions that MSM, MSW and TG might ask them when they are providing HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention. We consider the manual a work in progress and the project team is committed to updating it on an ongoing basis when new resources or information becomes available or when and/if there are changes in Thai law.

4. ONLINE PEER OUTREACH AND PREVENTION (OPOP)

Mplus' OPOP program introduced a 'safe space' online where Chiang Mai's MSM, MSW and TG can meet, talk openly and receive sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention services, including information about free testing facilities and treatment, as well as legal, human and sexual rights. Mplus understands MSM have specific STI-related needs but often feel uncomfortable going to conventional public sector health services, the OPOP provides a new viable option. Mplus knows the diverse communities of MSM in Chiang Mai are using the Internet to arrange meeting for sex or engage in sex work. The anonymity and widespread contacts available on the Internet create new vectors of transmission for HIV/AIDS. Through its regular outreach, focus groups and social activities, Mplus has discovered not only young Thai men who identify as gay and bisexual use the Internet to 'hook up', but large cohorts of TG, MSW and 'hidden MSM' also find sex online across a variety of websites, forums, and chatrooms. Mplus implemented the OPOP program because the Internet has proven crucial in reaching MSM, as a channel for education, a social outlet, and an outreach opportunity (Jerman, 2004). The OPOP training was provided by the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, using their program, "We are the Sexperts!" Mplus and its MSM volunteers have adapted the program to the Chiang Mai context and have named it the 'Mplus Sexperts'. In

October they launched a Facebook Site where they advertise the OPOP; showcase their HIV/AIDS prevention animations as well as other media related to their organisation's goal to reducing high-risk sexual behaviour and stemming the spread of HIV/STD/STIs among MSM, MSW and TG.

Since the OPOP started in September, the Mplus OPOP educators have conducted more than 1000 peer-education conversations via MSM Messenger. In December (2010) and January (2011) they logged more than 200 conversations each month indicating an increase in HIV/AIDS coverage and this possibly also indicates a growing localised community-based knowledge of the availability Mplus' OPOP. Mplus is strategic in advertising its services and uses social networking sites where Chiang Mia's MSM, MSW and TG use to socialize, meet, or engage in sexwork. The most common sites they use to let people know about the MSM Messenger based service is Pirch (www.pirch.com), GayRomeo (www.gayromeo.com), Post Jung (www.postjung.com) and MissLadyBoys (www.missladyboys.com). The OPOP is supervised by one project manager and team of Mplus' outreach and prevention staff. Each conversation is saved and the peer's screen name is deleted. The conversations are systematically reviewed to ensure that the peer educators are providing correct information in regards to sexual health and legal rights. Additionally, the number and kinds of referrals to services in the community is documented. Referrals are also directly provided to Mplus so that individuals can call a number to discuss Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing (VCCT) service provision in Chiang Mai provided through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM).

A preliminary review of the 1000 chats indicates a diversity of questions being asked from peers that range from questions about how to deal with one's own sexuality to availability of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. The most common topics discussed in the OPOP include:

1. Risk of sexual behaviour in relation HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI)
2. Penis size, enlargement and appearance
3. Love, relationships, loneliness and broken hearts
4. Dealing with stigma, discrimination and violence
5. Coming out to family and/or identity confusion
6. Sexual pleasure, premature ejaculation and improved orgasms
7. Effects of drugs during sex
8. How to access free and confidential counseling and VCCT
9. Hormone usage and sex change questions and referrals to TG friendly doctors
10. How to properly use a condom with lubricant
11. People living with HIV (PLHIV) related issues including accessing Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs

Mplus' peer educators receive ongoing support and training and work with the project manager to update their knowledge and understanding of sexual health and legal rights issues. In one chat, a young MSM confided in the OPOP worker that he had been drugged and raped by multiple men. When peers encounter these kinds of issues, they often refer them to a free legal clinic run by the Faculty of Law at Chiang Mai University or someone at Mplus who can talk to them on the phone (if they choose) and help them access additional help and resources. At the Chiang Mai University (CMU) Legal Clinic MSM, MSW and TG (or anyone else) can get free advice and help. They have staff that will accompany individuals to the police to help them report crimes and/or help them receive free legal council. In 2009, BABSEA CLE worked with Mplus to produce an animation that teaches transgender people and anyone else who has experienced sexual violence how to access the CMU Legal Clinic. It also explains individuals' legal rights under the Thai constitution and the importance of reporting crimes to the police and the availability of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV infection⁵.

5. Conclusion

The OPOP intervention itself is promising and Mplus is working to seek funding to continue the programme to promote sexual health, legal/human rights and access to quality HIV/AIDS prevention. This is in light of

⁵ To view the animation see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ4rBIZo1qk>

research that indicates that MSM are continuing to be at a higher risk of contracting HIV. A 2008 demographic survey found that HIV incidence among MSM in Bangkok increased from 17% in 2003 to 28% in 2005 and 31% in 2007. The rate of new HIV cases in Chiang Mai rose from 15.3% in 2005 to 16.9% in 2007, while rates in Phuket increased from 5.5% to 20% in the same time period (Wimonsate, et al., 2008). The survey also found that half of MSM do not use condoms and that male commercial sex workers (MSW) are at high risk of contracting HIV because they engage in unsafe sexual behaviour. A 2010 study of young MSM in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket found high levels of inconsistent condom use among sexually active young MSM (15-24 years). Of the 837 participants, 33.1% were regular MSM, 37.7% were MSW and 29.1% were TGs. 46.7% of MSM, 34.9% of MSW and 52.3% of TGs reported recent inconsistent condom use (Chemnasiri et al., 2010).

While building bridges between HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention and legal, human and sexual rights was seen as a priority, the agenda for such collaborative work is often made available through funding and steadfast dedication. The manual described in this paper is truly collaborative work that required law students, lawyers, researchers, peer educators, HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention workers and stakeholders from the community to work together to understand more about each other's lifeworlds then use the technology available (in this case MSN Messenger, and a variety of social networking sites) to provide peer education. The project also models a non-colonising cross-cultural way of working to address specific localized needs of a community around HIV prevention and human rights under Thai law.

This project was community driven and responded directly to local needs to collaboratively generate context-specific solutions and leverage technology accordingly. It is non-colonising because it intentionally built on existing skills within the community, thereby adding value to existing structures and drawing community-based organisations together around related causes. This project collaborated, researched and authored this unique community-based HIV/AIDS and human, legal and sexual rights resource to protect public health and promote human rights. The project collaboration reflects what we view as a sustainable and reinventing community-owned response with a stigmatized population disproportionately at risk of HIV infection. Through the use and uptake of this sexual, human and legal rights manual, this project precipitates a more effective enabling environment for realising the health and human rights of marginalised communities. This is because it directly addresses the social, legal and educational barriers to accessing HIV prevention through peer education. The project is unique because it removes barriers to learning for both the community stakeholders and legal interns involved. Their shared work and knowledge has then been repackaged in the form of an open educational resource, we anticipate others may replicate and leverage to enable safe sex and legal and sexual rights education to be delivered not-for-profit anywhere in the world. With this project, the technology was not the solution, rather it was part of a suite of resources used to promote HIV/AIDS prevention alongside human, legal and sexual rights.

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