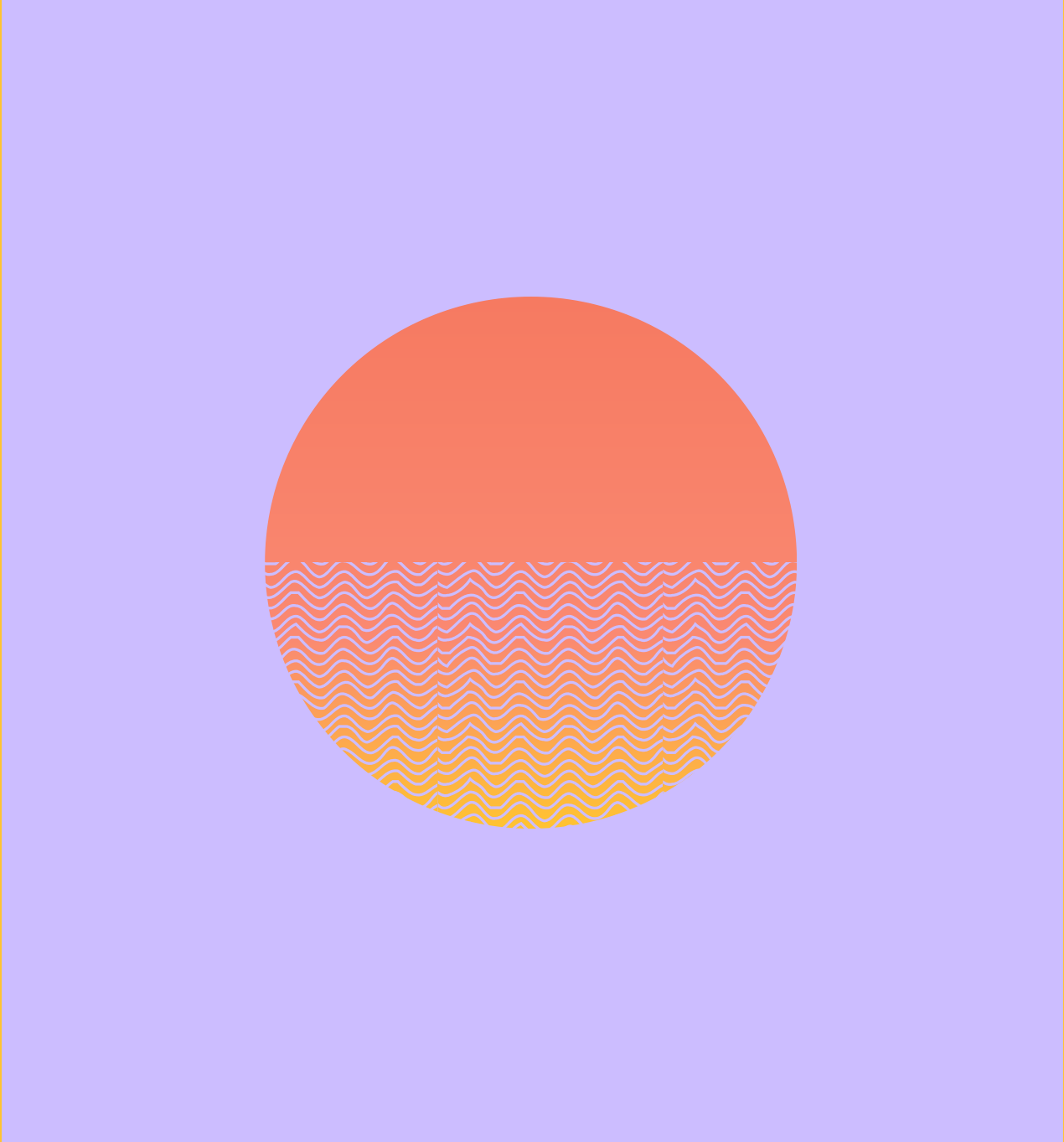




YOUTH LEAD

Annual Report 2024



Youth LEAD





Youth LEAD Annual Report 2023

Edited by Leo Villar

February 2024 (c) Youth LEAD

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of Youth LEAD. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to the Youth LEAD Secretariat

Youth LEAD, Asia Pacific Network of Young Key Populations

75/20 Ocean Tower 2, 17th Floor

Soi Sukhumvit 19, Khlong Toey Neua, Khet Wattana Bangkok, 10110, Thailand

www.youthleadap.org info@youth-lead.org

Youth LEAD is the regional network of young key populations (YKPs) that works with young people at high risk of HIV exposure and young people living with HIV in the Asia Pacific region. Youth LEAD aims to empower young key populations and ensure more meaningful engagement of YKPs in all levels of decision-making that impact their lives.

Scan the QR code for Youth LEAD's socials:







Munkh-Erdene Davaajav
Youth LEAD International Board
Vice-Chair



FOREWORD

The past year has been one of growth, resilience, and strengthened collaboration for Youth LEAD. With the addition of new activists to our Secretariat, we have continued to expand and scale up our networks and alliances, not only within the Asia-Pacific region but also on a global basis.

Our engagement with the Global Fund saw key activities such as the CLM assessment meeting in Nepal and the Y2Y Consortium meeting in April 2024, both aimed at enhancing the involvement of young key populations in the HIV response across different regions. Meanwhile, under the Robert Carr Fund, we marked the fifth anniversary of the 4Youth Consortium with a strategic meeting in April, reinforcing our collective strength and agreeing to further strengthen it.

Our partnerships with UNAIDS, DFAT, APTN, WHO, UNESCO, and UNFPA played a crucial role in advancing our mission. In Papua New Guinea, KPAC and World Vision supported a critical YKP training program, while the Seven Alliance facilitated a regional CLM workshop in September. Throughout the year, the Asia-Pacific Learning Hub remained a vital resource for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

A remarkable achievement of 2024 was our organization, active participation and leadership at various key events such as the Youth Forum in preparation for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in February, the IATT on YKP webinar in March, the Summit of the Future in August and September, the AWID Forum and the 55th UNAIDS PCB Meeting in December 2024.

I would like to thank the Youth LEAD Secretariat, focal points, country partners and international partners sincerely for making all of the above possible. In a period marked by geopolitical uncertainties and shifting international development aid tendencies, we remain steadfast in our mission. We will continue to persevere, adapt, and advocate tirelessly for youth leadership, education, advocacy, and development.





