

Mapping regional, sub-regional and national youth networks across Asia:

The state of youth networking for sexual and reproductive health across 21 Asian countries



Volume 1

Author and Lead Researcher: Jessie Freeman
Contribution by: Javita Narang.

March 2010.

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The researchers would like to particularly thank the youth activists and leaders who gave their time and support to the mapping assignment. All the young people interviewed regularly give substantial amounts of time on a voluntary basis to support sexual and reproductive health programming and policy development in their own countries and across the region.

The researchers welcome feedback on the report and would like to acknowledge that factual errors may exist in the information presented, and that the situation of youth networking can, and will, change rapidly.

Jessie Freeman, Lead Consultant, March 2010.

Cover photo: Taken by Mr. Hoang Hai Vuong, Key Correspondent for Vietnam. This photo captures young members of the Vietnamese Cau Vong MSM group, based in Da Nang.

Please note: The views expressed in this paper are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office.



List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AllianceAPAAPCRSHR	International HIV/AIDS AllianceAsia Pacific AllianceAsia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights
APRO	Asia Pacific Regional Office
ARHARROWASEAN	Adolescent Reproductive HealthAsia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for WomenAssociation of South East Asian Nations
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CO	Country Office
DIC	Drop In Centre
GFATMGYCA	Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and MalariaGlobal Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICAAP	International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific
ICPD	International Congress on Population and Development
IDU	Injecting Drug User
IWHC	International Women's Health Coalition
IPPF MAKAP	International Planned Parenthood Federation Member AssociationKey Affected Populations
KC	Key Correspondents
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
RH	Reproductive Health
RTI	Reproductive Tract Infection
SEAP TS Hub	International HIV/AIDS Alliance South East Asia Technical Support Hub
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
SW	Sex Worker
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNAIDSUNGASS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDSUnited Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VCTWAC	Voluntary Counselling and Testing servicesWorld AIDS Campaign
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel
YSRH	Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health



Executive Summary

Background

From November 2009 to March 2010, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance Technical Support Hub in South East Asia, with support from UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO), has conducted a mapping exercise on youth networking for Sexual and Reproductive Health (including HIV) across Asia.

Asia has an enormous population of young people, with some 850 million between the ages of 10 – 24.¹ There is great diversity among these groups, and they face significant social, cultural and political barriers to participating meaningfully in the SRH / HIV response. Throughout Asia, there is an absence of well-established youth networks relating to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV. Despite the critical role that young people can play in leading initiatives and developing policies, there are few genuinely “youth led” initiatives and mechanisms for fostering youth leadership. Special attention is needed to engage with vulnerable and excluded adolescents and youth², and for youth most-at-risk to HIV³. Limited progress in reaching out to these subgroups of young people impacts both sustainability and effectiveness of programming and policy initiatives. A scarcity of research and documentation on this topic hinders efforts for improvement.

As part of its regional programme on youth sexual and reproductive health (SRH) UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office focuses on linking with and strengthening networks of young people and NGOs working in youth SRH in the region. UNFPA takes two main approaches to working with networks of young people:

- 1) Many UNFPA country offices have formed **Youth Advisory Panels**⁴, with young people selected from national youth organisations working on SRH issues.
- 2) Mid 2009, UNFPA has also introduced **Y-PEER** in four countries in the Asia Pacific region.⁵

To enhance and to complement these activities, this mapping assignment aimed to support UNFPA to understand and work with existing regional, subregional and national organisations and networks of young people and NGOs with interests in SRH issues by providing an overview of youth sexual and reproductive health networking throughout the Asia region and to identify potential areas for capacity building. The information presented here is meant to raise issues and questions for consideration and to inform decisions that will ultimately guide a strategic approach.

Methods

The mapping assignment covers 21 countries to provide a snapshot of youth networking in practice, exploring methods used to engage individuals and communities and implications for improving programming. Drawing inputs from youth leaders and networks, youth-serving

¹ UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Overview, <http://149.120.32.2/asiapacific/>

² Defined as ‘married adolescents; very young adolescents; young people living in rural and hard to reach areas; internally displaced young people and refugees; out of school adolescents; and young people not working,’ UNFPA Framework For Action on Adolescents and Youth.

³ Defined as young sex workers and clients, young men having unprotected sex with men and young people who inject drugs using shared equipment.

⁴ Youth Advisory Panels are active in a number of countries in the region including Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh in South Asia and Thailand, Philippines, Mongolia, Indonesia and Cambodia in South East Asia

⁵ Thailand, Pakistan, Philippines and Pacific



organisations, networks representing populations vulnerable to HIV, and UNFPA Country Offices, this report compiles country-by-country information on youth policy and networking practices. The mapping collected data primarily through desk-based review of available literature and online resources (including organisational websites, discussion groups and list-serves), and through phone calls and email exchanges with key informants.

The key limitation of the mapping assignment was time. The researchers covered a broad scope in a short amount of time. This allowed for limited analysis in distinctions of networks' and organisations' quality, efficacy and comprehensiveness. Therefore, the information presented in the mapping is considered to be a springboard and starting point for UNFPA APRO's future work in this area.

Case Studies and Key Correspondents Articles

Two country case studies demonstrate how different networks currently operate, and explore linkages between youth networks at country and regional level. In Cambodia, there is no recognised national youth network, and so the case study gives an overview of the different sub-national networks and their linkages. It explores the spaces for increased networking related to youth SRH.

The India case study focuses on one key network, SRIJAN (Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives for Joint Action Network) which is hosted by the well-established NGO, MAMTA- Health Institute for Mother and Child. The case study discusses some of the challenges of sustainability and longer-term funding.

Four Key Correspondents representing trained citizen journalists from Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam were selected from the Alliance's regional network to develop stories from relevant young people's networks and organisations in their own countries. The resulting stories focus on vulnerable and excluded youth, and consider personal experiences of networking and participation. Findings that were common across all countries included the social and cultural challenges in speaking about SRH with youth, lack of government commitment (resources and will) to youth SRH participation and access to services; and difficulties of maintaining communication given lack of internet and mobile phone in rural areas.

Country Profiles

The mapping looks at 21 countries⁶ one-by-one, exploring context, youth policy development, the state of existing youth networking including relevant features of UNFPA work in this area. Overall, it seems that youth networking for SRH is more developed in South Asia than in South East Asia⁷. The state of national and sub-national networking varies widely across the region and requires different support strategies. There are limited youth led initiatives and more youth serving organisations. Country profiles explore mechanisms for youth networking led by Government, the UN and civil society. The detailed country level mappings are set out in Volume 2 of this report: Directory: Networks and Organisations for Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health in Asia. Each country profile includes between one to ten organisations; an overview of these can be found at Annex 3.

⁶ See Annex 3 with summary of countries and networks.

⁷ South Asia defined as: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. South East Asia defined as: Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.



Key Findings

Youth led SRH initiatives are more common in countries with stronger civil society movements. Countries with non-democratic and restrictive political structures and / or in post-conflict situations are less likely to have youth led movements. Informants believe that the absence of a national youth policy greatly hinders efforts to establish youth networks, although this would need more indepth analysis.

Mechanisms for youth participation include: Programmes supported by youth relevant ministries, Government working groups, UN working groups, Youth networks supported by international NGOs, Youth participation in youth-friendly SRH services, Youth participation supported by the UN, Faith-based youth networks, NGO coordination mechanisms, HIV/AIDS networks, Youth led arts initiatives.

Youth serving networks and organisations are moving toward more strategic and longer term support strategies for youth led initiatives, although support still tends to be provided irregularly and through one-off activities. Networking between youth serving organisations at the regional level is very limited. Linkages between countries, and from national to regional level, are also weak.

In general, underserved subgroups of young people (for both SRH and HIV) are not well represented. This is also true for both youth serving and youth led networks.

Individual youth leaders play an important role in networking between organisations at sub-national, national and regional levels. Individuals tend to belong to multiple movements, and network using Information Communication Technologies. The few opportunities for youth participation that are available, are not available to many. This can lead to over simplifications as the diversity of young people is misrepresented. Youth leaders and youth serving organisations have a role to play in reaching out to new, diverse groups of young people.

There is much interest and potential in mainstreaming SRH into existing youth led and serving networks, particularly those working in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care with youth most at risk.

Recommendations

There is an absence of well-established youth networks related to SRH and HIV in Asia; however, there are sufficient numbers of different movements where UNFPA could focus on sustaining and improving quality. The recommendations made are designed to stimulate further discussion and thinking between UNFPA APRO, Country Offices across the region as well as with agencies such as the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. They are intended to contribute to the development of a youth networking support strategy.

Recommendations fall within three key areas: 1. Strengthening youth participation and leadership, 2. Technical and organisational capacity building and 3. Resource mobilisation. First, institutionalisation of youth initiatives is acknowledged as a strategy to support youth networking, which can be achieved through support to youth-adult partnerships. There are some key regional and international organisations with whom UNFPA APRO could explore joint project initiatives to expand coverage and impact, particularly on advocacy for young people's SRH (including but not limited to Asia Pacific Alliance, ARROW and IPPF). Existing networks for Key Affected Populations⁸

⁸ Defined in this report as young sex workers and their clients, young men having unprotected sex with men and young people who inject drugs using shared equipment.



at regional and national levels should be supported to reach out to youth most at risk to HIV, who face significant barriers to participation. The International HIV/AIDS Alliance has significant experience in working with these groups, and in supporting their meaningful involvement in the response.

UNFPA APRO plays a role in leading and coordinating communication, knowledge sharing and information exchanges. There is a need to better document lessons learnt from youth initiatives and demonstrate the impacts of youth networking. UNFPA can play a role as a regional resource bank in this area.

Resource mobilisation is a real challenge for youth networks and organisations, which impacts negatively on potential innovation of emerging initiatives and sustainability of more established networks. Seed grants and strategic grants for covering network core costs and development are both needed. APRO can also support fundraising skills development for young people.

With no one clear youth SRH network emerging at the regional level, UNFPA APRO should consider targeting support to a few different initiatives and monitoring the development of these. Networks and organisations require capacity building in a variety of technical and organisational areas. The Alliance's Network Capacity Analysis Toolkit is recommended to help prioritise these needs in a strategic way.

UNFPA COs need support to strengthen a multisectoral response and to work with new organisations. Targeted support to appropriate COs in networking strategies could advance this work. YPEER and YAPs need ongoing technical support to sustain their growth. UNFPA APRO can also facilitate exchanges between YAPs, YPEER and other civil society networks across the region



Background

The vast and culturally diverse Asia region is home to over half the world's young people – some 850 million between the ages of 10 – 24. This enormous population of youth is the region's greatest demographic challenge and opportunity. In the past two decades, spurred on by the International Congress on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the region has made great progress on both the social and economic fronts. But this overall progress marks wide disparities and stark contrasts, and there is still much to be achieved in order to reach the MDGs in 2015⁹. There is a need to work side by side with young people to accelerate effective action, and to target resources more effectively to the groups that need them the most.

As part of its decentralisation strategy, UNFPA is increasingly focusing on working through regional partners to increase national capacity, building on its strong country presence and expertise in comprehensive SRH programming for young people. As part of its regional adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive programme strategy, the UNFPA Asia and Pacific Regional Office (APRO) awarded a short-term grant to the International HIV/AIDS Alliance through its the South East Asia Pacific Technical Support Hub (SEAP Hub)¹⁰, with a view to developing a longer term informal or formal partnership in this area in the region, building on the Alliance's extensive experience at national level, through its network of national partner organisations, of supporting NGO and CBO network and organisational development, especially with and for HIV-related programming with key affected populations.

The concept for this assignment was guided by UNFPA's *Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth: Opening doors with young people: 4 keys*, which highlights the 4 main areas of UNFPA's global, regional and national level work with young people as incorporation of youth issues into public policy; education on sexual and reproductive health (SRH); sexual and reproductive health services and; youth participation. In the UNAIDS Division of Labour, UNFPA is the lead agency on HIV prevention for out of school youth. In Asia 95% of new HIV infections in young people occur in most at risk young people¹¹, so these groups are a particular focus of UNFPA's work on HIV.

As part of its regional programme on youth sexual and reproductive health (SRH) UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office focuses on linking with and strengthening networks of young people and NGOs working in youth SRH in the region. UNFPA takes two main approaches to working with networks of young people:

- 1) Many UNFPA country offices have formed **Youth Advisory Panels (YAP)**¹², with young people selected from national youth organisations working on SRH issues.
- 2) Mid 2009, UNFPA has also introduced **Y-PEER**¹³ in four countries in the Asia Pacific region (Thailand, Pakistan, Philippines and Pacific).

To enhance and to complement these activities, UNFPA needs to understand and work with existing regional, subregional and national organisations and networks of young people and NGOs with interests in SRH issues.

⁹ UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Overview, <http://149.120.32.2/asiapacific/>

¹⁰ Alliance SEAP Hub is based in Cambodia and is hosted by the Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance.

¹¹ Defined as young sex workers and clients, young men having unprotected sex with men and young people who inject drugs using shared equipment.

¹² Youth Advisory Panels are active in a number of countries in the region including Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh in South Asia and Thailand, Philippines, Mongolia, Indonesia and Cambodia in South East Asia.

¹³ Y-PEER was initiated by UNFPA in 2002 and currently has a membership of over 7000 young people and over 600 NGOs and other



Methodology

This research covers 21 Asian countries which were divided into two sub-regions – South Asia and South-East Asia to correspond with UNFPA sub-regions. The Lead Consultant held overall responsibility for the research, with particular responsibility for research in 12 South-East Asian countries and the regional level, and a second consultant led the research in 9 South Asian countries. The research team communicated regularly via telephone and email to ensure consistency of research methods and approaches, share findings and discuss arising issues.

After conducting initial desk research, the consultants selected key informants using purposive in order to explore the specific issues within the closely defined groups. These were:

- 1) **Representatives of key networks or organisations** working on youth and SRH (national, sub-regional and regional)
- 2) **UNFPA CO staff** working with youth and SRH networks or organisations
- 3) **Youth leaders and activists**, including most-at-risk young people
- 4) **Selected experts** with in-depth knowledge of networking for youth and SRH (such as individuals who are not currently affiliated to a particular network or organisation but have strong expertise in the area)

The research aimed to explore a cross-section of views from these different groups, and it was not possible to reach a point of data saturation within the time frame. In total, 46 people participated in individual interviews and an additional 57 responded by emails. 16 young people (seven male and nine female) aged 17 – 28 participated in focus group discussions in Cambodia.

The mapping collected data primarily through desk-based review of available literature and online resources (including organisational websites, discussion groups and list-serves), and through phone calls and email exchanges with key informants. A list of people contacted and resources used has been annexed to this report.

UNFPA staff from 21 COs across Asia provided inputs by responding to a short written questionnaire. Country profile indicators were completed using online resources, and with information supplied by UNFPA CO staff.

Case Studies were conducted in Cambodia and India in order to demonstrate how national or sub-national networks currently operate, and to what extent they are linking with other youth networks at country and regional level. These were conducted through interviews with network representatives and youth organisations, site visits to relevant organisations and two focus group discussions were held in Cambodia with UN YAP members and youth researchers working with the Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA).

The Alliance's regional network of **Key Correspondents** (KCs) carried out in-depth interviews with key informants from relevant young people's networks and organisations in their own countries, in order to provide additional qualitative data. The KCs are a network of people, many of whom are from communities affected by and vulnerable to HIV, who have received training and support in information gathering, writing, editing and media skills. Four KCs from Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam developed stories about relevant youth activists and informants working with youth. There was a focus on most-at-risk youth and consideration of personal experiences



of networking and participation. The KCs were supported and managed by the Lead Consultant and the SEAP TS Hub.

Topic Guide

The Topic Guide drew on relevant sources including the Alliance's Network Capacity Analysis publication, and discussions from the UNFPA APRO Regional Workshop held in Bangkok in November 2009. The Topic Guide was prepared by the Lead Consultant in close consultation with the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and UNFPA APRO. The second consultant also gave inputs, and it was further adjusted after initial pre-testing. It was also subject to small adjustments on an ongoing basis according to the particular informant.

