

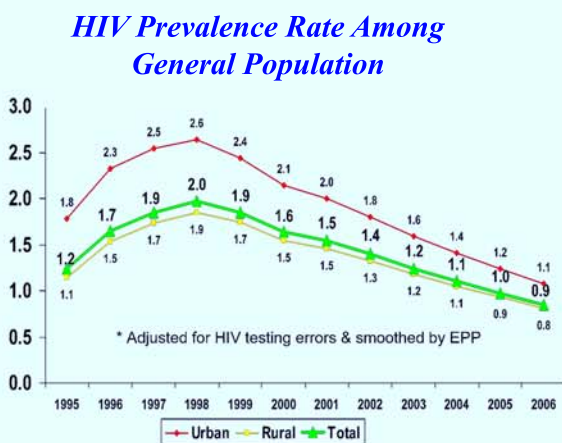
Reducing HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination through Capacity Building

Funding Source: USAID/Pact's Community REACH Program

Dates of funding: 01 April 2007 – 31 March 2010 (28 months)

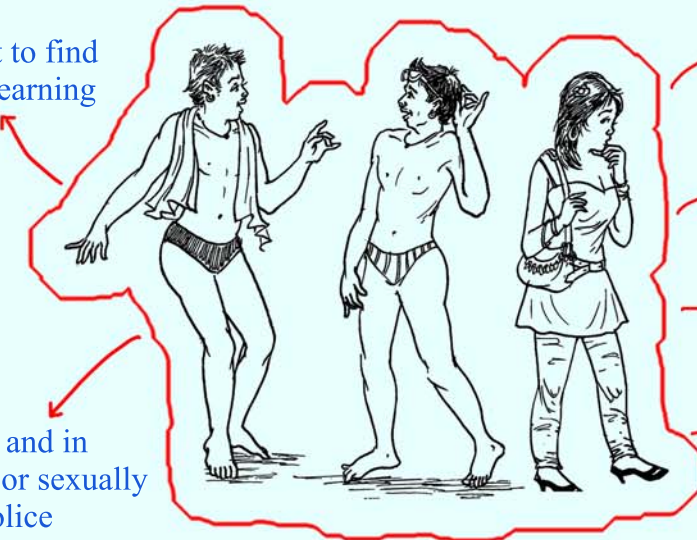
Background:

HIV presents a critical health challenge for Cambodia. In 2006 HIV prevalence was 0.9 % in the general population, but much higher in two high risk populations, Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)—8.7% in Phnom Penh and 0.8% in the province (Battambang and Siem Reap)- and Entertainment Workers (EWs)—14% . The vulnerability of these groups to HIV is heightened by the stigma and discrimination they face.



They find it difficult to find meaningful income earning opportunities

They are harassed, and in some cases beaten or sexually exploited by the police



They are blamed and shamed at home, and in some cases forced to leave home

They are badly treated in the community and banned from social gatherings

They lose friends who don't want to be seen with MSM who are open about their sexual identity

They are mistreated in health facilities and find it difficult to access health services, including testing and treatment for STIs including HIV

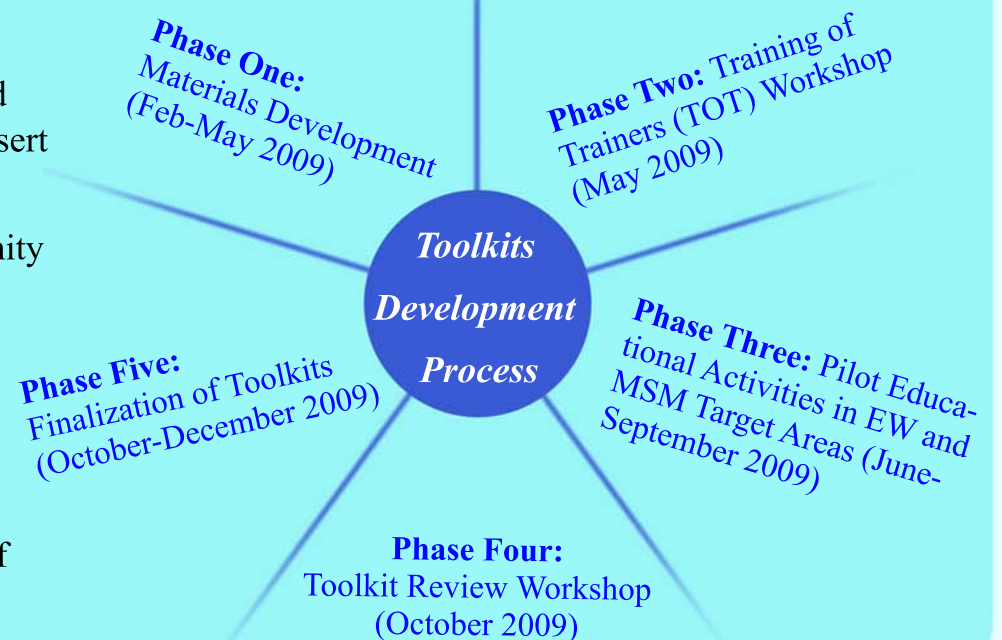
Program Goal:

Reduce HIV infection among most at-risk populations such as MSM and EWs through capacity building with NGO partners working on HIV prevention, care and support for MSM and EWs.

“To address this program goal, Pact Cambodia has developed toolkits and built the capacity of NGO partners to address stigma and discrimination affecting MSM and EWs”

Toolkit Objectives:

- Help MSM and EWs break out of a life on the margins, build improved relations with their families and communities, reassert their rights, and obtain better access to health services
- Raise the understanding of service providers and the community about MSM and EWs, and how stigma and human rights deficiencies fuel HIV transmission
- Build public recognition of stigma and discrimination, and public support and commitment to end it
- Get health workers and other service providers to develop new codes of practice for counseling, testing and treatment of MSM and EW patients



Project Results:

- Capacity building for stigma reduction at multiple levels:
 - Staff members of Pact's NGO partners trained as trainers
 - Staff, outreach workers, EWs and MSM reached with stigma reduction activities
 - Pact Cambodia staff taught how to incorporate stigma reduction into HIV programming
 - Two new toolkits developed focused on reducing stigma towards MSM and EWs

What makes this a success story?

- Strong local ownership and a commitment from local NGO partners
- Toolkits tailored to the specific requirements of the two target groups through field testing
- Learning and capacity building among EWs and MSM around:
 - How stigma creates vulnerability to HIV
 - How to cope with and challenge stigma
 - Human rights and discrimination as a violation of them
- Behavior Change with a relatively short intervention.

Replication beyond Cambodia:

The toolkits' simple design and user-friendly approach make them easily adaptable to other localities beyond Cambodia. Toolkits based on the same model have previously been adapted and implemented in many African countries, India and Vietnam.