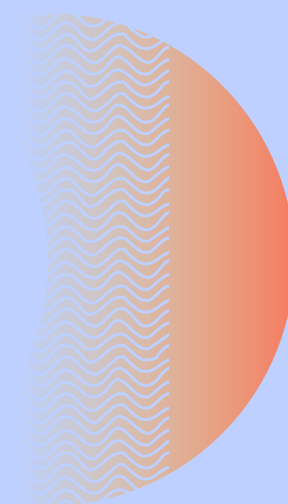
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. FOREWORD	i
2. ABBREVIATION	iii
3. INTRODUCTION	1
Secretariat staff updates	
4. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS	3
Programmes	
Global Fund	
Robert Carr Fund	
UNAIDS	
UNAIDS & APTN	
UNAIDS & DFAT	
UNAIDS & WHO	
UNESCO & UNFPA	
KPAC & World Vision	
Seven Alliance	
Advocacy	
APFSD 2024	
IATT on YKP	
Summit of the Future 2024	
Asia-Pacific Conference on LGBTQI+ Health	
Adolescence SRHR & HIV 2024	
International Day of the Girl Child Webinar	
World AIDS Day	
AWID Forum 2024	
55th UNAIDS PCB Meeting	



ABBREVIATIONS

CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CMI	Count Me In Youth Consortium
CRG-SI	Community, Rights and Gender – Strategic Initiative
C19RM	COVID-19 Response Mechanism (Robert Carr Fund)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
HLM	High-Level Meeting
EOF	Exceptional Opportunity Funding
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations
INPUD	International Network of People Who Use Drugs
NSWP	Global Network of Sex Work Projects
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
RCF	
SKPA	Sustainability of Key Populations in Asia-Pacific Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
UNAIDS RST	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Regional Support Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
YKP	Young Key Populations



INTRODUCTION

The mission towards catalyzing change and empowering young key populations in the Asia-Pacific is full of challenges. With the fast-paced and ever-changing landscape of HIV around the world, Youth LEAD had a busy year this 2024. Despite challenges, Youth LEAD made significant achievements including conducting several capacity building trainings, publishing a training manual, and participating in multiple regional and global advocacy spaces.

Building the capacity of young key populations to engage and advocate for themselves in HIV spaces has always been at the core of Youth LEAD’s work. This year, Youth LEAD conducted several trainings upon updating Youth LEAD’s core youth leadership training manual, TeenGen. Youth LEAD validated the TeenGen v.2 during a master training in January, supported national youth-led partners in Laos and Vietnam from March to May, and later published the manual in October. Youth LEAD also used the TeenGen v.2 to empower young people in Papua New Guinea by building their capacity on organizational development and movement building. Youth LEAD also supported youth- and trans-led networks in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, through small grants for young trans people. Apart from youth leadership, Youth LEAD continued its work on mental health, training young people on coping strategies and national advocacy for mental health.

Advocacy is another of the core work pillars of Youth LEAD. This year is no different, as Youth LEAD engaged in youth and HIV advocacy in spaces including the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development Youth Forum, Summit of the Future, HIV & Adolescence Workshop, and Asia-Pacific Conference on LGBTQI+ Health among many others. Youth LEAD also continues its support for young key populations who are also part of the LGBTQI+ community. Youth LEAD supported national partners in Vietnam to organize webinars and an in-person consultation on trans youth issues, culminating in a national LGBTQI+ forum where trans youth priorities were fed into the national LGBTQI+ strategic plan.

Throughout all this, Youth LEAD continues to value partnership and collaboration. Youth LEAD continued its strategic partnerships with UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, IATT on YKP, and the Seven Alliance; while also building new partnerships with the likes of WHO, AHF, and World Vision. Youth LEAD finished 2024 tired (an acknowledgement with respect to our mental health!) but also motivated and hopeful to secure more funding to continue dedicated support for youth-led networks in the Asia-Pacific region.



SECRETARIAT STAFF UPDATES

Program Officer

On August 2024, Youth LEAD hired Tan Fok Jun (Jeremy) (he/him) after Vanessa Monley's departure from the position. Jeremy is from Malaysia and has been actively working with young key populations, teen mothers, and marginalized communities and focuses on HIV advocacy, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, comprehensive sexuality education, youth leadership, policy and legislation, and community mobilization. A Youth LEAD focal point for many years, Jeremy is now bringing his passion for creating platforms for youth advocacy and policy change to our team.



Project & Networking Officer

In June 2024, Agatha Syailendra Hamdan (they/she) joined the Youth LEAD team as Project & Networking Officer, taking over the role of Legee Tamir. A young trans woman from Indonesia, Agatha started their activism at the age of 13 on Queer and Feminist issues, and later expanded to HIV, Young People, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Agatha has been a Youth LEAD focal point in Indonesia since 2021 and will be bringing their expertise on programme management, advocacy, queer and trans youth issues.







ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Global Fund

Development of the Assessment of YKP Involvement in CLM in Nepal

Young Key Populations (YKPs) in Nepal—including young people living with HIV (YPLHIV), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender individuals, and injecting drug users (IDUs)—experience significant health disparities and societal marginalization. These issues are further compounded by the lack of localized, actionable data. While organizations like the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS Nepal (NAP+N), National Federation of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (NFWLHA), Blue Diamond Society Nepal (BDS), and Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh Nepal (JMMS) have made strides in advocacy and service delivery, a critical data gap remains for YKPs aged 18-29. This deficiency hinders effective advocacy, the design of targeted interventions, and the realization of health equity for marginalized youth populations.

Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) represents a powerful approach to empower YKPs to actively participate in monitoring their health outcomes and advocating for their rights. YKP LEAD Nepal initiated a project to address this gap by assessing the current engagement of YKPs in CLM and disseminating key findings to inform future interventions. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the project's activities, findings, and outcomes, offering evidence-based insights and strategic recommendations for enhancing YKP involvement in CLM initiatives.

In 2024, with the support from CE-SI and Youth LEAD, YKP Lead Nepal developed the Assessment of YKP Involvement in CLM in Nepal. The assessment focused on understanding the participation levels of YKPs aged 18-29 in CLM initiatives. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the assessment identified barriers such as lack of citizenship documentation, insufficient youth-friendly provisions, and gaps in service awareness. The attached questionnaire served as the primary tool for data collection, ensuring a standardized and inclusive approach.



The findings from the assessment includes:

Qualitative

1. Barriers Identified:

- **Citizenship Issues:** Many YKPs, particularly orphans and double orphans, were excluded from health services due to their inability to obtain citizenship documents. This exclusion significantly impacted their access to HIV-related care and social protection schemes.
- **Youth-Friendliness:** Participants frequently highlighted that service providers lacked adequate training in youth-centered approaches, leading to discomfort during consultations. Respondents described health centers as intimidating or judgmental, especially for marginalized subgroups like transgender individuals and injecting drug users.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** A large number of participants were unaware of the policies and services available to them. This gap was especially evident in rural and underserved regions, where outreach programs were either absent or ineffective.