The topic guide annexed to this report was designed to explore informant views of:

- Background data on relevant network / organisation: origins, structure and membership, coverage, activities, resources, partners, achievements and challenges, future plans.
- Networking tools and strategies
- Context of network (urban / rural, legal, political, cultural, religious environment)
- Barriers and opportunities for networking

Some topics were more sensitive and therefore difficult: for example, discussion of political or religious context, and resources / funding.

Ethical Considerations

Information on the aims of the research was provided to all potential participants prior to being interviewed, and wherever possible this was given at least a week in advance. Where possible research participants were given the opportunity to review an output documenting their participation, and the part of the Mapping Report which they had directly contributed to. This review process was also designed to support data verification and to increase ownership of the report's findings.

UNFPA CO staff were involved in the mapping exercise in order to increase data reliability and validity through utilising staff perspectives of civil society networking.

Key Correspondents were given consent forms to use with key informants so that it was clearly understood how the information would be used.

Data analysis

The mapping was completed to a prescribed format, with some flexibility for adaptation according to the information available. Interviews were summarised not transcribed due to time limitations.

Thematic analysis was conducted using both a deductive approach whereby themes are identified *a priori* following desk based research, and by using an inductive approach that allows new themes to emerge through the text reduction and coding process.

Limitations

The most significant limitation was time. The researchers had limited time to conduct the desk-based research, and a large number of countries to cover. Some of the information presented in the mapping is therefore relatively superficial as there was limited time for analysis. There was limited time to analyse networking strategies and tools. The mapping is not exhaustive and this research acknowledges there are many more youth organisations across the 21 countries than have been identified.



This method of analysis and presentation has allowed for very limited distinctions of quality, efficacy, comprehensiveness or scale of individual components or the entire project. Quality of information may differ from country to country dependent on the contacts that were found and depth of information provided by UNFPA COs. Whilst efforts have been made to ensure completeness of information and consistency of responses, this was not always possible.

Possibilities for data validation were limited. UNFPA COs were used as the primary point of contact for accessing contact information of civil society groups, and checking information accuracy. However, many staff acknowledged that they were not fully familiar with the situation of youth networking in their country. There may be a bias toward groups and organisations that the CO already works with.

The mapping process covered a wide range of data in a short time frame, and reliability is a concern, both in terms of factual accuracy and understanding informants' subjectivity. Research participants may have limited time to review the report and to note any data abnormalities or outstanding gaps.

The researchers faced communication difficulties: challenges of contacting people, difficult phone lines, and written materials not available in English. Also this research was not able to successfully contact representatives from faith-based networks but more work is needed in this field.

Key Correspondents are still new to their work as citizen journalists and faced some challenges with designing their questions and stories, and writing in English.



Report Conclusions/Key Findings

This section will cover key findings of the research from the regional level mapping, country profiles, country case studies and the Key Correspondents. It describes the main issues that have been identified, and the variations in youth networking mechanisms. The mapping identifies some of the strengths and challenges of the different networks, and also looks at the linkages between organisations at different levels.

Networks and organisations can be separated into two main categories of “youth led” and “youth serving”. It is important to make this distinction: youth led NGOs are defined as ‘fully led, managed and coordinated by young people’¹⁴. Youth led movements are important because they allow young people to exercise their right to participation in improving their health and well being. Efforts that are “for young people” rather than “by young people” frequently miss opportunities to improve the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of programme and policies.

In this report, youth serving organisations are defined as non-youth led organisations which have a programmatic focus on youth. The mapping categorises the lead organisation, whilst acknowledging that some organisations are fostering initiatives which are genuinely youth led. Such initiatives can go on to become independent youth led organisations, or present interesting examples of youth-adult partnerships.

Within the categories of youth led and youth serving, we can see many variations of mechanisms that support youth participation. These provide many different entry points for possible initiatives. However, sometimes uncoordinated multiple mechanisms can be confusing, and this can mask the real picture that countries are still lacking in genuinely youth led networks.

The mapping identifies some of the strengths and challenges of the different networks, and also looks at the linkages between organisations at different levels.

REGIONAL LEVEL YOUTH NETWORKING

This section will cover key findings of the research from the regional level mapping, country profiles, country case studies and the Key Correspondents. It describes the main issues that have been identified, and the variations in youth networking mechanisms. It also explores challenges experienced in networking, and possible reasons for this.

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¹⁴ As defined in *Youth Leadership: Recommendations for Sustainability*. www.youthaidscoalition.org/docs/sustainableyouthleadership.pdf

¹⁵ As defined in *Youth Leadership: Recommendations for Sustainability*. www.youthaidscoalition.org/docs/sustainableyouthleadership.pdf



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REGIONAL LEVEL YOUTH NETWORKING

The mapping has found that there is no well-established and functioning regional level youth led network focusing on sexual and reproductive health including HIV. Informants tended to attribute this to a lack of capacity and/or commitment. There is also a dearth of organisations working to mobilise youth leadership on SRH issues at the regional level.

However, there are several regional and international networks and organisations with previous, current or planned activities of relevance that can be explored. The Regional level mapping examines a cross-section of these, one-by-one, as follows:

Youth led networks

- a) Regional
- b) International

Youth serving networks and organisations

- a) Regional
- b) International

Youth led Networks

Youth-led networks need substantive support, which is difficult for them to access. Four relevant regional and international networks have been identified, with preliminary analysis of individual strengths and challenges as viewed through a youth SRH lens. This is followed by a review of linkages between networks and presentation of their shared challenges.

a) Regional Network

- **Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN)**

Strengths: APIYN has an established structure, institutionalised through a Secretariat Office based within their host fiscal agency (NGO in the Philippines). They have wide coverage and broad membership with indigenous youth groups throughout the region - an underserved group of young people who are most at risk for SRH.

Gaps: APIYN does not currently have much work in SRH or HIV, although some of their country-level partners do. APIYN has activities on young women's capacity development; health and gender are key issues for the network. They have identified SRH/R and HIV as relevant for their future work and their upcoming new Strategic Plan development, dependent on funding availability.

- **Bali Youth Force (BYF)**

Strengths: BYF presents a successful example of a youth led initiative based on a clear understanding of role, achievable aims and sufficient donor funding. This demonstrates how youth across Asia can be effectively mobilised, harnessing interest



and enthusiasm around a specific, short time-bound project. Its high profile position and acknowledged importance for the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific is attractive to donors. It draws on the previous experiences of Bangkok and Barcelona Youth Forces, and has some strong documentation of its activities.

Gaps: Follow-up is limited after its purpose has been achieved.

- **Network of Asia Pacific Youth (NAPY)**

Strengths: NAPY was the first youth-led network of its kind in Asia, initiated ten years ago in 2000. Its purpose focuses on advocacy for young people's SRHR and is therefore of direct relevance to UNFPA. It could hold a niche position. NAPY has achieved a great deal in the past, including lobbying for inclusion of youth-specific concerns and issues in the field of SRHR during the ICPD+5 review process. It has been recognised by various regional and international NGOs and UN agencies. NAPY had also forged links with other international youth movements including Latin American Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (REDLAC), Young African Advocates for Rights (Lentswe La Rona) and Young Africans against AIDS (YAAN).

Gaps: NAPY's activities have been limited over the past two years and it has no current activities. The Coordinator has ideas for future projects and network strengthening but no donor funding to support its sustainability. Many of the members have aged out and the only remaining Coordinator will age out in 2010. It faces challenges with bringing on new members who are active and there is general uncertainty about its membership and structure. The Coordinator feels that it is still functioning but external perceptions do not support this.

b) International Networks

- **Global Coalition of Youth on HIV and AIDS (GYCA)**

Strengths: As an international network, GYCA has a high profile and strategic position. It has recognition as a network with accountability and commitment. It is a trusted and credible source of information on HIV and AIDS, SRHR and young people. GYCA has established procedures for the selection and election of its Focal Points. It is able to represent young people within Asia Pacific region in relevant decision-making processes. There is great potential to strengthen its Asia regional work, with dedicated and enthusiastic youth focal points.

Gaps: GYCA lacks a reward system for its Regional and National Focal Points, and therefore it is challenging for these volunteers to produce high quality work on a sustained basis. Organisational development is lacking, and there is very limited documentation regarding its Asia regional activities. GYCA is also aware of the challenges of representation, and is not able to connect with youth living in rural areas without internet access.

Linkages between networks:

Linkages between networks tend to be facilitated by the individual members who belong to several different groups. The Bali Youth Force drew representation from various regional and national youth networks. Youth Leaders tend to hold a number of different positions.

Networking happens on an informal basis, as most youth led networks have loose and non formal structures. Methods include e-groups and social networking sites, and side meetings at conferences and trainings. With limited available time, most youth members do not have time to sustain more than this.



Shared challenges:

- **Reaching out to vulnerable and excluded youth**, such as those living in rural areas, or those most at risk to HIV. Communication happens mainly through the internet which is therefore a requirement of, and a barrier for, participation from youth without internet access.
- **Documentation.** There is a scarcity of up to date documentation on the activities of youth-led networks. This hinders their networks' abilities to collaborate with one another and with other youth serving organisations and donors. BYF is an exception to this, due to its high profile activities and time-bound nature.
- **Technical and organisational management capacity** (including advocacy and communication skills, SRHR, monitoring and evaluation, organisational development and management, programme development).
- **Funding.** Most donor funding is project based; difficult to access longer term funding and core funding to support institutional growth and sustainability.

Youth serving networks and organisations

There are some key regional and international networks and organisations with youth SRH networking activities which present opportunities for collaboration and coordination. Seven relevant networks and organisations have been selected, and analysed with a focus on their SRH programming for youth. There are many other relevant non-youth led organisations; the seven listed below are chosen as a cross-section sample.

a) *Regional Networks and Organisations*

- **Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA)**

Strengths: Network membership bringing together 22 members from donor and emerging donor countries (including the Youth Coalition); organisational Task Force Youth including youth and adult experts from partner organisations working together to advance the ICPD agenda; innovative conference-based activities – “Youth Commitment Desks” – in collaboration with the International Youth Steering Committee of APSCSRH to increase support for young people’s needs and rights; follow up to conference activities including development of toolkits to support youth volunteers, ongoing technical support and monitoring; appropriate and inspiring leadership in the APA Executive Director who is an experienced youth advocate.

Gaps and Potential Future Plans: APA does not have the current capacity to support youth networking beyond its current commitments although may be interested in this in the medium to long term future. APA is responsive to its members and their interests; future work with youth could increase if that were requested by members.

- **Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)**

Strengths: History of supporting youth leadership development in Asia. Its support to the development of NAPY was critical. Different support strategies included: fiscal sponsorship for NAPY (an unregistered network) - receiving and disbursing monies, completing audit and finance reports; six month internship placement for a former coordinator with a focus on fundraising and organisational development for NAPY; youth representation on ARROW Programme Advisory Committee (PAC).

Gaps: ARROW is keen to move beyond tokenistic support to youth leadership



development but finds this challenging due to the informal ways in which young people in the region tend to organise. ARROW, IWHC and AWID previously discussed establishing a joint regional youth internship programme, but this lost momentum due to staff turnover. ARROW is still keen to pursue this, if an appropriate and effective mechanism is developed; this will be discussed later in 2010. ARROW has limited collaboration with other regional networks, has links with IPPF and APA on an adhoc basis.

Future Plans: To build capacity of civil society to advocate on SRHR for young people at national and regional levels in South East Asia, through programme strategy: the Women's Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership (WHRAP). This means building the capacities of CBOs that work with marginalised women and girls to generate grassroots evidence, and then use this evidence to advocate and improve local access to comprehensive SRHR.

ARROW is interested in supporting partnerships to build a regional platform for advocacy. WHRAP South East Asia will create new multilateral engagement platforms between and amongst governments and NGOs, encouraging further investments in monitoring progress towards MDG and ICPD targets and commitments.

- **7 Sisters (7S)**

Strengths: 7S has been selected as an example of a regional HIV/AIDS network for Key Affected Populations (KAPs) working with youth¹⁶. 7S brings together five regional HIV/AIDS Networks¹⁷ and therefore is well placed to reach out to youth most at risk to HIV.

Gaps: The 7S Coalition Working Agreement notes youth as one example of a priority group which could form a new organisational member; but this would need further internal discussion. To date, an existing or emerging youth network has not contacted the Coalition seeking membership. Previously regional KAP networks have demonstrated insufficient focus on youth as a constituency. Youth Leaders have described some difficulties in establishing partnerships with networks for KAPs – attributed to limited understandings regarding the importance of youth participation, and impressions that networks have limited resources and are already overstretched. Existing KAP networks need support in building meaningful youth-adult partnerships. It is also challenging to reach out to new, different young KAPs in a systematic way.

Future Plans: A Youth Key Affected Populations (KAPs) leadership development project (“Youth LEAD”) is a new initiative currently under development with the youth representatives from 7 Sisters and UNFPA APRO. This will be a youth led project. The ultimate aim of Youth LEAD will be to establish an Asia Pacific Regional Youth Network for KAPs.

b) International Organisations

- **International HIV/AIDS Alliance**

Strengths:The Alliance's current Strategic Framework advocates for greater integration

¹⁶ 7S strives to represent Asia Pacific's most marginalised, vulnerable, affected communities and constituencies or what the GFATM is calling Key Affected Populations (KAPs) at national, regional and global levels. These include: People living with HIV (PLHIV), People who Use Drugs (PUD), Sex Workers (SW), Transgender (TG), Men who have sex with Men (MSM) and Mobile Populations (MP)

¹⁷ Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+), Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW), Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM-Asia), Asian Network of People who Use Drugs (ANPUD), Asia Pacific Transgender network (APTAN).



of HIV services and SRH services as a means to bring better and more comprehensive services to a much larger number of people, in particular to poor women. The Alliance is initiating a South Asia regional project on community action for SRHR policies in partnership with linking organisations in India and Bangladesh. A key result of this project will be increased capacity, knowledge and networking of youth groups about SRHR and the linkages with HIV and AIDS, especially amongst young people from vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Gaps: This new project has no formal links with other international organisations, although it will support young people to share lessons learnt at conferences etc.

Future Plans: This new project will support state level partners to build capacities of CSOs to form youth groups. These youth groups will be trained and supported to conduct community level advocacy. Select youth leaders will act as ‘social change agents’, engaging in district level activities, and youth across districts will be connected with each other and other young people through innovative mechanisms such as web based portals. Using innovative mechanisms for networking such as Youth Partnership Platforms (YPP), based on an original concept by Health & Development Networks¹⁸, – an advocacy coalition bringing together CSOs and young people for joint action. YPPs are a form of youth-adult partnership, based on a set of tools and processes to support consultations, develop messages, and conduct joint advocacy, mostly ICT based.

- **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)**

Strengths: Adolescents are one of IPPF’s five priority areas (“the 5 As”) and it continues to increase support for youth participation and networking. Support strategies for youth participation include: Target of 20% youth participation in Governance Boards for Member Associations (MAs); an Annual Youth Forum organised by the East & South East Asia and Oceania Region (ESEAOR) Office, with youth representatives attending from every MA in the region; advocacy skills training for partners’ youth representatives and small national youth SRHR advocacy projects supported as follow-up. Supporting formation of youth led “One Voice” network in the South Asia Region – an 8-country network to empower youth volunteers in South Asia to be a strong regional constituency for advocacy and governance. One Voice links with IPPF’s two strong youth networks in Europe and Africa.

Gaps / Future Plans: Some MAs have attained the 20% youth participation on governance boards target, although it is not compulsory and therefore not considered by all MAs. Continued capacity building efforts are needed to ensure meaningful youth-adult partnerships in MAs. MAs identify youth representatives from their programmes, but they struggle to engage vulnerable and excluded adolescents and youth.

One Voice will need more support to become fully independent from IPPF. Current network activities are limited and mainly focus around online networking. In 2010 there are plans to re-launch the network, finalising documentation (such as TOR and Constitution) by June and holding a regional network meeting in November. In ESEAOR there is limited youth networking although an e-group will help youth to share experiences of new advocacy projects this year. IPPF does not link with other regional networks but works closely with YouthAct and Youth Coalition on sexual and reproductive rights at the global level.

¹⁸ National Partnership Platforms (NPP): <http://www.hdnet.org/v2/Links/cat.asp?iCat=8&iChannel=5&nChannel=Links>



- **International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)**

Strengths: Supporting the development of a core group of youth leaders in Asia who have taken the forefront in advocating for youth issues and rights in their own countries and at regional and international levels. Support mechanisms include: Various training programmes; direct foundational support to youth led and youth-established organisations and coalitions; a series of regional and international “advocacy in practice” training sessions, mentorship, technical assistance and advocacy support to attend regional-level and international conferences.¹⁹

Gaps: Limited collaboration with other regional organisations.

- **World AIDS Campaign (WAC) and HIVOS partnership**

Strengths: Two international organisations with similar interests in reaching out to marginalised youth are working together to lead a ‘South East Asia and Pacific MSM and Transgender Youth Consultation’. In launching a new regional initiative it recognises the importance of bringing multiple stakeholders on board and has support from: APN+, APCOM, ITPC, Fridae, Global MSM Forum and 7 Sisters coalition.

Gaps: Finding new mechanisms for reaching out to new MSMY through the existing networks. Language is a barrier to participation from the most marginalised as the consultation will be in English. A recommendation is to translate as much as possible but this costs time and money and is particularly challenging for distance communications.

Future Plans: This consultation aims to provide a safe environment with young (aged between 16 and 25) MSM including young transgender to articulate their concerns and unmet needs in relation to their sexual health, STI and HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Plans to seek further funds and develop a mechanism for MSM youth participation in existing regional networks, ensuring momentum and sustainability are maintained.

Conclusions

As outlined above, youth serving networks and organisations employ a variety of methods to support youth led initiatives. These include: conference support, use of youth advisory boards, internships, fiscal sponsorship and one-off training activities. Some organisations acknowledge the lack of strategy to guide their support and find it difficult to move beyond one-off, tokenistic support efforts.

However, common features of longer term support strategies include:

- Youth serving organisations and networks supporting national level advocacy activities on a small scale, following on from individual trainings or conferences.
- Youth serving organisations and networks are increasingly establishing youth led networks.

Youth-adult partnerships have been cited as particularly challenging in this regional, where traditionally young people defer to elders and intergenerational relationships are not equal.

¹⁹ IWHC Regional Youth Partnerships: http://www.iwhc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3374&Itemid=533



There is very limited networking between regional youth serving organisations, who tend to link up for specific, one-off activities. Successful coordination has been noted particularly around regional and international conferences.

Regional platforms for youth most at risk to HIV will increase in 2010, with activities already underway by 7 Sisters and the World AIDS Campaign. There is a need to ensure linkages between initiatives for youth most at risk to HIV and other initiatives for youth and SRH.

- **Separation of sub-regions**

The mapping has found that most networks and organisations separate the South Asia and South-East Asia sub-regions.²⁰ Whilst subjective, informants' agreed on some of the sub-regional differences. Experiences of the different working cultures were recounted:

"I understood this very clearly during the last ICAAP where we all worked together, even during the APCRSH. We are walking to same goal but in different speeds." - Milinda Rajapaksha. "One Voice" Youth Network Coordinator, South Asia.

Language is stated as a barrier, with more South Asians sharing language and perceived stronger English-speaking abilities. The South-East Asian voice is characterised as softer, with potential to be lost. Youth mobilisation and organising was generally perceived to be stronger in South Asia. This may indicate that there are many lessons to be learnt from South Asian experiences. The sub-regions need different support strategies for youth networking; South-East Asia was identified as a priority sub-region due to the limited youth networking that currently exists.

- **Representativeness of youth in networks**

In general, underserved subgroups of young people (for both SRH and HIV) are not well represented. This is also true for both youth serving and youth led networks. Stigma and discrimination impact significantly on the participation of vulnerable and excluded youth. Many networks and organisations lack the time, money and technical know-how to reach out and engage these groups. Young people most at risk to HIV face additional barriers to participation, including criminalisation (for example criminalisation of same-sex relations). Engaging with these subgroups needs special attention.

COUNTRY LEVEL YOUTH NETWORKING, CASE STUDIES AND KEY CORRESPONDENTS:

The mapping looked at 21 countries, exploring context, youth policy development and the state of youth networking including relevant features of UNFPA work. It has found that the state of national and sub-national networking varies widely across the region and accordingly requires different support strategies. The case studies looked in depth at two country situations: Cambodia and India and the key correspondents wrote about the situation from a community perspective. There were common themes found in each of the research methods, confirming strategic directions, strengths and gaps across the region.

Overall, it seems that youth networking for SRH is more developed in South Asia than in South East Asia. There are limited youth-led initiatives and more youth-serving organisations. Country profiles explore mechanisms for youth networking led by Government, the UN and civil society.

²⁰ There are differences between the specific countries covered within each sub-region, and how the sub-regions are defined, but generally we can apply the country coverage followed by UNFPA APRO.



Each country profile includes between one to ten organisations. Where the mapping did not identify any youth SRH networks, the researchers identified other potential mechanisms of relevance such as Student Associations or Guides and Scouts movements.

Youth led SRH movements were identified in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Levels of independence, legitimacy, experience varied – as does the quantity and quality of networks. The presence of a youth led network is accompanied by higher numbers of youth serving networks and organisations. Many youth serving organisations have supported the mobilisation of youth led movements. Countries with youth led networks have tend to have stronger civil societies overall, and around half have well established national youth policies.

There were found to be very limited youth led networks and particular youth networking gaps in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, DPR Korea, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Timor Leste and Vietnam. These countries can be characterised as having more nascent civil societies, many with non-democratic and restrictive political structures, and / or in post-conflict situations.

National Youth Policies

The research does not demonstrate a definitive link between presence of youth networks and organisations and the existence / status of national youth policy. Further analysis of the policy specifics would be required to explore this. Informants in different countries have stated clearly that the absence of a national youth policy has hindered efforts of youth networks. As a starting point, uncertain definitions of “youth” were cited as problematic – dependent on country context and different organisations. Tensions between UN definitions and national policies were also mentioned.

Definition and understandings of networking

Particularly evident in the case studies and key correspondents articles was the different (and at times contradictory) understanding of what a network is, and therefore what value having a network can bring. It was suggested that strong leadership from a government, UN or NGO led organisation may help to clarify this.

MECHANISMS:

Programmes supported by youth relevant ministries

In countries where there are significant youth networking gaps, there tends to be less developed civil society as well, and working with government supported youth movements is an important opportunity. The mapping found several examples of large scale government supported programmes where youth SRH could be integrated.

Youth ministries often have large coverage of youth and a national presence. They might support youth networks and clubs for developmental purposes, not always exclusively linked to health. For example, the Vietnam Youth Union has large memberships and multi-sectoral approaches. In Bangladesh, the UNFPA CO is already working with the Department of Youth Development’s Youth Clubs to integrate SRH and HIV activities.

In particular, the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies have mobilised significant numbers of youth as volunteers for broader humanitarian and development issues. They often reach out to large cohorts of students.



Government working groups

Many countries face significant operational barriers to SRH policies and programmes for youth. Even when policies are in place, it can be difficult for the government to match policy declarations with programmes that meet the needs of youth. Working groups and task forces that bring together relevant political leaders, NGO activists, academics, religious leaders, UN bodies, young people themselves and many others, have a lot of potential to accelerate the coordination and provision of good quality services. However, these groups involve large numbers of stakeholders with complex agendas. They require strong political leadership and commitment, and can therefore be hard to operationalise.

For example, in Indonesia, WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA have jointly supported the Ministry of Health to establish a national task force for adolescent health. In Timor Leste, there is a MoH Adolescent Reproductive Health Working Group and a Ministry of Education School Health Working Group. Vietnam has a Reproductive Health Affinity Group but this was reported to have met just once in 2009.

UN working groups

The UN can also play a strong role at country level in facilitating information exchanges. We can see examples of this in Mongolia, where UNFPA convenes 29 member organisations working on human development, reproductive health and rights into a network. In Myanmar, UNICEF and UNFPA jointly coordinate a network for youth organisations.

Youth networks supported by international NGOs

Strong support at the start is an important factor in fostering independent and sustainable youth networks. In Bangladesh, Action AID established a youth project in 1995 and it began operating as an independent network in 1997. Among other countries, Action AID has recently begun support to youth networking in Myanmar as well.

Youth participation in youth-friendly SRH services

Youth-friendly SRH services present excellent potential for youth participation which can lead to network formation. Family planning associations tend to make use of volunteer Peer Educators (PEs); many PEs are committed, enthusiastic individuals with existing knowledge about SRH. These groups who would benefit from increased opportunities for information exchange. Service provision sites often utilise youth-adult partnership strategies.

For example, UNFPA Mongolia has supported the establishment of Teen Boards at Health Centres. These groups already have some opportunities for coming together and exchanging ideas, but this has been constrained by limited funding. IPPF MAs in South Asia are increasingly supporting youth network formation (Afghanistan, Iran and Maldives) from their existing youth representatives. This can be partly attributed to the leadership role of the IPPF-supported One Voice Network.

Across all countries there is a recognition of the social and cultural difficulty in working in SRH with youth because of the sensitivity around this taboo topic. This translates into reduced youth participation and voice in design and delivery of SRH services and SRH health promotion.

Youth participation supported by the UN

Over the past five years, different Asian countries have established Youth Advisory Panels (YAPs) to establish an open mechanism for dialogue between youth groups and the UN. Some YAPs are UNFPA-specific, some are UN-wide. YAPs still face some uncertainties regarding their roles and



responsibilities; there are examples from Cambodia and Indonesia where members would like to implement more of their own activities. However, YAP Philippines describes a strong understanding of its advisory role. YAPs need dedicated resource support; members report limited time, finances and technical skills as barriers for their meaningful participation.

Y-PEER is an emerging network and, as such, there are limited findings at this stage. It will be important to ensure linkages with other youth movements in order to support the credibility of these new networks.

The case study analysis done in Cambodia revealed that there is a need for on-going commitment and investment to be successful. YAP workplans need to be developed, monitored and kept up to date. There are insufficient common accessible communication platforms between YAP members, and links to other advocacy platforms with external stakeholders for credibility and legitimacy.

Faith-based youth networks

The research has not focused on this area, and there is a need for greater analysis of relevant faith based groups. Religion plays a central role in the lives of many young people. The example from Myanmar identifies the need to work with youth from different faiths, promoting faith based approaches to programme delivery. One of the YAP members in Indonesia also belongs to the country's second largest Islamic organisation.

NGO coordination mechanisms

Several well established youth networks function as umbrella organisations – bringing together a broad section of youth led and youth serving organisations. Strong examples are noted with MAMTA in India, AYON in Nepal and YAN in Pakistan. In Indonesia, the Independent Youth Alliance was formed in 2008, building a membership of 40 youth focal points from organisations across the country. In Philippines, an existing Reproductive Health Advocacy Network formed its own youth arm to champion young people's issues. Youth led networks can gain legitimacy through broad representation of youth led and youth serving organisations. Some of the lessons learned from these NGO coordinated mechanisms include the need for strong focused leadership from the coordinating body, a commitment to capacity building in the member organisations backed by resource commitment and the continued focus on mainstreaming SRH into every activity with youth across all members.

Also noted was the need for holistic advocacy not only for resource mobilisation for the network, but in addressing gatekeepers at all levels of government to encourage policy and societal change.

HIV/AIDS networks

While there was an indicated interest to integrate SRH services into HIV/AIDS programmes - particularly with at risk populations, there seemed little consideration of the specific needs of youth. This was certainly the case in Cambodia and Vietnam. There is significant potential in fostering youth participation within these networks, and great donor interest in the same.

Youth led arts initiatives

Innovative arts projects have been sponsored by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation in several countries. These can encourage real community action and behaviour change in small scale settings. It can be harder to scale up effectively. The Dance 4 Life campaign in Vietnam has been successful in mobilising large numbers of youth and awareness raising, but it can be more difficult to sustain meaningful youth participation for action on change without more targeted interventions.



Conclusions

The wide variation of mechanisms identified for youth participation and networking shows that many different support strategies are used according to individual country contexts. While the mapping has found over 75 relevant networks and organisations in 21 different countries, and acknowledges that many more exist, there is still a real absence of initiatives that are fully youth led. Furthermore linkages between countries, and from national to regional level, are weak.

Individual youth leaders play an important role in networking between organisations at sub-national, national and regional levels. Individuals tend to belong to multiple movements and commit a lot of time and effort to sharing lessons learnt. However, this also contributes to the behaviour of youth serving organisations and donors, who tend to invite the same individuals to meetings. Therefore, few opportunities for youth participation that are available, are not available to many. This can lead to over simplifications as the diversity of young people is misrepresented. Youth leaders and youth serving organisations have a role to play in reaching out to new, diverse groups of young people.

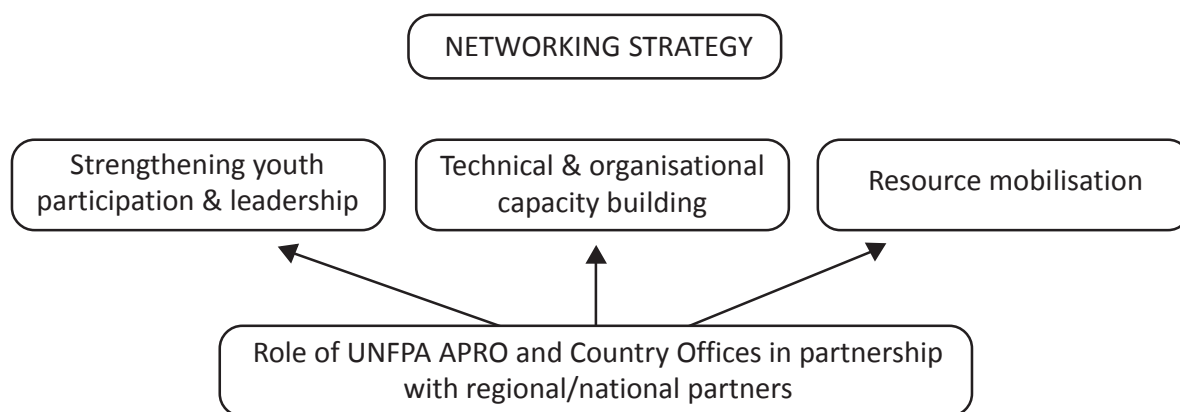
Finances were cited repeatedly by networks and organisations as a challenge for development and sustainability. Some networks are successful in mobilising funds through membership fees, others are reliant on project-based donor funds. Securing core funding and longer term funding is a huge challenge.



Recommendations for Developing a Youth Networking Strategy for UNFPA APRO

When developing a strategy for supporting youth networking in Asia, it is important to remember that one size does not fit all. We need to recognise the great diversity of youth across Asia, and the different needs and country contexts. It is critical to increase understandings of the complexities of building capacity and leadership amongst and for youth in Asia. There is a general absence of well-established youth networks relating to SRH and HIV, and mechanisms for fostering youth leadership and engaging with most at risk youth are limited. Few young people have access to the leadership opportunities that do exist and it remains challenging to move beyond tokenism in youth representation, particularly for most at risk youth. Youth-adult partnerships can be particularly challenging in this region, where traditionally young people defer to elders and intergenerational relationships are not equal. Evidence has shown that when young people are meaningfully included in the design, implementation and evaluation of youth-related programmes, policies and services, these initiatives can be more effective and ultimately more sustainable²¹.

In developing a new strategy to strengthen youth-led movements and networks in the APRO region, the following recommendations have been developed, drawing on the literature review, discussions with key informants, and recommendations from UNFPA CO staff. The recommendations are classified under the sections outlined in the table below:



STRENGTHENING YOUTH PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP

Support institutionalisation of youth-led movements with supportive adult organisations at regional level. The research has found that youth networks are not sustainable without a degree of institutionalisation. Finding the correct youth-adult partnership is crucial for this. There are different degrees of organisational development; for example, independent registration may not be appropriate for a regional youth network because of the challenges associated with this (expense, time, expertise required, decision making on location). It may be more appropriate to look into supportive, already established organisations or networks that can nurture a youth network within it for partnerships. To an extent, this was tried by ARROW who housed a NAPY

²¹ Family Health International Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning, and Implementation, 2005.



member as an intern for six months. UNFPA APRO can play a role in advocating for the institutionalisation of youth-adult partnerships and find ways to capacity build organisations on how to do this..