2. Motivators:

- Respondents who participated in CLM activities cited personal health improvements and a sense of community solidarity as key motivators. They also appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences and advocate for changes.
- Peer networks and role models within the YKP community played a crucial role in encouraging participation. Success stories and visible impacts of CLM activities inspired further engagement.

3. Challenges in Feedback Mechanisms:

- Participants expressed frustration about the lack of follow-up on their feedback. Many felt their concerns were documented but not acted upon, which discouraged future participation.
- Language barriers and technical jargon in surveys and communications were cited as obstacles, particularly for respondents with lower literacy levels.

Quantitative

1. Awareness: 40% of respondents reported being moderately aware of CLM activities (average score of 4/10). Awareness levels varied significantly based on region, with urban YKPs demonstrating higher awareness than those in rural areas.
2. Participation: 45% of YKPs actively participated in CLM activities, with a lower participation rate (35%) observed among orphans and double orphans, who cited citizenship issues as a major deterrent.
3. Satisfaction: Satisfaction with existing health services averaged 5/10, indicating significant gaps in service delivery. Respondents highlighted long waiting times and insufficient privacy as key factors lowering satisfaction.
4. Barriers to Access: 52% of YKPs indicated that logistical issues, such as travel costs, prevented them from accessing CLM activities regularly.
5. Youth-Friendliness: 40% felt the services were not tailored to their specific needs, reflecting a gap in inclusivity and youth-friendly service provisions.
6. Perceived Importance of CLM: 50% of respondents rated the importance of CLM initiatives at 5/10 or higher, suggesting strong support for expanding such programs.





Youth 2 Youth (Y2Y) Consortium

The Youth to Youth (Y2Y) Consortium, a collaborative initiative comprising three regional and global partner organisations, Youth LEAD, Y+ Global, and Youth Organisation for Drug Addiction (YODA), gathered for the first in-person planning meeting on 3 April 2024. The consortium was formed in early 2024 to align and strategize efforts for the upcoming three-year collaboration under the Global Fund's community engagement strategic initiative (CE SI).

During the meeting, the three networks reviewed plans and discussed interventions for their top priority countries: Mongolia (Youth LEAD), Ukraine (YODA), and Cameroon (Y+ Global). The consortium's primary objective is to support youth-led, inclusive, and effective engagement in the Global Fund processes, with a focus on young key populations (YKPs) and addressing the unique challenges faced by those most affected by HIV.

In Cameroon, Y+ Global has partnered with the Center for Advocacy in Gender Equality and Action for Development (CAGEAD) and CS4ME to implement advocacy activities related to the Global Fund. These activities involve engaging young people in the country-coordinating mechanisms and training civil society around the meaningful engagement of young people in national HIV responses. They also plan to organise workshops on the GC7 process and develop and implement the #UPROOT roadmap with other youth-led organisations, empowering them to monitor Global Fund activities.

Youth LEAD and their partner Youth Lead Mongolia are focusing their efforts on qualitative data generation and building on the success of the sensitisation of healthcare workers on YKP issues project, done in collaboration with UNAIDS and DFAT.

Youth LEAD aims to increase the awareness of YKPs on HIV prevalence and conditions and train youth leaders on community-led monitoring, HIV support services, human rights, and The Global Fund processes. Through these activities, Youth LEAD aims to build the capacity of national youth-led networks to advocate for data-driven decision-making and foster a supportive and inclusive environment to provide healthcare services for YKPs.

YODA and Way Home are partnering in Ukraine to promote harm reduction efforts and education on young key population issues among healthcare workers. Despite the ongoing conflict in the country, YODA is increasing its efforts to empower youth leaders with essential skills in community-led monitoring, access to HIV support services, knowledge of human rights, and insights on Global Fund processes. The activities under this grant, and similar to those of Y+ Global and Youth LEAD, will include workshops on harm reduction strategies and community-led monitoring, sensitisation sessions for healthcare providers, and advocacy for policy changes to improve access to services.

With the support of the Global Fund CE SI, Y2Y aims to fill in those gaps and missing links. Through capacity building, technical assistance, and mentoring, Y2Y is pooling its resources, expertise, and connections to help drive policy change and help organisations at the country level improve their funding requests and engagement in the Global Fund processes.



The Development of Report on Accessibility and Acceptability of Mental Health Services for Young People Who Use Drugs in Nepal

Mental health challenges and substance use disorders often co-occur, presenting significant barriers to well-being and quality of life for young people in Nepal. Despite the growing need, access to appropriate mental health services remains limited in the country.

In 2024, with the support from CE-SI, Youth LEAD developed a Report on Accessibility and Acceptability of Mental Health Services for Young People Who Use Drugs in Nepal. The report had four main objectives. Firstly, it aimed to assess anxiety and depression levels among young drug users using the HADS scale. Secondly, it sought to identify barriers to accessing mental health care with the BACE scale. Thirdly, it aimed to understand participants' perspectives on mental health services' availability and acceptability in Nepal through open ended inquiries. Finally, it analyzed drug use patterns among participants. These objectives guided an investigation into the accessibility and acceptability of mental health services for young drug users in Nepal. The report analyzed the mental health status and barriers to mental health services among 100 young drug users in Nepal. Findings from the study revealed significant proportions experiencing anxiety and depression, with 43% reporting mild anxiety, 39% moderate anxiety, and 18% severe anxiety. For depression, 72% had mild symptoms, 24% moderate symptoms, and 24% severe symptoms. The assessment of barriers to mental health care indicated a mean score of 1.67 (SD = 0.89) with an IQR of 43, demonstrating variability in barriers.

Qualitative data showcased diverse mental health perceptions, categorized as Positive Understanding (17.4%), Negative Understanding (46.5%), Misunderstandings (27.9%), and General Descriptions (9.3%). These findings underscore the intricate nature of mental health challenges and the necessity for tailored and accessible mental health services for this vulnerable demographic. The findings underscore the significant mental health challenges and barriers to care faced by young drug users in Nepal, emphasizing the urgent need for tailored, accessible mental health services for this vulnerable population.



Robert Carr Fund*4Youth Consortium 2024*

Marking the five years since the 4 Youth Consortium was formed in 2019, Youth LEAD, Y+ Global, Youth RISE, and YPEER Asia-Pacific, convened in Bangkok on 1-2 April 2024. The in-person meeting was an opportunity for all Consortium partners to review progress, reflecting on substantial achievements in 2023. These reflections highlighted the progress made not only as an individual network but as a consortium, setting the stage for meaningful conversations on addressing rising challenges within the HIV response.