Supporting youth participation in youth-serving organisations. There are other youth groups (panels, advisory committees etc) affiliated to specific organisations such as IPPF and APA. These groups are not independent and are guided strongly by the adult organisation. IPPF-supported youth groups were known to most informants, but were not acknowledged to have diverse representation of youth.

Youth participation through advisory panels can be perceived as tokenistic, often happening only because it “looks good” or to meet donor requirements²². APRO could advocate with youth serving organisations to commit resources for supporting meaningful youth participation. Commitments could include dedicated proportions of funding for youth programming. APRO could also support the development of indicators to monitor youth participation and advocate with youth organisations to use this and be accountable. IPPF has set targets for youth representation on MA Governance Boards, but these are not compulsory and haven’t been achieved yet.

Focused attention on participation of vulnerable and excluded youth. These subgroups of young people face significant barriers to their meaningful participation. There is a need for stigma reduction and sensitisation for working with these groups aimed at government partners, key youth serving organisations and youth led networks. Youth most at risk to HIV can be marginalised by their own peers, and this must be addressed as part of network development. Sharing lessons learnt and successes from initiatives is vital to increasing understanding.

For example, in East and South East Asia, IPPF youth representatives are drawn principally from students with no reach out to vulnerable and excluded youth. Limited diversity in network membership affects credibility. UNFPA APRO and the Alliance could explore further partnership with IPPF at a regional level, in order to expand youth networking. IPPF has strong existing coverage and national presence. The Alliance could provide technical expertise with regard to reaching youth most at risk to HIV.

High turnover of youth and ageing-out compound difficulty in strengthening youth leadership and institutionalising groups. Youth become involved mostly as volunteers, and drop out of the network as they move onto employment, marriage, further studies or even age out. Networks need to be supported to develop strategies which keep young people engaged. The *Expressions India* example can be highlighted as a strategy where youth graduate from schools but can remain as peer educators within their new colleges.

Youth networks could also be supported to try out Alumni schemes. The aged out active youth become parents and respected members of their communities and represent a fertile ground for advocacy and solidarity.

Few young people have access to leadership opportunities. The same effective and highly visible individuals are being granted access to opportunities again and again, and need to support the development of new, younger individuals and most-at-risk youth. It may be useful to consider a regional mentoring programme that matches nascent leaders with those who are experienced and highly regarded, but soon to age out.

²² *Youth Leadership: Recommendations for Sustainability*. www.youthaidscoalition.org/docs/sustainableyouthleadership.pdf



It would be useful also to explore the possibility of institutionalising informal networks that are created for regional events and conferences. Youth Taskforces have been convened most recently for the Beijing and Bali conferences. These are good starting points for building longer-term and more sustainable networks. The Bali Taskforce was successful because it had buy-in from a diverse membership of youth leaders, and was developed to focus on a very specific project. It had a clear plan which was time limited and achievable, and there were clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors.

Strengthening leadership and coordination of communication, research and information exchange on youth SRH networks.

Organisations and individuals approached during the mapping do not know what else is out there, and tend to partner with the same organisations. Youth movements feel isolated from one another. This challenges alliances and linkages. The findings of this mapping could be shared widely to enhance existing knowledge across the region.

APRO could facilitate a regional website for youth networking and information exchange. The Alliance can share its experiences from developing its resources bank for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, www.ovcsupport.net/. UNFPA CO staff can contribute much to the development of such a resource.

This can create a regional platform for youth to share knowledge with one another, and enhance the linkages between national and regional movements and ensure that each feeds into another.

APRO could produce a regular e-bulletin for COs to keep staff updated regarding relevant regional initiatives. This could be done on an informal basis or as a dedicated newsletter.

There would be great benefit in APRO providing support to COs who have not already done so, to conduct more in-depth mapping, using the work conducted for this assignment as a starting point.

There is a lack of research on impact and importance / benefits of youth-led organisations. UNFPA APRO could initiate and document the impact of regional youth SRH initiatives or support a youth-led process with some attainable targets. The tracking and reporting of the performance of the RHIYA program against baseline over the period of the project is a very useful example of the learning that can be garnered and shared for long term sustainability. If youth participation is to be the core direction of UNFPA then the benefits will need to be documented.

TECHNICAL & ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Need to recognise different contexts. Consider recognising a division in youth movements within the sub-regions of South Asia and South-East Asia, in response to feedback regarding the significant language and cultural barriers. Some key informants have suggested targeting resources to the South-East Asia region, as youth networking seems to be less developed in this region and there are much greater needs with regard to coordination, collaboration and sharing understandings around youth and SRH. It should be noted that the regional analysis focuses more on South-East Asia, so this may be a bias of the research.

However, there needs to be dedicated efforts to bridging and sharing across the sub-regions. There is a need to make additional efforts to include the Pacific Islands who face great challenges in getting their voices heard.



Focused technical and organisational development capacity building for regional youth networks. The research cannot assertively identify a single regional youth SRH network; there seemed to be near consensus among key informants that a functioning and relevant network does not exist. Therefore, selecting any one specific existing network for increased, longer term support is difficult at this stage. APRO could instead target support to a few different initiatives over a time period of one year and monitor and document the success and impact of this work. A slower approach to youth network analysis may generate more consensus among the existing different initiatives.

Many of the youth initiatives that have been attempted in Asia self-identify and are perceived as “loose and informal”, and they have not been sustainable. Further time would need to be spent with the networks and organisations highlighted to analyse their priority capacity building needs. This would be best achieved in workshops using the Alliance Network Capacity Analysis toolkit.

There is much more to be learnt from the experiences of NAPY. With the final Coordinator about to age out, a lack of donor funding for sustainability, and other members too busy to continue, it seems likely that NAPY will naturally draw to a close soon. It has not been able to bring in new members. Additional efforts could be made to document its experiences and lessons learnt so that they might be used for other groups in future. Former youth leaders from this network could be tapped as individual technical support leaders for other regional youth initiatives.

There are mixed feelings with regard to establishing new youth movements. Some individuals identified a gap that cannot be filled by an existing organisation. However, it seems that there are sufficient numbers of different movements where UNFPA could focus on sustaining and improving quality.

There seems to be consensus that networking activities for youth most-at-risk to HIV are best housed within existing networks for Key Affected Populations. New partnerships with organisations already working with most-at-risk groups across the region can expand programming to youth in a more sustained and structured way. UNFPA APRO has plans to support this with its new project with 7 Sisters. With limited resources, it is imperative that regional youth initiatives for HIV prevention are targeted to those most-at-risk. Key Affected Populations networks will need technical support and capacity building on successful youth-adult partnerships.

Consider capacity building for government partners to support youth participation. Recognise countries where youth-led movements are not possible and support governments to work with youth through advocacy and positive engagement.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Further mapping work could be undertaken to identify donors who will fund youth work. The mapping process identified few donors interested in genuinely youth-led HIV initiatives, some include the MTV Staying Alive Foundation and the “HIV Young Leaders Fund” - a new community-driven funding mechanism for youth-led HIV Initiatives, hosted by the HIV Collaborative Fund.

Young leaders are interested in **engaging with the Global Fund**. Due to a lack of understanding of how the Global Fund operates, there is a limited participation from civil society organisations led by young people or working for youth. This has already been acknowledged by the Youth Coalition who will conduct training programmes for youth on “Understanding the Global Fund” in 2010.



There is also interest in learning about youth representation on Country Coordinating Mechanisms. Supporting direct representation of youth on CCMs may not be possible, but increased indirect representation may be worth consideration. The new Alliance South Asia youth SRHR project is increasing youth organisations' capacity to advocate with CCMs; the Alliance currently receives significant grants from the Global Fund in Asia and is well placed to build the capacity and knowledge of youth organisations in this area.

Requirement of increased financial resources for youth networks. UNFPA APRO could consider making small, seed grants to enable development of youth-led initiatives, particularly in countries where this is under-developed. This would support growth of national youth-led movements to inform country-level programming and regional advocacy work.

Strategic grants can also be given to help sustain networks. There is a need for longer-term funding for youth-led initiatives to cover operational costs and support human resources.

UNFPA APRO could also advocate for funding applications to be made more youth-friendly.

Proposal writing / fundraising skills for youth. During the research many informants described the difficulties of accessing funding for youth networks and organisations, particularly with regard to covering core and operational costs. Skills building could be undertaken through training workshops, distance e courses and could be extended to toolkit development.

ROLE OF UNFPA COs AND APRO

Support COs to strengthen a multi-sectorial approach and to work with new organisations. This mapping has examined some organisations which have strong youth participation, but perhaps not current activities on SRH. There is some strong potential to increase coverage of youth SRH interventions through mainstreaming SRH with different partners. An example of this comes from Iran where reproductive health messages are being spread using Literacy Movement educators. Stronger role of UNFPA COs is required in facilitating, coordinating and assessing the networks as well as integrating SRH issues in other networks of youth (that may not be focussing on SRH but have significant reach to youth membership).

APRO could consider supporting side meetings and exchanges at regional and international conferences for UNFPA CO delegates to share updates. And to maintain dedicated staff support for youth SRH initiatives within UNFPA APRO.

Train COs in youth networking strategies. A training workshop for select key staff and country programmes that are keen to expand their portfolios in youth networking could advance this work and share examples of good practice. Lessons learnt from the regional level should be shared so that COs can then adapt as required for their country contexts. The Alliance has a range of networking tools and best practises which may be considered.

Develop youth internship scheme within UNFPA APRO. Engage young people in the day to day work of UNFPA. This would set an example for COs and enable APRO firsthand to experience and document opportunities and barriers around internal youth participation in APRO. This would also enable APRO to engage more meaningfully with youth-led initiatives and advance work in this area. An intern could take on some responsibility for new areas of work suggested within these recommendations.



Develop the potential and linkages between UN YAPs, Y-PEER, and other movements such as GYCA. This will contribute to YAP representation and diversity and integrate the different initiatives.

Established in Asia in 2009, Y-PEER is very new. Successful linkages to existing youth networks and organisations will be vital to establishing Y-PEER's credibility as a youth movement. There is a need for ongoing technical support in Y-PEER's early stages. Members already report challenges around building identity, resource mobilisation and skills building that is needed.

YAPs across Asia need more opportunities to come together. Many reported their first interaction with YAPs in other countries at the 5th APCRHSR in October 2009, Beijing. YAP members enjoy using information and communication technologies such as email groups, facebook and other social networking sites.

APRO should support exchange visits and study tours for YAP / YPEER members, and other members of national youth networks to exchange experiences and lessons learnt and to generate new knowledge and ideas. Some respondents suggested that APRO could establish a regional level YAP as a coordination mechanism.



Case Studies: Cambodia and India

Case study: Exploring the spaces for youth networking in Cambodia

Introduction

The Kingdom of Cambodia is an overwhelming youthful nation, yet young people today face an array of hurdles. Youth have been prioritised within Cambodia's development as shown by increasing focus in research, policy and programming. However, there is no national network for youth recognised in Cambodia. Therefore, this case study explores variation of networking mechanisms and existing organisations with relevant work on SRH / HIV. This is designed to aid analysis of potential spaces for youth networking. The case study also considers linkages between networks within Cambodia and elsewhere in the Asia region.

Definitions and understandings of networking varied among informants. These different variations can be useful to identify multiple opportunities for youth participation: youth led initiatives, youth serving organisations, networks for groups most at risk to HIV, government led youth projects and UN mechanisms for youth involvement and development.

There are increasing numbers of youth led associations²³ in Cambodia, some of which implement projects related to sexual and reproductive health and HIV. Some non-youth led NGOs have established their own "youth networks", usually groups of volunteers involved with project implementation and peer education. This case study gives an overview of some select youth serving networks and organisations. It also explores how HIV/AIDS networks for most at risk populations are including youth. Finally, it presents some of the key achievements and challenges for the United Nations Youth Advisory Panel (UN YAP), and makes recommendations.

Features of UNFPA support to youth networking

UNFPA CO provides direct programme support (financial and technical assistance) to key organisations working on youth sexual and reproductive health, such as the Khmer Youth Association (KYA), described further below. UNFPA was involved with the establishment of the UN Country Team YAP – supporting recruitment of panel members and engaging with dialogue on reproductive health between UN CT, YAP and UNFPA. The UN YAP is an exciting model of youth networking and youth leadership development.

²³ A mapping exercise conducted by *Youth For Peace* reports between 15 – 20 youth led organisations and associations, working in different thematic areas.



Context

% of total population between 10 – 24 years ²⁴	34.8%	
Adolescent fertility rate ²⁵	52 per 1000	
Percent of ever-married 15-24 year old females who ever used a modern method of contraception ²⁶	37.3%	
HIV prevalence among young people (aged 15–24) ²⁷	Male: 0.8%	Female: 0.3%
Secondary school enrolment ratio 2000–2004, gross	Male: 31%	Female: 20%
<p>Status of National Youth Policy A draft policy has been technically endorsed by the National Technical Working Group, and will be submitted for review by senior leaders of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and debate at the Council of Ministers for finalisation in 2010. The UN CT has provided significant technical and financial assistance throughout this policy development process.</p>		

The situation and context of Cambodian youth is now well-documented through the 2009 Cambodian Situational Analysis. Other upcoming relevant research include a survey of risk behaviours to HIV infection among adolescents most at risk, conducted by the SEAP TS Hub / KHANA, who have been contracted by UNICEF with support from other UN agencies including UNFPA and WHO.²⁸

YOUTH SERVING NETWORKS AND ORGANISATIONS

Four networks and organisations have been selected to examine a cross section of different youth networks.

1. ChildSafe Network:

Contact: Vann Khemreth, tito@friends-international.org, +855 92 449223.

Formed in 2005, ChildSafe network is a Friends-International initiative for the protection of children with strategic members of society. It is designed to:

- Participate in the **global reduction** in the number of children having to live and work on the streets
- Improve the **protection of children** from all forms of abuse
- Increase **society's involvement** in the protection of children

In Cambodia, the network currently has over 1,000 members, trained and certified by Friends staff. Its achievements include: strong membership and coverage, and links with the Ministry of Tourism and other networking movements such as ECPAT and ChildFund. Challenges

²⁴ Cambodia Census 2008.

²⁵ WHO, World Health Statistics 2009 (available at <http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat/2009/en/index.html>, and <http://www.globalhealthfacts.org/country.jsp?c=18&i=90&cat=7&sn=1>)

²⁶ Cambodia Adolescent Data Guide 2005.

²⁷ UNICEF State of the World's Children 2009. 2007 data.

²⁸ This project is also supported by the Interdepartmental Committee on HIV / AIDS of MoEYS (ICHA), which convenes the Steering Committee overseeing the research.



include: intensive monitoring and staff time required to sustain the network's impact, and difficulty growing the network whilst dealing with high turnover of existing members.

2. Khmer Youth Association (KYA)

Contact: Mr. Seng Rithy, Secretary-General, rithy_kya@yahoo.com

Formed in 1992 to build “potential youth, to work with youths and for youths, for a social positive change” KYA receives UNFPA support and is described by UNFPA staff as ‘a dynamic youth association with work on SRH issues’. KYA’s Adolescent RH project provides RH information and HIV prevention activities, conducts advocacy and builds capacity for young people between 12 – 24 years old.

KYA’s different projects across Cambodia have over 1,000 volunteer members. Network members, selected through application process, are usually 15 – 22 years old, although they can be older. It is a significant achievement to reach out and engage so many young people, but KYA faces challenges with sustaining young people’s active involvement beyond one-off activities. Furthermore, it is challenging to bring together so many volunteers, from different projects in different geographical locations, for information sharing or solidarity building purposes.

Example Activity: On 1 December 2009, World AIDS Day, youth volunteers of KYA led awareness raising events across Cambodia. They mobilised young people to march from their schools to central points at pagodas where entertainment shows were held which contained educational messages. This was the biggest awareness raising event they’d ever organised, and was widely attended by young people, parents, local authorities, partner NGO representatives, donors and government.

3. Reproductive Health Association Cambodia (RHAC)

Contact: Dr. Var Chivorn, chivorn@rhac.org.kh

RHAC is a national NGO and IPPF affiliate which has worked with youth since 1997. RHAC currently has a Youth Health programme which utilises a behaviour change communication framework with four objectives:

1. Increase knowledge and awareness
2. Ensure availability of quality services
3. Referral and follow up
4. Build a supportive environment for target group

In 2009, RHAC worked in nine provinces and municipalities, supported youth-friendly services in 53 Health Centres, and trained 3,583 Peer Educators (youth volunteers). RHAC has an advisory youth council with all members under 25. RHAC participates in youth-related advocacy as issues arise, acknowledging that civil society networking on youth in Cambodia is not well coordinated and tends toward being reactive in its approach. RHAC links with Medicam, the Cambodian coordinating mechanism for NGOs working on health related issues, for information sharing and advocacy.

4. Youth Committee for Unity and Development Network

A coalition of six – eight local youth organisations was formed in 2007 to support the national youth policy development process. It aims to represent the voice of Cambodian youth. There



is no formal secretariat for the network and the leadership responsibilities are rotated. The network is not youth led, instead representing youth-adult partnerships within the local organisations.

It demonstrates how civil society advocacy coalitions can be successfully formed around specific issues. In this case, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) was designated by the RGC to establish the national youth policy, but progress was slow due to limited leadership and weak coordination mechanisms. UN CT has played a significant role in supporting this process through to finalisation.

Although the network was formed specifically to support the youth policy development, the members find it to be a useful mechanism and hope to continue it:

“Once we have successfully established a National Youth Policy, we need a National Youth Council. We will advocate to ensure policy is implemented, we could do more forever” – KYA Secretary General.

The Youth Committee for Unity and Development Network is challenged by limited time and resources. It has not been able to make linkages with other youth-serving NGOs, and was not well known to all informants.

NETWORKING FOR POPULATIONS MOST AT RISK TO HIV

Networking for most at risk populations within the HIV response is recognised as an important strategy - supporting solidarity building, information exchange and joint action. Cambodia has established networks for: people living with HIV, women living with HIV, MSM and a coordinating body for civil society programmes working on HIV. An assessment of networks for entertainment workers and sex workers has also been conducted recently with UN support. All networks face challenges regarding capacity, coordination, and management.

This case study explores two of the more established networks the Cambodian People Living with HIV network, and the HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee. Government recognition contributes to their sustainability, as does medium-term funding support from donors such as UNAIDS, Global Fund and USAID. Networks link with the relevant HIV/AIDS regional networks (such as APN+).

The two Network Coordinators interviewed described increasing integration between HIV and sexual and reproductive health in their activities, although there is need for continued improvement. Population size estimates demonstrate that youth form a large component of populations most at risk to HIV:

- 6,500 drug users, most of whom are young people aged 18 – 25. (NACD 2010)
- 34,193 female entertainment workers; 10.3% between 15-19 years, 45.1% are between 20-24 years. (Q1, 2009, NCHADS)

Cambodia’s existing networks for most at risk populations have large youth constituencies, but currently have limited capacity to recognise and address the specific needs of youth.



1. Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network (CPN+)

Contact: Mr. Keo Chen, Coordinator, keochen@cpnplus.org, 012-889 285

The Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network (CPN+) is a national network of groups and organisations of PLHIV. CPN+ was established in July 2001 in response to Cambodia's rapidly growing HIV epidemic. CPN+ is closely affiliated with APN+ and GPN+.

Mr. Keo Chen, Coordinator of CPN+, estimates that up to 50% of its members are youth (under 30 years), but has no specific project activities focusing on youth. A recent strategic re-planning exercise has made recommendations around the development of a youth-focused project. Mr. Chen identified the following barriers to supporting youth networking:

- a. The lack of a national youth policy to guide our work with youth.
- b. Migration of youth across the country for work.
- c. Weak education in schools resulting in much remaining work for NGOs.

2. HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee (HACC)

Contact: Mr. Tim Vora, Acting Executive Director, pm@haccCambodia.org

HACC, established in 1993, is a network in representative, comprising over 115 national and international NGOs and CBOs working on HIV/AIDS and related social and health issues. Over 50 of those members work on SRH and HIV, and up to 20 of those work on youth issues.

HACC does not have a specific working group for youth, although youth-related issues do occur for discussion from time to time. Mr. Vora identified gaps of youth representation in the National AIDS Authority and National Centre for HIV/AIDS Dermatology and STDs Technical Working Groups, and emphasised that the support of these national bodies was important in establishing any national network.

"People aren't thinking about youth as a most-at-risk group and what their needs are. Even though the data shows us that many most-at-risk in Cambodia are the youth" – Mr. Vora.

The **Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA)** is a leading national NGO contributing to the response to HIV AND AIDS in Cambodia. It supports more than 60 local NGOs and CBO partners to implement focused prevention and integrated care and prevention packages to PLHIV, OVC and most-at-risk groups. Many of KHANA's partners support activities with youth. KHANA serves as a coordinating mechanism to share lessons learnt between these groups and provide technical expertise to ensure quality programming – the *Standard Package of Activities on Youth* is one product of this work.

LINKS TO REGIONAL NETWORKS

1. Young Progressives Southeast Asia network (YPSEA)

<http://ypsea.multiply.com/>

YPSEA is "a regional organisation of young progressives aimed at creating political exchange and communication in order to promote democracy, equality and human rights in Southeast Asia." The network first came together in Manila in 2004 and its structure was formally set up in 2006 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Its membership consists of progressive youth groups from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. Timor Leste currently has



observer status. The YPSEA networks seeks to provide a platform to enhance young people's participation in Southeast Asian Politics.

2. The CYTI Alliance.

Contact: David Harding, Drug Programme Technical Advisor, Friends International, david@friends-international.org, 012 790 961.

A network of NGO and Government partners (across Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong) aimed at developing best practice models and services that effectively respond to the needs of marginalised urban children and youth (particularly those using drugs). The network does not directly address SRH issues, but acknowledges its importance and the needs for integration. It supports partners to make linkages with local organisations and service providers. Youth participation was identified as a barrier:

"It is not easy to engage marginalised youth in decision making. They are often poor, with low education levels, possibly from rural backgrounds, stigmatised and criminalised. Marginalised young people may not want to be more involved because of the labelling involved here. They might just want to use the services and then move on." - David Harding.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED NETWORKS

MoEYS supports huge networks of youth through bodies such as the National Scouts movement and Cambodian Youth Red Cross. These networks have worked to serve different humanitarian purposes throughout the country and there is strong potential for SRH integration here.

UN COUNTRY TEAM YOUTH ADVISORY PANEL (YAP)

Established in 2007, YAP was designed - under the guidance of the UN Country Team with full support from the UN agency Youth Focal points - to establish a mechanism for open dialogue and exchange between UNCT-Cambodia and youth groups, to advise the Country Team on strategic opportunities and actions to address adolescent and youth issues across the UN system. Its aims are to:

- (i) increase dialogue and knowledge sharing between the UN system and Cambodian youth, based on best practices and lessons learned from youth policies and programmes,
- (ii) build up leadership and communications skills of the panel members and increase young people's understanding of the role of the UN, its comparative advantages and its Cambodian development priorities; and
- (iii) provide a means for young people to discuss issues with the UNCT and share youth perspective on development.

Cambodia developed the first ever UN-wide YAP anywhere in the world. Many Cambodian youth NGOs were involved in designing the TOR. YAP is still new in Cambodia, and there is much potential here.

Achievements

- Raising the profile of youth issues and creating a stronger youth voice.
- Youth involvement in UN mid-term reviews of projects, including field trips to different provinces, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) review, and development of UNFPA Country Programme IV.
- Led first ever SMS text messaging campaign across Cambodia for International Women's Day.



- Initiated, organised and supported first ever joint international youth day celebration in Cambodia bringing together Government, youth organisations and the UN.
- Active involvement with the development and launch of the Youth Situation Analysis and the ongoing National Youth Policy development process.
- Building capacity of Cambodia's youth who have: increased knowledge of Cambodia's development situation and young people's issues, improved English language skills and knowledge of "development language", understanding of how the UN system works.

Challenges

- Limited time for UN CT. There are many competing priorities; the capacity building and preparation work required for YAP events is intensive.
- Limited time for YAP members. YAP members are volunteers, and often need to prioritise their paid jobs over responsibilities with YAP.
- YAP members' managers may not understand the purpose of UN activities, and therefore don't prioritise the time needed for these.

Recommendations

- YAP needs an annual workplan which should be shared and consulted with members' organisations.
- Explore mechanisms to facilitate improved communications amongst the YAP members themselves
- Consider increased funding to allow YAP to conduct a small project of its own, to build stronger sense of tangible achievement among youth, demonstrate YAP impact to others, and raise general awareness and profile.
- Consider supporting YAP exchanges or study tours to share ideas and lessons learnt, and to build YAP networks across the region. This could also serve as another incentive for YAP members.
- Assess the specific capacity development needs of YAP members and provide support in response to members' concerns that they are not adequately prepared to engage with policy makers at the level required.
- Raise the profile of YAP among NGOs, Government and young people. Members feel challenged to represent the concerns of different youth, when many organisations still have not heard of YAP. This also hinders knowledge sharing more widely.

Conclusions

This case study found a great deal of uncertainty around definitions of networks, with many nebulous meanings attached to the term. Linked to this, there were mixed feelings about the value added of networking. The topic seems to have received limited attention across different NGO networks, UN and government. However, there are clearly opportunities to create more spaces for: youth participation and leadership development, information sharing, and collective, coordinated action on youth issues.

Some participants felt strongly that a national youth network is needed in Cambodia. Suggestions included supporting a formalised youth-led coordination body with a Secretariat supported financially by its members. Institutionalisation was described as "crucial for recognition and respect" among Cambodian stakeholders. Independence, particularly from any political affiliation, is important, but any official network must link with other relevant government, UN and NGOs.



Cambodia's youth leaders want to come together, but they are lacking in platforms to do so. Current examples of youth networking in Cambodia often seem inappropriate for youth: "It's got to be youth-centred and fun! That's a must for sustainability".

However, many informants said youth networking on SRH was not on the national agenda and not a priority. Challenges included discussion of the limited resources available and acknowledged that networking can be an intensive process, particularly for new networks which need significant nurturing and support.

"Networking is one of those things that gets lost among the many other competing activities that we have to do" – Informant (m).

Networking tends to be stronger within the HIV response, and this is not well linked or integrated with the SRH movement. Cambodia has various established networks which support and represent populations most at risk to HIV. These networks have large youth constituencies but do not tend to recognise the specific needs of youth.

More consultation and greater involvement of stakeholders would be required to support youth networking. There is a need for greater coordination and opportunities for experience sharing. The work of youth needs to be linked to Cambodia's overall development indicators and monitoring and evaluation needs significant improvement. This would help to demonstrate the impact of youth participation and to increase dialogue at the national level.

The current civil society networks, including those for most-at-risk groups, should be supported to engage and sustain dialogue on youth issues, and to build meaningful youth-adult partnerships. Youth led organisations need significant institutional capacity building support and technical expertise on managing youth volunteer networks. Following the expected endorsement of the National Youth Policy, there will be opportunity to develop a National Council for Youth Development to coordinate the development and implementation of the policy, which will impact upon the work of all the youth participation mechanisms described in this case study.

India Case Study

SRIJAN: Integrating Youth Organisations and Youth Forums in India

Introduction

India has many youth networks and organisations working with youth however, few focus extensively on SRH issues. MAMTA- Health Institute for Mother and Child is one such organisation. MAMTA, a well established NGO, has set up a unique Network called, SRIJAN, which not only brings together youth-led and youth serving organisations from seven states (with low development indicators particularly related to SRH issues), but also is connecting youth with the network through Youth Forums. It is also in the process of helping the Youth Forums in developing their independent identities, separate from the NGOs they are currently associated with. This Network demonstrates the benefit of one strong NGO taking leadership in forming, managing and sustaining the network.



Name: The SRIJAN Network (Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives for Joint Action Network)²⁹: Network of Organisations and Young people

Origins / Established: How and when did the Network evolve?

The community based interventions of MAMTA led to the realisation of the need for formulation of appropriate programmes to address the concerns and challenges of young people nationally. In view of the geographical expanse of India and realisation of the need for extensive reach on the issue of Young Peoples' Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights (YRSHR) for positive and deeper micro level, MAMTA adopted networking as a strategy in 2000 and took up the leadership in forming the network on the issue through consultation with various institutions (Government and NGOs) and individuals in India and in the international arena in order to explore their interest on networking and mobilise their support to give it a functional shape.

The first phase of the network started in the 2000-2003 and in March 2001, a network on YRSHR, 'SRIJAN' was officially launched with MAMTA serving as the secretariat for the network. SRIJAN, an acronym for 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives for Joint Action Network' literally means 'Creation'. It is not yet registered as a separate network.

Network Coverage

The Secretariat³⁰ of the SRIJAN network is based in New Delhi, India. The Network is functional in 101 districts in 7 states of India: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Although the initial objective was to establish a countrywide network, a decision was made to initiate the network gradually. The seven states above were selected based on the health and development scenario and the availability of a strong agency with some experience on SRH and young people to serve as the nodal agency for that state.

Network Membership and Population Covered

Network Membership Criteria for Organisations

- Members can be organizations/ institutions / individuals - government, non government or private
- Organisations / institution / individuals working with adolescent and young people or in principle agree to working with adolescent and young people
- Should have in principle agreed to work in the rights perspective
- Should have willingness to contribute (time, resources etc.) to the network
- A formal letter of acceptance to be part of the network is needed

Organisational Membership: Currently, the Network has 136 organisations as members.

Youth Forums: SRIJAN supports a forum of Young People, selected in collaboration with its network partners. SRIJAN has youth forums in 90 districts with 18-25 youth members in each forum (with about 50:50 male-female membership). These young people come from areas where SRIJAN is networked and have either experienced or understanding of the health and development issues of people in their age group.

²⁹ Details of SRIJAN are provided in the document 'Partnerships for Change: Evolution of SRIJAN' MAMTA - Health Institute for Mother and Child, 2009

³⁰ For contact details of the Secretariat, refer to the profile of SRIJAN network under country level youth network mapping



Young People are the primary beneficiaries of SRIJAN’s initiatives. SRIJAN reaches out to young people between 10-24 years old in both formal institutions (schools, colleges and workplace), and more informal settings to include out of school youth, and migrant populations. It reaches to married and unmarried youth, in rural areas and urban slums, with emphasis on marginalised and disadvantaged populations.

Network Structure

The administrative structure of the Network consists of:

- National Secretariat at MAMTA, New Delhi
- Five State Facilitating Agencies (SFA) that coordinate with the Partner NGOs at State Level in five states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and West Bengal
- Two state Zonal Coordinators (ZC) in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh respectively where administrative set up of networking is divided into Zones

At the central level, the Network’s administrative programmatic functioning is guided by a ‘Working Group’. This is comprised of the SFA and external supporters such as MacArthur Foundation, Family Planning Association of India (FPAI), and National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD).

Focus Areas and Network’s Different Activities

Focus Areas	Key Activities
Prevention of Early Marriage and Early Pregnancy	Capacity Building of Partner NGOs
Youth people and HIV	Information sharing & technical expertise
Sexuality Education	Joint advocacy at central, state & district level
Youth friendly services	Establishing information channels for young people on YSRHR issues
Retention of children in educational institutions	Improving young people’s access to quality SRH services
Adverse sex ratio	Enhancing young people’s representation at national and international forums
	Research on key issues and gap areas
	“SAMVAD” newsletter covers best practices, current programs, policies, case studies & news is disseminated widely.

All the action plans are prepared at the state level and the activities are implemented by the NGO Network partners together with the young people from the youth forums.



Tools: Communication and Coordinating Mechanisms

Though the national secretariat coordinates and supervises the activities of the Network, mechanisms have been built in to decentralise the national secretariat's responsibilities. Various mechanisms to ensure communication, coordination, monitoring and evaluation include:

1. Administrative and Inclusion Mechanisms:

- Working Group Meetings conducted twice a year where SF' as well as some representatives from the state level NGOs and youth forums participate and take major decisions with regard to decentralisation of national secretariat's responsibilities.
- At the State/Zonal level, Network partners meet for the annual planning of SRIJAN, to emphasize the participation of each NGO partner in respective states in planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting.
- Change of SFA/ZC ensured on a rotational basis with new partners given the opportunity to serve as SFA or ZC. New SFA/ZC is chosen democratically by the partner NGOs.
- Action plans prepared and finalized through a participatory process by all partner NGOs at the state /zonal level under the guidance of SFA/ ZC.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:

- Technical support visits undertaken by secretariat (minimum two visits per state annually) as well as SFAs and ZCs (once or twice a year as required) to their respective partner NGOs for evaluation and monitoring of progress.
- Reporting on a mutually agreed MIS has been an essential part of the project
- SFAs/ZCs send their progress and financial reports on a quarterly basis.