Over the years, the 4Youth Consortium, supported by the Robert Carr Fund has played a crucial role in empowering youth-led organisations and networks to secure grants and larger funding streams. This has been possible through the partners' dedicated capacity-building and collaborative institutional strengthening initiatives, which have successfully equipped young people with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate complex funding landscapes. In this light, providing financial and technical support to youth-led organisations remain a top priority for the Consortium. The meeting highlighted the need for national network registration and capacity building to diversify funding sources as pivotal steps towards strengthening youth-led HIV response. These concerns affirm the value of the Consortium and its impact through the Robert Carr Fund, which has supported many organisations in becoming registered and having the capacity to apply for domestic and international funding over the last few years.

A significant outcome of this year's meeting was the agreement to establish a stronger 4Youth Consortium profile. This strategic move is designed to streamline collaborative efforts and amplify their impact. The consortium also agreed to embark on a comprehensive donor mapping exercise to identify and engage potential funding sources that align with their mission and objectives and to see how the 4Youth Consortium's reach can be expanded into more regions and across more countries.

Besides the Consortium Meeting, Consortium members continued planned activities in light of unforeseen financial constraints.





Trans Asia-Pacific and Africa Solidarity Consortium

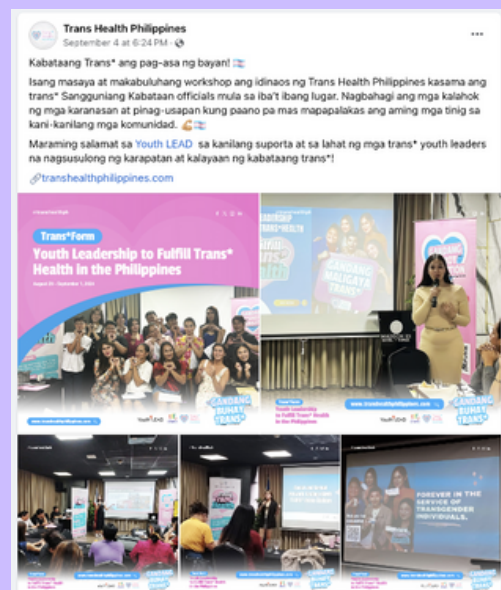
This year, Youth LEAD continued its seed funding activities under the Trans Asia-Pacific and Africa Solidarity (TAPAS) Consortium funded by the Robert Carr Fund. Youth LEAD contracted 3 trans- and youth-led organizations; namely Misfyt Foundation (India), Inti Muda Indonesia (Indonesia), and TLF Share (Philippines) to conduct activities to build the capacity and empower young transgender people to engage in HIV and LGBTIQ+ rights advocacy in their communities.

Misfyt Trans Youth Foundation conducted a 2-day workshop on trans youth capacity building with an objective to provide a platform for young trans leaders to connect, share, and create knowledge and information with respect to movement building, as well as to strengthen Misfyt’s decision making and accountability mechanism to include diverse and marginalised youth voices. The workshop was attended by 21 trans youth participants from Dehradun, India.

Based on the workshop, Misfyt developed a Youth Organization Building Toolkit. The toolkit is a list of resources compiled in a pdf form for easier circulation and access that puts together the above video tutorials along with key resource documents such as sample concept notes, list of funding opportunities, articles on Indian non-profit laws that can considerably help a person in understanding the ecosystem. The Toolkit was launched in a dissemination webinar on 12 November 2024.

In the Philippines, TLF Share implemented Project TRANSform, a workshop to increase capacity to advocate for trans youth rights and improved HIV services of transgender Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)(youth) officials, aged 16 to 35, to integrate Trans Health Philippines’ activities and programs into their local agendas. The workshop was held from August 30 to September 1, 2024, about key issues affecting transgender people, such as healthcare access, HIV/AIDS awareness, and discrimination. Through a combination of lectures, group discussions, and collaborative activities, participants were trained to be more effective in implementing programs for the trans community.

In Indonesia, Inti Muda Indonesia strengthen the capacity of its constituents through promoting inclusive leadership and enhancing the capacity of young key populations, particularly transgender individuals. The project focused on the regeneration of leadership at the provincial level and targeted capacity-building sessions to improve organizational governance and strategic planning within Inti Muda Indonesia.





Youth Org Building Toolkit

A collection of resources to support young trans & queer young leaders build and lead organisations



Are you a trans* Sangguniang Kabataan or Barangay Official?

Be a part of PROJECT TRANS*form!

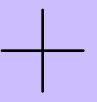
Join Trans Health Philippines in a series of capacity development sessions for advocacy campaigns, lobbying, and implementation of transgender-inclusive and transgender-responsive healthcare services within your barangays.

Thảo luận trực tuyến T-Junction

đuổi **HÌNH** bắt **BÓNG**

Thời gian: 19h30, Thứ 6, 29/03/2024

Địa điểm: Sự kiện trực tuyến trên Zoom



In addition to the seed funding activities, Youth LEAD also supported Lighthouse Social Enterprise in Vietnam to organize a national Trans Caucus where trans people can discuss pressing issues for the trans community in Vietnam including barriers to healthcare and human rights. Lighthouse partnered with two transgender-led organizations in Vietnam, IT'S T TIME (ITT) and FTM (Female to Male) Vietnam Organization (FVO), to organize three webinars aimed at empowering transgender youth advocates and discussing key trans rights issues, engaging nearly 100 activists. The webinars covered diverse topics that transgender people are most interested in including Trans visibility, media representation, transgender health, and the influence of media on gender-affirming care, culminating in a strategic Trans Caucus event.

The Trans Caucus was held in Hanoi on 7 June and involved 23 trans youth leaders below 30 representing communities from 6 sub-regions in Vietnam. Participants engaged in interactive activities highlighting existing privileges and power dynamics, explored theories of power, and connected these concepts to real-life situations, work, and activism. Through simulation exercises, attendees placed their preferences, and applied advocacy skills. Based on community discussions and identified priorities, the trans youth leaders developed a [strategic action plan](#) for the Transgender rights movement in Vietnam for period of 2024-2025 in light of the anticipated enactment of the LGBTI Rights Law by the end of 2025 from the Vietnamese National Assembly.