Key Successes

- SRIJAN's biggest strength is the fact that seven different states, with diverse socio-cultural and political environments are all working on a "taboo" but extremely relevant subject like YSRHR.
- Mainstreaming of these issues by the partner NGOs in their other projects and mainstreaming the agenda of 'Sexuality Education', 'Youth Friendly Health Services' 'Youth Information Centers' in policies and Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) through advocacy and collaboration with different departments and line ministries.
- As a result of extensive capacity building initiatives, each partner organisation functions independently on adolescent and youth SRH issue, which has enabled them to mainstreaming the same into their mandate and various programmes
- State level networks have been formed, some of which have secured state-level funding/ resources from various national and/or international agencies, which helps in ensuring the sustainability of the network and continuity of the joint initiatives required at the State level.
- Advocacy with various stakeholders including Panchayati Raj Institutions (local self governance system), which helps in bringing about an institutional change within the community with the acceptance and cooperation of the leaders in the communities.
- Formation and functioning of multi-tier Youth Forums and developed a cadre of peer educators, which has led to the formation of Youth Ambassadors on SRHR issues represented at national and international forums
- Establishment of youth information centres
- Regular magazine of young people, by young people, for young people, called Arushi, disseminated widely to network partners, community members as well as other NGOs and stakeholders.



Partners and Linkages

- Most of the NGOs in India known to be working in the field of children and youth on issues of SRH are associated with the Network.
- The expertise from within the Network is utilised for training and capacity building of other partners.
- MAMTA as an organisation in an advisory capacity as well as the Youth Ambassadors represented at many national and international committees and task forces.
- Some projects around adolescent and youth friendly service are implemented with the support from UNFPA.

Network Resources and Sustainability

- MAMTA cultivated a relationship with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), beginning in 1999. Pilot activities were followed by a comprehensive and strategically focused project from 2003-2008. Core funding from SIDA was instrumental in establishing the Network and for capacity building with NGO partners.
- MAMTA has sustained the network activities by channelling all other project-based funding that MAMTA receives from other sources to Network partners, primarily for interventions. In addition, some of the state level networks have been successful in securing funds from national and/or international organisations focussing in respective states.
- MAMTA has found that there are opportunities available for state-level networks, however it's difficult to secure funding for the National level networks.
- Mainstreaming the issues in the mandate of the organisations as well as at the policy level has also paved the way for ensuring sustainability.

Looking Ahead

- Consolidate, strengthen and expand activities within the seven operational states.
- State-level networks to mobilise increasing independent funding.
- Create more formal youth forums and structures, developing their independence from parent NGOs and supporting their registration. Some youth forums are expected to function as independent bodies by 2012.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt:

- Sustaining the network on YRSHR beyond project period
- Establishing an effective mechanism for communication among network partners is a big challenge in ensuring the overall coordination mechanism.
- Developing a common understanding of YRSHR and building capacities - which was overcome to a large extent through extensive focus on capacity building initiatives.

Recommendations

- High level of commitment is required from each partner (organisational and individuals) for the cause. Long term vision for the network needs to be there from the very beginning and it must come from the grassroots level. Bottom to top approach required i.e. from grassroots to districts to state to the national level.
- Strong leadership is required to keep the network together by demonstrating strong leadership in bringing together and sustaining the forum.
- Each member/partner needs to realise and understand the significance and collective strength of the network. Unless the network partners realise the importance of the collective strength of networking, the networks cannot sustain and function smoothly.



- Sustained technical and financial resources for the network required through state level mobilisation by partners; securing funding through the leadership at the national level; as well as by building capacities of the network partners.



Key Correspondents

Profile of “25 Messengers”

Youth Network in Bandung, West Java Indonesia

This youth association in Indonesia revealed successful strategies such as: genuine youth involvement in every activity of the organisation including decision making, the need to build youth capacity in organisational and management skills, that programme design should recognise the different needs of urban and rural youth and that modern media plays an important role in support youth mobilisation. The profile demonstrates the importance of strong leadership and the multiple roles that individual Youth Leaders play, whilst also making reference to the linkages that smaller associations can make with larger networks and donors.

25 Messengers was established in March 2005 as a youth association in West Java, Indonesia. Most of its activities reach out to most-at-risk populations such as drugs users, street children, people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their partners. 25 Messengers have developed a youth network among those concerned about HIV and AIDS in west Java. They use peer education, providing a drop in centre (DIC) for youth which offers voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) services and addiction counselling. The association both delivers direct services and conducts advocacy activities. Advocacy is always an important concern, and the association supports mass action, targeting policy makers at provincial and national levels. They’ve also been involved with advocacy at regional and international levels as a member association of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS. One of their success stories is engaging the district / city National AIDS Commission and participating in the establishment of the Indonesia Youth Alliance.

Members of the association are young people aged 17-25 years old from ten different cities and district in West Java. Individuals are mobilised into groups; they’re trained peer educators and volunteers who are influenced by youth issues. The Association has hundreds of volunteers as its members and over 200 Peer Educators, with just three full time staff.

The Association is led by Eka Prahadian Abdurahaman. Eka is now 28 years old but a true youth activist with experience of developing youth initiatives across Indonesia. Eka is deeply involved in increasing young people’s understanding of sexual and reproductive health, drugs abuse and HIV / AIDS through community trainings. He also facilitates communication networks between community and government to create an adequate environment for changing perspectives of society towards HIV / AIDS and drugs abuse programs and the importance of youth involvement in policy designing and implementation. In addition to playing a leading role in the Indonesian youth movement, he was a regional focal point for Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS in 2007-08. One of his successes was the award of a project by MTV’s Staying Alive Foundation to develop a youth-led initiative in five Indonesian provinces. This initiative developed youth AIDS Ambassadors; developing a youth peer education network and a youth friendly services through drop-in centre providing information, counselling and education. Eka was also involved as a pioneer in a UNICEF youth empowerment initiative program in 10 provinces.

On a personal level, Eka believes he’s benefitted greatly from his experiences and had opportunities to build wide and strong networks at local, national and international levels. Developing his skills and knowledge has increased his capacity as an activist and inspired many other young people in Indonesia to become more actively involved in their local communities.



The main roles of the 25 Messengers are to disseminate information on HIV / AIDS, drug addiction and youth reproductive health, and to create peer educators. Youth are involved in every activity of the organisation - planning, program implementation and decision-making. Involving young people in every activity and decision making process engenders a growing sense of belonging and activism spirit. Members' contributions are invaluable – 25 Messengers really appreciate them, as do donors such as MTV and UNICEF. These are examples of donors who recognise there is a great need for youth-led initiatives.

Support for vulnerable youth (including drug users and their partners, street children and sex workers) is a key component of 25 Messengers' work. The Association aims to build critical consciousness among vulnerable youth and support them in voicing their needs to stakeholders and policy makers at provincial and country levels, to ensure the fulfilment of young people's sexual and reproductive health rights.

Eka says that *“challenges we face through these activities are that young people can be unprepared for advocacy tasks and sometimes overwhelmed by the work. Young volunteers can change their minds and their commitment, depending on other events in their lives.”* Eka believes that youth initiatives need to plan and coordinate their approaches to policy change. Another common challenge is the limited commitment from local government regarding youth issues. Support for youth can be very dependent on the individuals who govern and, therefore, changeable. The political and religious context in Indonesia means there is a lack of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health facilities.

Advocacy skills for speaking out on youth sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV issues to government and society are a critical need for 25 Messengers. In addition, institutional management capacity building is a priority of youth networks because a lot of youth organizations still do not have proper organizational management skills. Eka also wants to develop skills to manage and maintain an effective program and youth network in the long term; a program that will be sustainable.

When asked about how young people in Indonesia can communicate with each other, Eka says: *“Where young people live in urban area it's easier for them to share and improve their ideas, supported by accessibility of internet and other communication facilities. But the opposite happens for young people who live in rural areas where it's harder for them to access communication tools.”*

Communication tools aren't the only difference between urban and rural contexts: “The strength of traditional values such as taboo of talking about sex among young people in rural areas makes it harder still for young people to share their ideas and issues in relation of their sexual and reproductive health rights and access. If they start to talk about sexuality it will be against cultural norms and politeness. It is very important to pay more specific attention for young people who live in rural areas and supporting their empowerment. This might lead to a decrease in migration to urban areas as young people are encouraged to stay on their own areas and develop other young people using the local wisdom. By increasing access to information for young people in rural areas, we can support youth development and improve creativity in our responses and improve potential resources.” Communication facilities for rural areas are still inappropriate, and not based on the needs. Programme design should take into consideration the different needs of rural and urban youth.



Modern media has an important role in supporting young people's movements in Indonesia, considering the geographic distances in this archipelago country. "Communication with people overseas is needed to open our minds and the thoughts of young people in Indonesia. We use phones and internet, we have teleconferences with various youth networks across the country and the world. This makes it easier for us to share knowledge, issues and ideas among youth."

Eka emphasised that "Sexual and reproductive health rights are very important for young people because young people are very vulnerable as they grow up. Their emotions make them more curious and so they need information and support in relation of sexual and reproductive health to protect themselves and their futures. Young people are particularly vulnerable to STIs and unwanted pregnancies. With proper knowledge of sexual and reproductive health rights, young people can appreciate the diversity of sexualities and fight for their rights to get attention from policy makers and protect their lives." There is a lack of skills to cope with stress among young people. So, when faced with an unwanted situation there's a tendency to run away. Peer pressure is also one of the most powerful influences on young people when making behaviour choices; many have unsafe sex because they feel pressure to keep up with their peers.

There is a government supported programme (Indonesia Family Parenthood Association) targeting young people in schools, but there is lack of resources and capacity that is allocated for this programme compared to the actual needs of young people in Indonesia. Eka's work with 25 Messengers has achieved a lot, but we need more at a larger scale to fulfil young people's sexual and reproductive health rights and needs.

By Yudi Manggala
February 2010

***Yudi Manggala**, 30, lives in Jakarta, Indonesia and works for Indonesia Planned Parenthood Association. Yudi became a resource person for one of the 8th ICAAP newsletters and from there applied to be a Key Correspondent in 2007.*

"Being a key correspondent makes me learn much more about how to use news articles as a medium for advocacy and deliver the issues that happen in my country and community through my writings. It's taught me how to voice my issues at the national and regional level through articles, and I learnt a lot about how to write and share burning issues that I had and need to voice out."

Young Leaders for Positive Change in the Philippines

Listening to the members of YPEER Philippines reveals the challenges that reproductive health is interpreted as family planning alone, with little focus on the sexual and reproductive health needs of young men. Communication barriers can be very challenging for youth networks, as can the lack of a robust governance and operational foundation for the group. They perceive that there is little decision making and resource mobilisation capacity, and a lack of project implementation skills such as monitoring and evaluation. Another key issue is the ageing out of their members, with little sustainability.

When 21 year old Rein Naldoza volunteered for a community advocacy project with Pinoy Plus Association, a Filipino organization of people living with HIV and AIDS, he was like an "outsider looking inside". The advocacy initiative mobilized 15 to 25 year olds living with HIV and encouraged them to get involved as peer educators. Rein wanted to see and experience real action but he



was just a neophyte. There were many things that he wanted to do: meet with like-minded people, and most of all empower youth so that they can participate in development work that will protect and improve their lives. Through mentoring, and immersion with marginalized sectors, he gradually was able to grasp the issues and concerns affecting lives of people living with HIV and AIDS and their significant others. Specifically, he engaged himself in programs and activities that are important to the young ones like him. He became part of a team assessing needs of youth, regardless of HIV status. At the outset, they were being led by senior people associated with Pinoy Plus Association; they were mere workers as opposed to being equals in the negotiating table and decision making. Rein, with a sigh of relief uttered, *“From this day on I vowed to myself, we will (together with allies) by all means be pro-actively and meaningfully involved in all initiatives that will affect and improve the lives of the young people”*. He dreamt of a movement for the young people and managed by young people.

Chancing upon Mario Balibago, the current focal person of the Youth Peer Education Network Pilipinas (YPEER), he shared a lot about his exciting experiences on youth networking. He was supporting community organizing for young gay men, fund raising for materials development about HIV and STI and exploring further integration of the concepts on sexual and reproductive health. His desire to deepen his understanding of the issues and concerns of the youth, he studied further. Mario is now a candidate for a Masters Degree in Health and Social Science in one of the prestigious universities in the Philippines.

For decades, young people had been given minimal attention and were treated as beneficiaries of initiatives on health elsewhere in the country. More attention was given to the needs of women and girls. There are sectors of the Philippine society that interpret reproductive health (RH) as family planning alone. Health programmes had been implemented vertically, thus RH became a stand alone program, making it more difficult to respond to especially reproductive health and rights of adolescents. The religious sector had always been the greatest challenge in local RH programming. Having this current scenario, youth representatives coming from different civil society organizations with diverse areas of expertise came together to organize the YAP and eventually YPEER that was launched in December 2009.

Rain and Mario are among 25 young people who joined forces forming the core YPEER in the country. Rain and five other YPEER members were already serving on the Philippines Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The panel has a total of 16 members who bring the voice of youth to advise UNFPA in programming its country support particularly for youth-focused projects and activities. Mikas Matsuzawa represents her organization YOGHI (Youth Organization Giving Hope and Inspiration) at the regular meeting of YPEER. She hopes that other youth-oriented groups will be able to take on ASRH, integrating issues and concerns of youth in whatever they are doing.

For Rain, Mario and Mikas, working together through networking provides them opportunities to learn and share from one another. They coordinate and discuss virtually through their current e-group. According to Mario, they intend to diversify their communication approach because not all of the youth groups have access to computer technologies and electronic communications. Communication barriers can be very challenging to their group. Mario and the rest of the youth network would like to explore the different possibilities and modalities that may be appropriate for information exchange, looking at other youth networks and then testing different methods in the local context.

They all think big but want to start small. As Mario said, *“we are still in our infancy stage, we have our baby steps in doing things and we need much mentoring and assistance in order to move*



forward the plans we put together from the start". At the moment they are part of a team that reviews youth focused proposals and endorses those that which are compliant, relevant to the current needs of and innovative, youth led and youth managed.

When asked what challenges they face, they all have similar responses- governance for YPEER as a network is still loose making it difficult for them to make some decisions; having no legal face and legal name, the ability to receive and manage their own funding; the enormous needs of capacity and skills building in developing specific youth programmes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Currently, YPEER is donor dependent and they look forward to becoming autonomous whilst still consulting with key partners and mentors for technical assistance. Another key issue for them is the age limitation for YAP members. Once they reach the age of 24, they automatically graduate from their membership. There is also a difficulty in looking for replacements of those who have graduated. More advocacy effort to other CSOs is needed so that they too will involve the youth in their initiatives and integrate ARH/SRH.

The first National Training of Trainers for youth is yet to happen. There are events lined up which have been developed by the network. The three youth, Rain, Mario and Mikas enthusiastically exclaimed, "Watch for us, soon we will be ready to take on the tasks at all levels of work, sitting in the negotiating table with other stakeholders, and be responsible for all the actions we take on."

By Nenet L. Ortega

Nenet L. Ortega is based in the Philippines. Nenet started working as a Key Correspondent in 1999 and since then has contributed many articles to Health and Development Networks (HDN), SEA AIDS e-forum and other information exchange forums. Her focus is in working with marginalised communities and people living with HIV. She enjoys her work because "Documenting stories like the work of the youth in the Philippines is worth doing in order to share the good news to the rest of the world."

Sexual and reproductive health services and networking for most-at-risk youth: Where does it fit in Vietnam?

Vietnamese youth activists see a profound need for SRH youth networks and access to information in their country, but see the biggest challenge to working with youth on SRH as the Vietnamese culture. As SRH is so highly sensitive and difficult to discuss, there is a lack of resources and political will from the government side, and communities are not perceived to be mobilising themselves around this issue.