The 23 transgender youth activists who attended the Trans Caucus were also actively engaged in the 5th LGBTI National Summit—Stronger Together 2024, themed “Navigating the Challenges, Shaping the Future,” a 3-day event for LGBTI activists. At this high-level platform, two representatives from the Trans Caucus had the opportunity to present the [strategic action plan](#) for the transgender rights movement in Vietnam for 2024-2025 and others participated proactively in leading the discussion. This presentation made a significant contribution to the overall 2024-2027 Strategic Action Plan for the LGBTI Movement in Vietnam, as developed during the summit.



UNAIDS

YKP-led CLM Implementation in Indonesia

Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) provides an accountability mechanism that operates at various levels, spearheaded by local community organizations. CLM involves evidence-based monitoring and advocacy efforts, focusing on policy recommendations. By directly implementing several monitoring methods, the affected communities ensure that the delivery of health services is closely scrutinized and improved. In essence, CLM empowers those most impacted by HIV to lead the charge in enhancing the quality and accountability of HIV services.

As a part of strengthening the youth leadership on CLM at the country level, Inti Muda Indonesia (the National Network of Young Key Populations and Young People with HIV) conducted CLM training for its provincial member with financial support by UNAIDS Regional Support Team through Youth LEAD, this training aims to strengthen the knowledge and technical understanding of CLM among young key populations in Indonesia and support CLM efforts at the country level, especially in data collection from young key populations to enhance the current CLM component in Indonesia, while at the same time promote youth-led monitoring and meaningful involvement of young key populations in the CLM process.

This training was conducted for 3 days from 3-5 July 2024, and was attended by 10 participants, each representing one of the 10 provincial members of Inti Muda Indonesia. During the training, participants discussed the current CLM implementation in their respective province, as CLM was incorporated in the Global Fund's country proposal of Indonesia for 2024-2026. Participants also learned on how to conduct their own CLM and deliberated on the strategies to enhance youth participation in the CLM implementation.

In addition to training with young key populations, Inti Muda Indonesia invited stakeholders from UNAIDS country office in Indonesia, Indonesia AIDS Coalition (the Global Fund community PR responsible for CLM implementation in Indonesia until 2026), and CLM INA Task Force (A taskforce established to integrate all community initiatives in CLM in Indonesia). The three-day training allowed participants to discuss the issues faced by young key populations when it comes to participating in the CLM process meaningfully, and an opportunity to hear the update on the CLM process under the Global Fund and other related initiatives.



UNAIDS & APTN

Regional Mental Health Training: Lift Up! Your Mental Health, Your Power

On 11-13 November, Youth LEAD in partnership with Y-PEER Asia Pacific and Youth Voices Count, with support from UNAIDS RSTAP and APTN, organized “Lift Up: Your Mental Health, Your Power!—a transformative regional mental health training. The training was co-facilitated by SCDI Vietnam and attended by 22 youth participants. This impactful workshop empowered young key populations across Asia with essential skills in mental resilience, emotional strength, and mental health awareness.

The Training is designed to equip participants (aged 15-24) with essential skills to acknowledge and manage their emotions and feelings, develop effective coping mechanisms, and increase their knowledge and awareness of mental health services. The workshop focused on practical, hands-on training, enabling young people to identify and articulate their mental health needs, understand the importance of emotional well-being, and build resilience in the face of life’s challenges. Youth LEAD also brought all participants to the Institute of HIV Research and Innovation (IHRI) to learn about the trans health programme of Tangerine Clinic presented by Khun Jemma Samitpol.



UNAIDS & WHO

Training Workshop on Accelerating HIV and STIs Prevention for Young People from Key Populations

In response to the rising new HIV infection rate among young people in Asia and the Pacific, Youth LEAD partnered with UNAIDS RSAT and WHO to organize “The Training Workshop on Accelerating HIV and STIs Prevention for Young People from Key Populations (YKP).” Held in Bangkok, Thailand, from September 24 to 26, 2024, the event aimed to address critical issues related to HIV and STI prevention among young people, particularly those from key populations disproportionately affected by these health challenges.

Participants included youth leaders, civil society organizations (CSOs), and government representatives, with delegates from countries in Asia and the Pacific including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, China, Thailand, and the Philippines. The delegation comprised youth representatives, one to two government officials, and representatives from UN agencies such as UNAIDS and WHO. Notably, the youth representatives from Bangladesh were unable to participate in the event due to the rising conflict in the country. The delegation from China included representatives from both the private sector and UNAIDS, however did not have youth representatives.

This workshop brought together key stakeholders for the first time in a regional forum to address critical issues related to HIV and STI prevention among young key populations (YKP). Through comprehensive discussions, the participants identified common challenges such as limited access to youth friendly services, lack of awareness on HIV and STI prevention, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. At the same time, best practices, including strong partnerships, leadership development, and differentiated service delivery models, were highlighted as potential solutions.

The outcomes of this workshop will form the foundation for continued efforts to strengthen healthcare services for YKP. Immediate actions will ensure that the insights gained during the workshop are transformed into tangible improvements. The workshop has successfully initiated a roadmap for future initiatives that will help improve the health and well-being of YKPs. The commitments made by participants and facilitators will be closely followed up on to ensure that these outcomes drive meaningful change and continue fostering youth leadership and engagement in the region's health landscape.



UNESCO & UNFPA

TeenGen v.2 Workshops and Publication

With support from the regional offices at UNFPA and UNESCO, Youth LEAD is revising one of our core leadership programmes for adolescent key populations (AYKP) called TeenGen. TeenGen aims to mobilize and identify potential activists to be part of the broader youth movement engaged in addressing HIV issues, upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights and includes components on sexuality education. It was developed in 2017 and has been rolled out over 50 times in 22 different countries, globally. However, recent feedback from Youth LEAD's implementing partners of TeenGen have commented that a lot of the content is outdated in terms of the fast-paced space of HIV and SRHR for adolescents and AYKP.

The revision of TeenGen's content was completed in 2023 and included several consultations from TeenGen's implementing partners, YKP experts in sexuality education and the Inter-Agency Task Team on YKPs. Further research included desk research on guidelines such as the International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence informed approach (ITGSE), and the International technical and programmatic guidance on out-of-school CSE: An evidence-informed approach for non-formal out-of-school programmes. One of the highlights of the new version of TeenGen include the UNESCO adapted learning materials on life skills-based HIV and sexuality education ([AMAZE](#)) videos and companion learning materials.

In January 2024, Youth LEAD presented the updated content among 23 youth and YKP leaders across the region who were either implementing partners of TeenGen or who could provide their expertise on AYKP sexuality education. The countries included India, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. YKP leaders provided their insights on activity flow, structure and appropriateness of content, which were used to revise the Training Manual.

After the workshop, the country teams from Laos and Viet Nam piloted the new training manual among in and out-of-school learners aged 14-18 years old in their respective countries, supported by UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok.

On 30-31 March, CHIAs conducted the first pilot training in Vientiane, Laos, where up to 40 participants learned about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), as well as basic information on HIV awareness and prevention. On 6-7 April, Youth LEAD joined CHIAs observe the second pilot training in Vientiane. The sessions engaged youth participants in discussing a variety of topics including the mental health, substance abuse, violence against young people, sexual violence and grooming, digital safety and security, as well as practical knowledge on youth leadership, HIV testing and services.



In Vietnam, the Vietnam Young Key Affected Populations (VYKAP) conducted pilot trainings for in-school and out-of-school learners aged 12-18 years old from 12 April to 4 May 2024. VYKAP collaborated with the Department of Education and Training, the People’s Committee of Chieng Khoi commune, and Tu Nang Secondary School. The workshops was attended by a total of 103 participants. In addition to the workshop with young people, VYKAP also disseminated the TeenGen v.2 Toolkit to educators for future reference and proactive teaching to students and adolescents. VYKAP plans to continue promoting the TeenGen training manual as a vital program for learners in Vietnam by connecting with the health department and CDC, as well as communicating more broadly to authorities.

Youth LEAD’s activities updating the TeenGen Manual and conducting the pilot trainings culminated in a learning exchange webinar that was held on 25 June 2024. Representatives from CHIAs and VYKAP presented their implementation of the pilot trainings, challenges, and lessons learned to other youth-led organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. Lessons-learned included the value of roleplaying as an effective and engaging teaching method for adolescents to envision themselves in different situations. CHIAs and VYKAP also highlighted the knowledge and capacity of young learners to engage in dialogue around sex, mental health, and drugs and that they are respectable experts on the experiences and issues faced by young people.



KPAC & World Vision

YKP Training in PNG

Following the support of UNFPA and UNESCO to develop the TeenGen v.2 Training Manual, the Key Population Advocacy Consortium (KPAC) engaged Youth LEAD to build the capacity of young key populations in Papua New Guinea (PNG), specifically the members of the YKP organization in the country—Youth Lead PNG. Supported by World Vision, Youth LEAD visited Papua New Guinea twice to facilitate workshops on gender and sexuality, HIV, youth leadership, and organizational strengthening using the TeenGen v.2 Training Manual.

Youth LEAD first visited PNG on 30 September – 4 October to provide a basic foundation of YKP issues and movement across the globe, including SOGIE, harm reduction, sex work, and HIV 101. On 5-7 November, Youth LEAD went to PNG a second time to facilitate refreshment sessions from the first training, and introduce new topics such as violence, systemic oppression as a root of discrimination, capitalism, and organizational & movement management.

Through these two trainings, up to 20 representatives of Youth Lead PNG and its members discussed specific issues faced by YKP in PNG developed an action plan. The action plan aims to strengthen Youth Lead PNG as an organization, and ensure that they are recognized as a YKP network capable of leading the national HIV program for YKP.

Through the support of World Vision, Youth LEAD also published and printed the TeenGen v.2 Training Manual. Fifty copies were printed on 1 November, 35 copies were disseminated to KPAC and Youth Lead PNG, and 15 copies were distributed by Youth LEAD to its other partners. The digital version of the training manual is available upon request.



Seven Alliance

Regional Community-Led Monitoring Workshop

Youth LEAD, as part of the Seven Alliance Consortium with the support of UNAIDS, CDC, PEPFAR, SKPA-2, and the RCF, hosted an impactful two-day workshop on Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) from 18-19 September. The event, “Charting the Future Together: Joint Regional Dialogue on Community-Led Monitoring for Asia and the Pacific and Eastern Europe and Central Asia” brought together advocates from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) and Asia-Pacific (AP) regions, focusing on the achievements, challenges, and innovative solutions within community health initiatives.

Throughout the two-day workshop, advocates discussed the transformative impact of CLM across various countries. Some countries such as the Philippines and Myanmar illustrated how integrating CLM into national health systems can significantly enhance program implementation as well as fosters accountability and strengthens community trust. CLM integration could also take various forms, such as in Kazakhstan where a digital CLM tool that provides real-time data to empower advocacy efforts and inform policy changes was introduced.

Advocates from India, Indonesia, Tajikistan, and Nepal shared insights on the crucial role of community leadership in ensuring sustainability within CLM initiatives. These includes the need for capacity building to transition CLM tools into digital formats, and the importance of aligning CLM efforts with national service packages to enhance effectiveness.

The role of CLM in supporting health interventions during emergencies, with case studies from Ukraine and Sri Lanka was also discussed. The adaptability of CLM was underscored, demonstrating its capacity to respond effectively during times of uncertainty.





Overall, the workshop was an opportunity to foster cross-regional dialogue and highlight the opportunities for collaboration across the Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions. Taking the lessons-learned from this dialogue, Youth LEAD and the Seven Alliance hopes to increase the capacity of community-led organizations in implementing CLM and enhancing community engagement in national HIV response. The Seven Alliance—composed of APCOM, APN+, APNSW, APTN, ICWAP, NAPUD, and Youth LEAD—are committed to providing technical assistance on CLM to community-based organizations across the Asia-Pacific.

Asia-Pacific Learning Hub

As part of Seven Alliance, Youth LEAD was also involved in the development of the Asia-Pacific Learning Hub with the support of the Global Fund and SKPA-2. Youth LEAD supported the development of the Seven Alliance and Learning Hub’s communication groundwork including emails, website, newsletters, and social media accounts. The Seven Alliance website, which hosts the Asia-Pacific Learning Hub, aims to provide up-to-date information on technical assistance and community-led monitoring relating to HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria. Youth LEAD also supported the Seven Alliance in hiring a Communications Coordinator specifically for the Learning Hub fulfilled by Karon Lama, a longtime Youth LEAD focal point and one of the first young people trained under the TeenGen Training Manual back in 2017.





Advocacy

APFSD 2024

On 15-17 February, Youth LEAD in collaboration with ARROW, Y-PEER Asia-Pacific, Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), and Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP (CYMG), organized a Youth Forum in preparation for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2024 (APFSD). During the Forum, Muunuu, Vice-Chair of Youth LEAD’s International Board, provided opening remarks and highlighted the value of meaningful youth engagement at regional and global levels.