Traditionally, sex is considered to be a forbidden subject in Vietnam. In many families, parents rarely talk with their children about sex, and sexual reproductive health (SRH) education in schools is weak. Young people might curiously seek information on the internet but obviously this is not a safe or effective source. So where and from whom will youth, especially those most-at-risk, will get SRH services? Is there any specific network for SRH targeting most-at-risk youth in Vietnam?

To inquire into this issue, four people, who have been working quite long time in this field, are invited to share their experiences:

- Mr. Ong Van Tung, the coordinator of Bright Future Network for people living with HIV in North Vietnam



- Ms Nguyen Thi Lan, the leader of *Ban Mai Xanh* (Green Morning Light) Dalat University students' group
- Ms Huynh Nhu Thanh Huyen, coordinator of Southern Plus Network for people living with HIV/AIDS in South Vietnam
- Nguyen Le Minh, leader of *Cau Vong* MSM group in Da Nang

"SRH is a significant issue to everyone. Unfortunately not many people, including those who are from most-at-risk populations know much about SRH", said Ms. Lan of *Ban Mai Xanh* students' group. The group provides education on HIV prevention, harm reduction and SRH to fellow students.

Mr. Tung of Bright Future Network said "Personally speaking, I don't have much experience working in SRH. I was only interested in this issue from the beginning of 2009. For people living with HIV like me, ARV is always the first most interesting subject. From 2009, when many people living with HIV in Vietnam could deal with their ARV treatment, at that time I realized that SRH would be very important to everybody in the near future and there would be many things to do with it".

None of the people interviewed were aware of a specific network for SRH targeting most at risk youth in Vietnam. However, some self-help groups are conducting some relevant activities for most-at-risk youth. Being able to access correct information about SRH is important in helping young people to protect themselves. Ms. Huyen of Southern Plus Network recommended that most-at-risk youth should access services and information through one of the existing networks or self-help groups working in HIV or MSM. Mr. Minh of *Cau Vong* MSM group reaches out to many young MSM, providing condoms, lube and information. "I have been studying much about SRH and I'm interested in expanding our work to include more about this".

Groups and networks targeting most-at-risk populations are naturally reaching out to youth. Bright Futures Network has around 4000 members with one third of these are under 25 years old. *"Some of our notable activities include communicating about SRH with sex workers in karaoke bars in Hanoi – most of them are under 20 years old"* – Mr. Tung.

It is clear that most-at-risk youth can get SRH services as beneficiaries from activities of some networks or self-help groups; however, is it necessary to have a specific network for SRH targeting most at risk youth? Ms Lan of *Ban Mai Xanh* students' group said, "SRH is always considered as a personal and sensitive issue in Vietnam. Not many people, especially youth, are willing to talk about it openly. There have been some additional activities (within existing PLHIV / MSM networks) related to SRH so far, but the remaining demand is still so huge. In the long run, I do think a specific network for SRH targeting most-at-risk youth is certainly necessary, without any doubt".

However, there are many obstacles to this. Ms Lan said, "Sexual and reproductive health is considered as a sensitive issue and has not been socially acknowledged. The students I work with and most-at-risk populations' attitudes toward this issue are still - I don't care!" She believes that young people and communities aren't mobilising themselves on these issues. Most of the related programs have been funded by international NGOs and on a small scale. Support from the government is limited.

Ms Huyen of Southern Plus Network, agreed there was a total lack of resources for carrying out projects on SRH for youth. This includes tools that could be used – she believes there is a complete lack of "specific communication toolkits designed for youth and SRH" and so people wouldn't know what to do.



All the participants believed that Vietnamese culture is still the biggest challenge to working on SRH for youth. However, Mr Minh of *Cau Vong* MSM group believes that youth culture is changing attitudes in Vietnamese society slowly. Certainly, “there is no law or restriction in civil society networking for youth and SRH”. Mr Minh cited various international and national NGOs that have had initial successes working on youth and SRH, which is promising for the movement. Mr Tung agreed:

“Vietnam Civil Social Platform on Aids (VCSPA) is an example. It was established three years ago and is doing well. The number of its members now might have reached to thousands. Who knows, we might have a similar platform on youth and SRH someday. Something like Vietnam Civil Social Platform on Youth and SRH”.

Hai Vuong
KC for Vietnam

Hoang Hai Vuong is 31 years old and lives in Khanh Hoa, Vietnam. Since 2008, he’s been designing a magazine named “Living with HIV”. This inspired him to change his career path and move from a graphic design company to the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS) at Hanoi. Vuong is now responsible for managing a website for people living with AIDS (*nch.vn*), as well as organizing and coordinating a group of 22 KCs!

“Thanks to being a KC, I have an opportunity to improve myself, to go many places, to meet and to talk with many people, and the chance to help many people. With my article, I hope that readers can have an image of the situation in Vietnam.”

Indonesian Antitorture Network & Reproductive Health for Female Prisoners

While there is very limited discussion on youth networks, this piece explores possible integration of sexual reproductive health promotion for marginalised and criminalised young people into human rights based networks in Indonesia.



Established in 2003, *Jaringan Anti Penyiksaan Indonesia – JAPI* (Indonesia Anti Torture Network) is a strong human rights-based network in Indonesia with twenty NGO members, forming a coalition in the field of advocacy against torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. “*JAPI is a great network in Indonesia working with anti-torture issues. I have sympathy for JAPI because many youth activists there have a good will to work with human rights*”, said Johny

Simanjuntak, one of the commissioners of Indonesia National Commission of Human Rights.

Dedi Ali Ahmad (35, featured in photo above), founder and chair of JAPI, states that JAPI has fought hard to ensure that the Indonesian government protects human rights, particularly the right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as implementation of Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). This is ratified by Indonesian government through Act No. 5/1998, through several campaign activities in national level. This has been one of JAPI’s greatest successes.

JAPI has implemented many activities since its establishment, including holding discussions on anti-torture issues with vulnerable groups, such as urban poor, students, women, suspects and



defendants, drug users, PLHIV (people living with HIV), and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) communities. It is during its work with these vulnerable groups that JAPI encounters its biggest challenge: stigma.

Dedi said that many young people are actively involved in the design and implementation of JAPI's activities. In January 2010, JAPI held a discussion to socialize human rights issues, particularly the right to be free from torture, in one of the detention centres for women and children in Jakarta, called *Pondok Bambu* detention centre. One of the topics in the discussion was the right to health for prisoners. 25 young female prisoners attended the event. They were all curious about their rights while they were detained in the centre.

Pondok Bambu detention centre has capacity of 504 prisoners. At the present, there are 117 juveniles and 44 women detained in the centre. There are 89 prisoners between 17-25 years old. Most of them are detained because of narcotic use-related cases. The centre has a polyclinic managed by 2 doctors and six nurses.³¹ One of the nurses, *Endah Sari F.* (27), said that there are ten pregnant prisoners at the moment. While in the centre, they are all given proper health services. If there were pregnant prisoners infected by HIV, they would be given HIV-related programmes, such as PMTCT. On average, three prisoners give birth in the centre every year.

A young female prisoner, who has been pregnant for 7 months, *Novita Sari* (20) felt happy because she could attend JAPI's event in January 2010, so she could improve her knowledge on human rights and anti-torture issues. When she and her husband were caught using narcotics by the police, their two year old child had to live with her grandmother in Bekasi, West Java.

"I feel that all needs related to my pregnancy, such as health check-up and medical USG, have been provided well by the centre", said Novita. *"Even though I have to sleep with 13 other prisoners in my room and there is no nutrition aid from the centre, I still happy because at least none of them are smoking,"* she added. Novita walks in the field every morning to stretch and refresh her body.

"I hope that JAPI could arrange routine discussions related to the issues in the centre", said Novita. Sexual and reproductive health education is still a gap and a need in prison settings. Novita thinks more education would be good: *"Therefore, I and other prisoners could improve our knowledge on the issues."* Novita also suggested that the centre could establish a peer group for any pregnant prisoners, *"so we could share and discuss our needs and problems related to our pregnancy"*. The Key Correspondent shared these thoughts with Dedi at JAPI who responded positively: *"To fulfill Novita and other pregnant prisoner's desires, I will try to discuss it with other members, so in the future, we could include sexual and reproductive health as well as HIV issues in our next discussion in the detention centre,"* Dedi said.

Rido Triawan, 31, lives in Jakarta, Indonesia. Rido became a Key Correspondent after being approached by the Alliance at ICAAP in 2009. Ridos wishes to share stories from Indonesia regarding HIV, health and narcotic issues. "I think any story related to youth detention centre is important to be shared with because it would change society's point of view on young prisoners that they are also human, so they also have rights as human beings that should be respected, protected, and fulfilled."

³¹ There are several health services provided by the polyclinic, such as general check-up, dental check-up, pregnancy testing, baby examination, immunization, blood testing, laboratory testing, medical ultrasonography, and HIV-related programmes, such as VCT (voluntary counseling and testing), PMTCT (preventing mother to child transmission), PITC (provider initiated testing and counseling), and MMT (methadone maintenance therapy). The polyclinic also gives routine illumination twice a week to all prisoners regarding health issues, such as personal hygiene, narcotics, HIV AIDS, TBC, hepatitis B and C, sexual infectious disease, and other related issues.



Annexes:

Annex 1: Research Tools

1. Indicators for country contexts

- Numbers of young people / % of total population
- Adolescent fertility rate
- Contraceptive prevalence in under 25s (married and unmarried)
- HIV prevalence among young people (aged 15–24)
- Secondary school enrolment ratio (by gender)
- Status of national-level youth policy

2. Maps of organisations / networks at national, sub-regional and regional level to include the following information:

- Name
- Contact Information
- Origins / Established
- Mission and Objectives
- Membership / Structure
- Thematic areas of interest (tick boxes): HIV/AIDS, sexuality education, SRH/R, peer education, youth friendly SRH services, most-at-risk young people [i.e. those engaged in sex work or those who identify as injecting drug users (IDU) or young males who have sex with males (MSM)] and youth participation
- Populations targeted
- Coverage Area: where is leadership (if relevant) based and what are geographical areas covered?
- Resources: What financial and material support does the network receive? Budget and donors.
- Comments, including: any links to UNFPA or other UN agencies, links to other networks at other levels (national, regional etc) overview details of notable programmes / campaigns on relevant themes, achievements or challenges.

3. Questionnaire for UNFPA COs

1. What is the status of the national level youth policy in your country?
2. Can you give details of one or two key youth networks working on SRH in your country? If so, please provide a brief description of the network and any notable successes or challenges that you're aware of.
3. How does the UNFPA CO link with existing youth networks?
4. What more could COs do to link with / strengthen civil society organisations and networks?
5. How could UNFPA APRO strengthen youth networking? How could APRO support COs to strengthen networking?
6. Please list any additional key contacts within your country which may be useful for the consultants.



4. TOPIC GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Questions must be adapted and selected as relevant, according to the network / organisation / individual being interviewed

Questions specific to individual organisations or networks:

- Origins:
 - How did the organisation / network evolve? Maturity – when was it set up, when was it registered (if relevant)?

- Network structure and membership:
 - Is it a network of organisations or individuals?
 - Is there a network secretariat? What role does the secretariat play?
 - Who leads the network? What are the main jobs/roles in the network?
 - How are decisions made in the network?
 - How many full-time or part-time staff are there (paid or unpaid)?
 - How many members are there? What is the membership criteria?
 - How are young people included in the network?

- What is the focus of the network's different activities?
(advocacy / knowledge sharing / project-based)

- Coverage:
 - What is the geographical coverage area?

- Successes and challenges
 - What have been the network's key successes?
 - What have been the main problems or challenges that you've faced?
 - How does the network monitor and evaluate its work?

- Looking ahead
 - What are the immediate needs/priorities of the network?
 - If the network received more funding, how would it be used?
 - Is the network considered to be sustainable and why?

- Partners and linkages
 - What are other key organisations, networks or stakeholders working in this area?
 - How do you partner / link with other organisations / networks - in-country, regionally and / or globally?

- Links with UNFPA
 - How have you worked with UNFPA? (if relevant)

Second half of interview to focus on general roles of networking, context, tools and / or recommendations:

- Context:
 - What considerations are there for differences in context between rural and urban organisations?





- Why is networking for youth and SRH important in this context?
- What added value does networking provide in the context of SRH and youth initiatives?
- What are the obstacles to networking for youth and SRH?
- How does the legal / political / cultural / religious environment support or impede civil society networking for youth and SRH? Examples?
- Gaps – If relevant, are there any examples of networks that haven't worked out, why?
- Describe the funding environment, and what funds are available to support this work.
- Recommendations
 - What could organisations work together on, what could be achieved?
 - Discuss relationships and linkages between networks, governments, other stakeholders.
 - Discuss potential merits, or disadvantages, of increased engagement by UN agencies.



Annex 2: List of research contacts

Organisation	Person	Contact details	Call / Meet	Email
ASIA: REGIONAL / GLOBAL				
7 Sisters	Skand Amatyia. Youth Representative.	skand@7sisters.org	X	X
	Giten Khwairakpam. Regional Program Coordinator	giten@7sisters.org		X
Asia Pacific Alliance	Rose Koenders. Executive Director.	rose@asiapacificalliance.org	X	
Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network	Athili Sapriina.	kholiadang@yahoo.com		X
	Jennifer Awingan. Coordinators.	jenawingan@yahoo.com		
Asia Pacific Youth Network	Mirinda Boon-Kuo. Coordinator.	Mirinda.Boon-Kuo@amnesty.org	X	
Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)	Nalini Singh. Programme Manager (Advocacy & Capacity-building).	nalini@arrow.org.my	X	X
Asian Students Association	Rey Asis.	reyasis@gmail.com		X
Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS (GYCA)	Rachel Arinii Judhistari. Asia-Pacific Representative.	rachel.arinii@gmail.com	X	X
International HIV/AIDS Alliance	Sunita Grote. Programme Manager: SRHR & Young People	sgrote@allianceindia.org		X
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)	Arushi Singh.	asingh@ippfsar.org		X
	Jayamalar Samuel.	jsamuel@ippfeseaor.org	X	
Network of Asia Pacific Youth (NAPY)	Agniva Lahiri. Coordinator.	agniva_lahiri@hotmail.com	X	X
World AIDS Campaign (WAC)	Greg Gray.	grayg@worldaidscampaign.org	X	
	Claudia Ahumada.	ahumadac@worldaidscampaign.org	X	
World Assembly of Youth (WAY)	Ediola Pashollari. Acting Secretary General.	ediola@way.org.my		X
Youth RISE	Caitlin Padgett. Former Coordinator / Founder.	caitlinpadgett@gmail.com	X	
SOUTH EAST ASIA				
Cambodia				
Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network (CPN +)	Keo Chen. Coordinator.	keochen@cpnplus.org	X	
Cambodian Red Cross HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee	Mr. Kosal. Tim Vora. Acting Executive Director.	+85512 931430 pm@haccambodia.org	X X	

Organisation	Person	Contact details	Call / Meet	Email
Friends International	David Harding. Technical Advisor.	david@friends-international.org	X	
	Vann Khemreth. ChildSafe Network Coordinator.	tito@friends-international.org	X	
Khmer Youth Association	Seng Rithy. Secretary-General.	rithy_kya@yahoo.com	X	
	Uch Sovannalay. Project Officer.	sovannalay_uch@yahoo.com	X	
Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia	Ms. Kim Hourn.	market-research@rhac.org.kh	X	X
	Dr. Var Chivorn.	chivorn@rhac.org.kh	X	
PHD Association	Ou Ratanak.	phd_association@yahoo.com		X
UN Country Team	Dum Chanthida.	ChanThida.Dum@one.un.org	X	X
	Soth Nimol. Former UNCT Youth Officer. Consultant: National Youth Policy.	nimolkha@yahoo.com	X	
UNFPA	Vandara Chong Vimol Hou	chong@unfpa.org vimol@unfpa.org	X	X
Youth Council Cambodia (YCC)	Pouthyroth Mao. Program Coordinator.	maopouthyroth@yahoo.com		X

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group One. Researchers working on KHANA Most-At-Risk-Adolescents Survey:

Phek Ssphanno, M- lyhimsrou@yahoo.com
 Ngoun Chansothea, M – cgansotheangoun_007@yahoo.com
 Khen Khousoptom, F – sophornkhen@yahoo.com
 Orng Srey Phang, F – sreyphang_007@yahoo.com
 Srey Vannak, M – srey.vannak@yahoo.com
 Loeung Samoeun, M – samoeun_loeung@yahoo.com.au
 Bou Sreyna, F – sreyna_ana@yahoo.com
 Som Chamnorng, F – somchamnorng@yahoo.com
 Kun Sophat, M – kunsophat@yahoo.com
 Phou Maly, F – malyphoupsy@yahoo.com
 Kim Sreyniang, F – sreyniang_kim@hotmail.com
 Ly Rady, M – ly_rady@gmail.com

Group Two. YAP members:

Uch Sovannalay, F, sovannalay_uch@yahoo.com (KYA)
 Em Amrita, F, amrita.em@gmail.com (SCY)
 Teng Sam Ath, M, kht_samath@yahoo.com (PHD)
 Chhay Chansopheaktra, F, chansopheaktra_chhay@yahoo.com (YCC)

China

China Youth Network	Liping Mian. Member.	mianl@worldaids-campaign.org	X	
UNFPA CO	Fang Qiang.	fang@unfpa.org		X

DPR Korea

UNFPA	Xiaoyu.	withers_u@hotmail.com		X
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Indonesia

Independent Youth Alliance	Rachel Arinii Judhistari	rachel.arinii@gmail.com	X	X
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Organisation	Person	Contact details	Call / Meet	Email
UNFPA	Margaretha Sitanggang	sitanggang@unfpa.org		X
YAP	Gyna Lydiana	re.graph.green@gmail.com		X
Laos				
Lao Youth Network	Sili Hansana.	sili888777666@hotmail.com		X
UNFPA	Viengthong Manivone. Loreto B. Roquero. HIV/AIDS & RH Programme Specialist.	manivone@unfpa.org roquero@unfpa.org		X
Malaysia				
Malaysia AIDS Council	Adeeba Kamarulzaman. Bakhtiar Talhah. Executive Director.	adeeba.kamarulzaman@gmail.com btalhah@mac.org.my		X
UNFPA	Yeok Kim Yeoh. Assistant Representative.	yykim@unfpa.org		X
Mongolia				
UNFPA	S. Navchaa. Uranchimeg.	navchaa@unfpa.org uranchimeg@unfpa.org		X
Myanmar				
Danish Red Cross Myanmar	Anna.	drc@myanmar.com.mm		X
ActionAid Myanmar	Shihab Uddin Ahamad. Country Manager.	Shihab.Uddin@actionaid.org		X
UNFPA	Ne Win. Assistant Representative (HIV and youth).	nwin@unfpa.org		X
Philippines				
Cordillera Youth Center	Theresa Manglicmot.	cordillerayouthcenter@yahoo.com.ph	X	X
Philippine NGO Support Program, Inc. (PHANSuP)	Roberto A.O. Nebrida	raonebrida@yahoo.com		X
RHAN - Youth	Francisco M. Dela Tonga	francisco.d@likhaan.org	X	X
UNFPA	Emee Lei Albano. Youth Advocate.	albano@unfpa.org		X
YAP	Lady Lisondra	lisondralady@yahoo.com		X
Thailand				
UNFPA	Srisuman Sartsara.	sartsara@unfpa.org		X
Timor Leste				
Marie Stopes International	Melinda Miles-Morland. Country Director.	msi_timorleste@yahoo.com		X
UNFPA	Pornchai Suchitta. Representative.	suchitta@unfpa.org		X
Vietnam				
Hands In Hands	Ha Minh Loan.	quynhloan028@gmail.com		X
Marie Stopes International	Dinh Thi Nhuan.	nhuan.dt@mariestopes.org.vn		X
Save The Children	Lisa Sherburne.	lisas@savethechildren.org.vn		X
UNFPA	Dao Khanh Tung. Duong Van Dat.	ktung@unfpa.org.vn dat@unfpa.org		X
World Population Foundation	Jerry Clewett.	jerry@wpfvn.org		X

Organisation	Person	Contact details	Call / Meet	Email
Afghanistan				
Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA)	Mr. Akbari, CEO. Dr Feriba Hosham. Adolescent RH and HIV/AIDS Program Manager.	nakbari@afga.org.af	X	X
DMYA	Ms. Mahbooba Paygham. Director, Youth Programme.	Mahbooba.paygham@gmail.com		X
Helvetas	Dr. Khalil Anwari.	khalil.anwari@helvetas.org		X
Ministry of Public Health	Dr Alawi. Drs Nafisa Shouibi.	alawi_dr@yahoo.com drs_nafisa@yahoo.com		X
UNFPA	Dr Abdul Rahman. National Program Officer. Dr Zibulnessa Alam. Dr Ahmadullah Molakhail. Dr Prasanna Gunasakera. Naveeda Khawaja.	abarahman@unfpa.org zibulnessa@unfpa.org molakhail@unfpa.org gunasakera@unfpa.org		X
WHO	Dr. Adela Mubasher.	mubashera@afg.emro.who.int		X
Bangladesh				
Department of Youth Development	Md. Mizanur Rahman.	mizan_yep@yahoo.com		X
NEARS	Dr. K M Rezaul Haque. Chair.	k_haque2@yahoo.com	X	
Ministry of Education	Prof Dr. Md. Sirazul Hoque. Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education.	prof_sirazul@yahoo.com	X	
Population Council	Mr. Ubaidur Rob. Ms. Ismat Bhuiya			X
UNFPA	Mr. Noor Mohammad. Assistant Representative. Dr. Ruh Afza. Project Officer (Youth).	noor@unfpa.org afza@unfpa.org youthruhi@yahoo.com		X
Bhutan				
RENEW	Mr. Pema Gyaltsen.	pema_gyaltsen@hotmail.com	X	X
UNFPA	Mr. Yeshley Dorji.	dorji@unfpa.org		X
Youth Development Fund	Mrs. Yandey Penjor. Director.	ydf@druknet.bt		X
India				
Expressions India	Dr. Jitendra Nagpal. Programme Director.	jitendranagpal@rediffmail.com	X	X
Mamta	Ms. Deepti Agarwal. Deputy Director. Ms. Priyanka Sreenath. Mr. Faiyaz Akhtar.	mamta@ndf.vsnl.net.in ; mamta@yrshr.org	X	X
Pravah	Ms. Ritikaa Khunnah.	ritikaa.khunnah@pravah.org	X	X
UNFPA	Ms. Jaya.	jaya@unfpa.org	X	X

Organisation	Person	Contact details	Call / Meet	Email
Iran				
Family Planning Association	Mr. Ashkan Alavi.	a.alavi@fpairi.org		X
	Ms. Mitra Ahmadinejad.	mitra.ahmadinejad@gmail.com	X	X
Mashaad Positive Club	Mr. Vahid Nobahar. CEO.	vnobahar@gmail.com		X
	Ms. Marzieh Keramati.	raintree.mk@gmail.com	X	X
UNFPA	Ms. Soudabeh Ahmad Zedeh. Resident Representative.		X	
	Dr. Ali-Reza Vassigh.	vassigh@unfpa.org	X	X
	Ms. Farideh Farahani.			X
Maldives				
Ministry of Youth and Sports	Nazhath.	nazhath.a@youthsports.gov.mv		X
Society for Health Education (SHE)	Mohamed Ajmal. CEO. Ms. Fazna Shakir, Asst. Executive Director	she8804@dhivehinet.net.mv	X	
UNFPA	Ms. Shadiya Ibrahim. Ms. Fathimath Zuhana	ibrahim@unfpa.org	X	X
Nepal				
Association of Youth Organisations Nepal (AYON)	Mr. Kabindra Burlakoti. President.	Kabindra@ayon.org	X	
	Mr. Deependra Chamlagain. Vice president.	deependra@ayon.org		X
UNFPA	Ms. Aradhana Gurung-Shrestha, Youth Programme Officer.	agurung@unfpa.org		X
Youth Action Network	Mr. Pawan Roy. Chair.	pawan@youthaction.org.np		X
Pakistan				
Aware Girls	Ms. Gulalai Ismail	aware_girls@yahoo.com	X	X
ILO	Mr. Saifullah Chodhery. Senior Programme Officer.	msaif@ilo.org		X
UNFPA	Ms. Sadia Atta Mehmood	sadia.mehmood@un.org.pk	X	X
Y-Peer	Muhammad Shahzad Khan. National Coordinator, Y- Peer.	M_skhan7862003@yahoo.com	X	X
YAN	General Secretary, YAN			
Sri Lanka				
Family Planning Association	Mr. Gamini Wanasekara. ED.	fpa@fpasilanka.org		X
National Youth Coalition of Sri Lanka	Mr. Milinda Rajapaksha. Convenor.	milinda.rajapaksha@gmail.com	X	X
UNFPA	Ms. Chandani Galwaduge.	galwaduge@unfpa.org		X
	Ms. Revati Chawla	chawla@unfpa.org		

Annex 3: Country Networks Overview

Networks and Organisations

This research explored 21 different countries across Asia, and mapped over 75 networks and organisations relevant to youth SRH. For some countries, additional networks and organisations were listed for future exploration. This is a first effort at regional mapping on this topic; some UNFPA COs have their own mapping reports to complement these.

This overview has been produced to profile the different networks and organisations identified; more information on all of these can be found in the Directory: Networks and Organisations for youth SRH in Asia.

No.	Name	Brief Description
Afghanistan		
1	Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA)	NGO with Youth Peer Educators, aim to build youth network.
Bangladesh		
2	Department of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports	Government supporting youth clubs and organisations
3	Network for Ensuring Adolescent Reproductive Rights and Services	Non formal Network, Secretariat at Marie Stopes, 55 member NGOs working on SRHR.
4	Disadvantaged Adolescents' Working NGOs (DAWN) Forum	Non formal advocacy network working with vulnerable and excluded youth, 32 NGO members.
5	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Ministry of Education.	Used the Bangladesh Scouts and Girl Guides network to reach out to youth with peer education.
6	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society	NGO with national level network and youth members.
7	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporter Association	Opportunity to increase SRH / HIV education for young female garment factory workers.
Bhutan		
8	Youth Volunteers in Action (Y-VIA) network of the Youth Development Fund (YDF)	Non formal youth network, direct youth participation, potential to reach out to vulnerable and excluded youth.
9	Respect, Educate, Nurture, Empower Women (Renew)	NGO working on SRH, youth volunteers, wants to develop network.
10	Save the Children	International NGO with youth-friendly services.
Cambodia		
11	ChildSafe Network	Youth serving network for the protection of vulnerable and at risk children.
12	Khmer Youth Association	Local NGO, many youth volunteers, ARH project
13	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia	Local NGO, IPPF MA, youth volunteers
14	Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network (CPN +)	National network, has youth members.
15	HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee	Umbrella organisation, around 20 members working on youth SRH
16	Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA)	Local HIV NGO with network of over 60 NGO/CBO partners
17	The CYTI Alliance	International network of organizations, marginalised urban children and youth.

No.	Name	Brief Description
18	Cambodian Red Cross	Government supported youth programme with large youth network of students
19	Youth Committee for Unity and Development Network	Coalition of 6-8 NGOs advocating for national youth policy
20	UNCT YAP	Youth advisory committee for UN
China		
21	China Youth Network	Youth SRHR network, project of the China Family Planning Association
DPR Korea		
22	KFPA	IPPF MA, has SRH programming.
India		
23	SRIJAN (Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives for Joint Action Network)	National youth network with Secretariat at Mamta organisation.
24	National Peer Educators Forum (NPEF)	Youth network formed by Expressions India linked to schools and colleges.
25	Student Partnership Worldwide	Non formal youth network with volunteer peer educators at state level.
26	Indian Committee of Youth Organisations (ICYO)	Umbrella Organisation for Youth Networking
27	The YP (Youth Parliament) Foundation	NGO
28	Pravah	NGO supporting youth citizenship and action.
29	Youth Venture (India)	NGO supporting youth social initiatives.
Indonesia		
30	UNFPA YAP Indonesia	Youth advisory committee for UNFPA.
31	Independent Youth Alliance	Youth-led network with 40 focal points, advocacy on SRHR and HIV
32	International Planned Parenthood Association (IPPA)	NGO, IPPF MA with Youth Centres and youth training projects.
33	MoH Working Group	Government group on Adolescent health.
Iran		
34	Family Planning Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FPA/IRI)	NGO, IPPF MA, non-formal youth volunteer network.
35	Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS)	NGO with youth volunteers and HIV project.
36	Hamyaran Mosbat - The Mashhad Positive Club, Iran	Non formal network reaching most-at-risk youth
Laos		
37	Lao Youth Action Program (LYAP)	NGO with youth volunteers and HIV project.
38	Lao Youth Network	Youth Platform for local NGOs.
39	MoH's Thematic Working Groups on Sex Workers and MSM	Potential for increased youth participation.
40	Takieng Lao Community Theatre Group and Kabong Lao Puppet Artistic Group in Vientiane	Youth-led initiatives on HIV, AIDS and sexuality.
41	Burnet Institute	International NGO with peer led interventions for young women.
42	Lao Women's Union (LWU)	Government body implementing Migrant YSRH Project and Vientiane Youth Centre for Health and Development.
Malaysia		
43	Kafe@teen	Government-run services for adolescent reproductive health
44	PROSTAR	Government-funded organisation for youth and HIV.

No.	Name	Brief Description
45	Youth Centres of Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia (FRHAM)	Youth friendly SRH services of local NGO, IPPF MA
46	Malaysian AIDS Council	HIV/AIDS NGO reaching most at risk
Maldives		
47	Society for Health Education (SHE)	Informal network of IPPF MA, plans to develop youth network.
48	Youth Centre of the Ministry of Youth and Sports	Government department conducting youth activities
Mongolia		
49	Teen Boards at Threshold Adolescent Health Centres	Informal youth network linked to youth-friendly Health Centres
50	Human Development, RH and Rights NGO network	29 NGO members, 10 working on youth, convened by UNFPA
51	YAP Mongolia	Youth advisory committee for UN
Myanmar		
52	Youth Working Group	NGOs working together with UNFPA and UNICEF on youth
53	Youth Network	Emerging group of youth organisations, convened by ActionAID
54	Interfaith Youth Coalition on AIDS - Myanmar (ICYA)	CBO / Group of youth organisations from different religions with HIV projects
Nepal		
55	Youth Action Nepal (YOAC)	Youth led network with SRHR and HIV programme, member of AYON.
56	Association of Youth Organisations Nepal (AYON)	NGO with 52 member organisations working on youth, strong programming on SRHR and youth participation.
Pakistan		
57	Youth Advocacy Network (YAN)	Youth network in process of registration, national secretariat with provincial Chapters, working on SRHR and youth participation.
58	Y-PEER Network	Initiated by UNFPA in 2009, 40 organisational members working on youth participation and SRHR.
59	AWARE GIRLS	NGO with young women's network, working on HIV and family planning.
Philippines		
60	Reproductive Health Advocacy Network – Youth (RHAN Youth)	Youth-led network, part of SRH NGO network, advocacy work.
61	UNFPA YAP Philippines	Youth advisory committee for UNFPA
62	YPEER Pilpinas	Launched December 2009, 17 national members.
63	Youth AIDS Filipinas Alliance	Online network of Filipino Youth working on HIV
Sri Lanka		
64	National Youth Coalition of Sri Lanka (NYCSL)	Youth Network, advocacy on HIV
65	National Youth Services Council (NYSC)	Government organisation with youth clubs
66	Sarvodaya	NGO, strong youth participation, plan to mainstream YSRHR into existing work on leadership development
67	YMCA	
68	AISEEC	International students' organisation with HIV project.



No.	Name	Brief Description
Thailand		
69	UNFPA Thailand YAP	Youth advisory committee for UNFPA
70	Youth Network on HIV/AIDS-Youth Net	Youth-led network with national coverage
Timor Leste		
71	Fundasaun Timor Hari'i (FTH)	Local HIV NGO working with most-at-risk
72	Marie Stopes International Timor Leste	International NGO with HIV project, plans to expand adolescent RH project.
Vietnam		
73	Hands in Hands	Youth-led organisation with work experience on SRHR and HIV
74	dance4life Vietnam	Youth participation mechanism for HIV awareness
75	Youth Union	Socio-political organisation with strong youth membership