This Forum brought together up to 100 youth advocates across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss sustainable development for young people. The Forum aimed to ensure young people’s voices and their realities are included in setting the regional agenda on sustainable development through the development of the Regional Youth Call to Action. The Call-to-Action included recommendations on SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 5 Gender Equality), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Each of these SDGs have been analysed through the lens of other related and crosscutting SDGs such as SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). This Call-To-Action was included in the Civil Society Call-To-Action statement presented at the APFSD 2024 on 20-23 February 2024, and contributed to the Youth Call-to-Action for the Summit of the Future.

IATT on YKP

- *Spill the T: International Women’s Day*

To commemorate the 2024 International Women’s Day (IWD), Youth LEAD, as part of the Asia-Pacific Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations organized a Spill the T webinar episode on 8 March 2024. The webinar highlighted the themes from the IWD campaign and joint ESCAP and UN Women ‘Inspire Inclusion’ and ‘Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.’ Panelists from diverse backgrounds discussed their journey in women’s equity, equality in their respective fields.





Summit of the Future 2024

The Summit of the Future is a high-level event, bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future. World leaders will convene at the United Nations in New York to adopt the Pact for the Future, which will include a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations as annexes. This means that the Summit is a key platform for advocacy for all civil society organizations, as UN agencies and member states discuss and establish effective global cooperation to achieve the SDGs.

In preparation for the Summit of the Future, Youth LEAD partnered with ARROW, Y-PEER Asia-Pacific, MGCY, and CYMG (UNEP) to organize the Asia-Pacific Regional Convening Ahead of the Summit of the Future. Held on 22-24 August, this regional convening brought together up to 100 youth advocates across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss regional youth priorities regarding the SDGs.

During the Summit of the Future, held on 22-23 September in New York, the Vice-Chair of Youth LEAD's international board, Munkh-Erdene Davaajav (Muunuu), was invited to represent the Asia-Pacific region. Muunuu shared his personal experiences with inequality at the Global People's Assembly and highlighted the urgency of addressing these issues and resonated with other participants, fostering a sense of shared purpose among various government and civil society stakeholders.



Reflecting on the Summit, Muunuu shares that it demonstrated a growing recognition of the importance of youth engagement in global decision-making. But while the Summit provided a platform for dialogue, the real work lies in translating commitments into action. It's crucial to hold leaders accountable and ensure that the voices of marginalized communities, including youth, are included in the implementation process.

As such, the Summit of the Future was just the beginning and young people need to advocate for meaningful youth participation, hold leaders accountable, continue building partnerships, as well as empower young people at the grassroots level.





Asia-Pacific Conference on LGBTQI+ Health

In September 2024, Youth LEAD participated in the First Asia-Pacific and Third National (India) Conference on LGBTQI+ Health held in India. Youth LEAD presented during a session on “Methodological and Implementation Challenges in Research and Programs for LGBTQI+ Communities in the Asia-Pacific Region” where Program Officer, Jeremy Tan focused on SOGIESC integration into health programs.

During the session, Jeremy emphasized how SOGIESC concepts can fill research and implementation gaps by fostering a community-led approach, including the importance of youth participation in designing programs that resonate with the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ youth. A key component of this approach is community involvement in both the data collection and design of health programs. LGBTQI+ communities, particularly youth, need to be engaged as active contributors and implementers of these programs. This participatory model ensures that interventions are evidence-based and tailored to the real needs of the community, ultimately improving both engagement and health outcomes. Moreover, this peer-led model creates a more inclusive environment, where services are delivered by those who understand the lived realities of their peers. It also helps dismantle barriers to care by fostering stronger relationships between health systems and marginalized communities, ensuring that programs are not only accessible but also respected and trusted by those they are meant to serve.

Adolescence SRHR & HIV 2024

Virology Education held the International Workshop on Adolescence, SRHR, & HIV 2024 in Kenya on 2-4 October 2024, and Youth LEAD was honored to take a part in the workshop, to lead a session YKP Programming Guidelines.

Through the session, Youth LEAD aims to share best practices of filling the gaps on YKP intervention in Asia & the Pacific, and discuss how it can be utilized in Africa, as there are many toolkits, guidelines and briefs on the needs of key populations generally, i.e. people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, trans people, and sex workers. Youth LEAD thus presented the “Young Key Populations Programming Guidelines: Inspiration for a new era of SRHR and HIV programming for young key populations in Asia-Pacific” to fill the gap on the lack of programmatic guidance for YKPs, drawing inspiration from the ongoing work of YKP in the Asia-Pacific region themselves. During the session, Youth LEAD shared the experience of identifying the needs of YKP, and how to tailor them into an intervention that fills the gap and empower YKP leaders in the process.







International Day of the Girl Child Webinar

In commemoration of International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October 2024, Youth LEAD and Y-PEER AP, in collaboration with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s (AHF) Girls Act Programme in the Asia-Pacific, conducted a webinar entitled ‘Breaking Taboos and Raising Awareness’ to demystify some myths, unpack cultural taboos, and promote menstrual health and hygiene for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and adolescent YKPs, especially in rural areas and during crisis situations. The webinar included a panel discussion of youth advocates representing adolescent girls, young women, trans men, as well as young men. The perspectives of the youth advocates offered an intersectional approach highlighting the. Key barriers and needs of young people to improve menstrual health and hygiene.

The discussion highlighted key barriers for young women and girls in Indonesia including the lack of education and awareness for menstrual health, taboo and stigma, financial constraints to access menstrual hygiene products, and lack of school facilities for young women and girls. Menstrual health and hygiene in emergency situations was also highlighted as a gap. For example, during crises like the 2018 Lombok earthquake in Indonesia, women and girls faced severe difficulties in accessing menstrual products and hygiene facilities.

Youth advocates also stressed the need for accessible and affordable menstrual products, particularly in rural areas; comprehensive menstrual health education; safe spaces for discussion and support for mental health and trauma relating to menstrual health.

It is also essential to adopt a more inclusive and comprehensive approach, acknowledging the menstrual health needs of transgender men and non-binary individuals; as well as the need for menstrual health to be included in disaster preparedness plans. Overarching these recommendations is the need to address the limited data on menstrual health in South and Southeast Asia which hampers effective advocacy and policy-making.





World AIDS Day

On World AIDS Day, 1 December 2024, Youth LEAD with the Seven Alliance and Asia-Pacific Learning Hub collaborated on a commemorative social media post. Youth LEAD also collaborated with UNAIDS RSTAP on developing a song and social media reels promoting U=U posted on World AIDS Day.

AWID Forum 2024

The AWID Forum is one of the biggest spaces to discuss feminist issues around the world and on the 15th AWID Forum 2-5 December 2024, Youth LEAD supported youth advocates to participate in this global community event. During the Forum, Agatha from Youth LEAD was invited to join panel discussions to talk about how trans feminism is linked to HIV and youth advocacy during APTN's session. Youth LEAD also supported ICWAP and UNAIDS RSTAP in their booth and session promoting how HIV is a feminist issue and raising awareness on the feminist, inclusive approaches to community-led HIV response.

Participating in the AWID Forum 2024 provided youth advocates an opportunity to increase their network and knowledge on the intersections of feminism with youth and HIV advocacy. Youth advocates supported by Youth LEAD also attended sessions on sustainable financing, organizational development, and movement building. Overall, this Forum was an opportunity to engage with the global feminist community and movement to inspire and build the capacity of young people in the HIV movement.

55th UNAIDS PCB Meeting

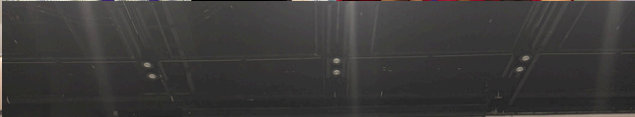
On 10-12 December, UNAIDS held its 55th Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) Meeting in

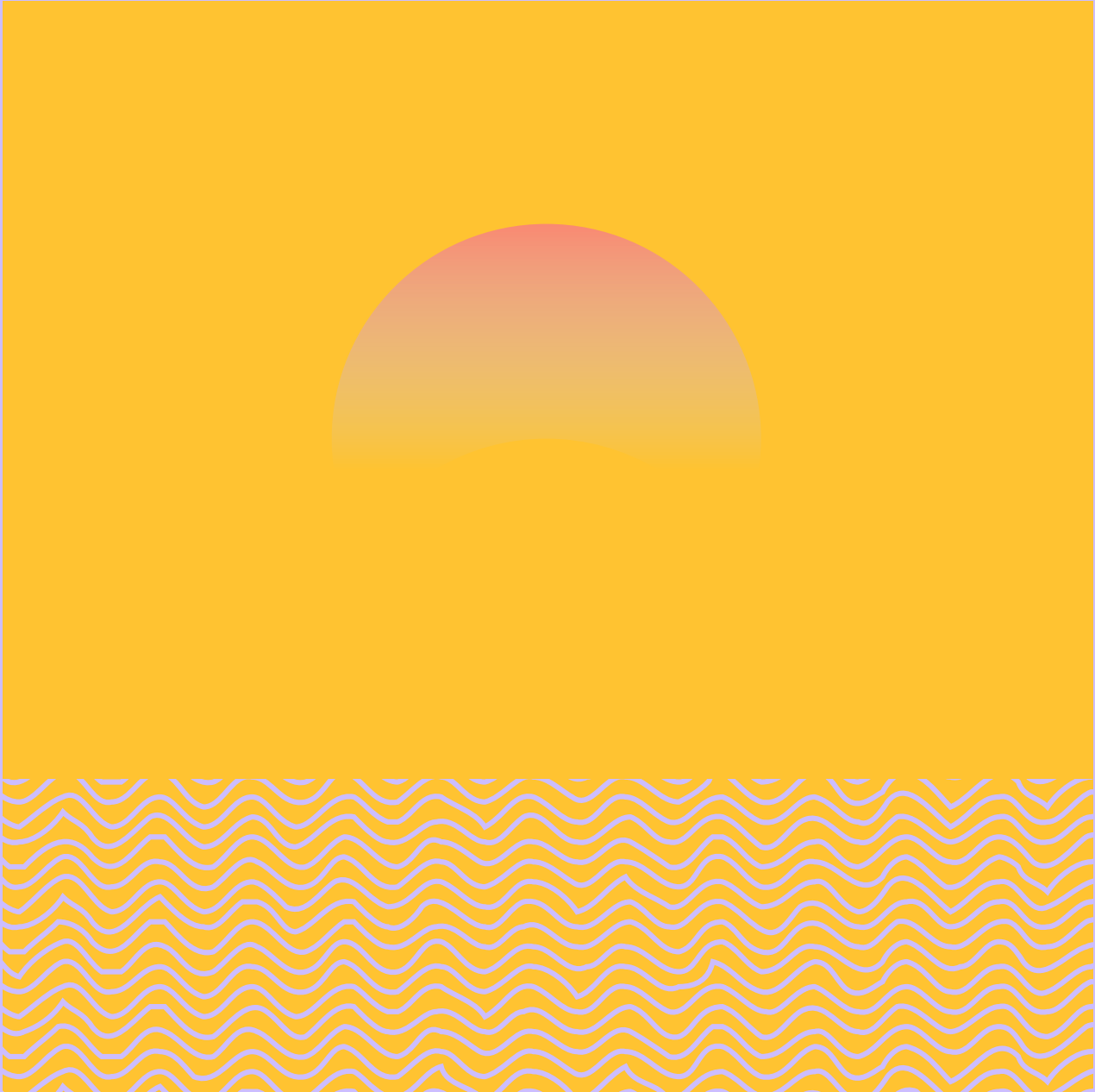
Nairobi, Kenya, to review the progress made by member states and UN agencies in achieving commitments towards the global HIV response. The meeting highlighted the [UNAIDS PCB NGO report](#) which focuses on the importance of involving communities – key and marginalized populations, people living with HIV, and other communities hard hit by the AIDS pandemic – in the HIV response. The report emphasized the urgent need for sustainable financing, accountability frameworks, and collaborative efforts to support community-led initiatives.

The meeting also included the mid-term review of the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026 which highlighted both significant achievements and unmet 2025 targets due to persistent inequalities, funding gaps, and political challenges. This review reinforced the urgency of enhanced prevention, equitable treatment access, and robust community engagement to meet the 2030 goals.

The PCB Meeting was also an opportunity to welcome incoming NGO delegates from various regions. Youth LEAD Program Officer, Fok Jun (Jeremy) Tan, was selected as the new NGO delegate for Asia and the Pacific. Jeremy gave an intervention during the meeting highlighting the shrinking space for comprehensive sex education (CSE). Noting that according to the UNAIDS Global Update 2023, fewer than 50% of young people in Asia-Pacific have comprehensive HIV knowledge, Jeremy stressed that CSE and community-led responses are not just programs, but are lifelines that require sustainable funding. Jeremy further highlighted that systematic attacks by anti-rights and anti-gender movements continue to undermine the efforts of community-led organizations to provide sexual and reproductive health information and services.







Youth LEAD

Youth Leadership, Education, Advocacy and Development (Youth LEAD)
75/12 Ocean Tower II, 15th Floor Soi Sukhumvit 19, Klong Toey, Nua Wattana
Bangkok, Thailand 10110
www.youthleadap.org