

HEALTH POLICY PROJECT



Photo by: Health Policy Project

Key Populations

Overview

The Role of Policy, Advocacy, Governance, and Financing in Addressing the HIV Epidemic

Key populations—men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers (SWs), people who inject drugs (PWID), and transgender persons (TG)—are at higher risk for HIV transmission than the general, adult population. Numerous factors impede their access to high-quality HIV-related services, such as stigma and discrimination, gender-based violence, and structural and legal barriers, including criminalization. Further, key populations are often excluded from informing national and sub-national HIV services, research, advocacy, programming, and planning.

To significantly improve health outcomes for key populations, policies and programs should be designed to promote health equity. HIV-related programs, as well as

family planning and maternal and child health programs, must address the unique needs of key populations to ensure their equal access to services. To date, the global health community has taken several steps to address the specific immediate and long-term health needs of key populations:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) produced a series of clinical guidelines for MSM, SWs, TG, and PWID.
- The UNAIDS Investment Framework outlined an investment strategy in which key populations and an enabling environment are cornerstones in the HIV response.
- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Blueprint is based on the principle of ending stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and key populations, and improving their access to, and uptake of, comprehensive HIV services.

Who We Are, What We Do

The Health Policy Project (HPP) works to improve access to high-quality HIV-related services for key populations and thereby mitigate their risk of HIV transmission and disease burden. HPP's efforts focus on promoting evidence-based policymaking, informed advocacy, sustained capacity development, genuine engagement, accountable governance, and transparent financing. The project collaborates with networks of key populations, governments, HIV-related councils, service providers, civil society organizations, donors, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and other national, regional, and global bodies to

- Identify high-level policies, laws, and regulations that affect access to and quality of services for key populations—as well as related guidance (e.g., gender-sensitive language in transgender healthcare or patient-provider confidentiality for drug users)
- Gather up-to-date data and information to provide evidence of barriers to improving access to and quality of services for key populations
- Develop capacity to use this evidence and design and implement effective policy and advocacy strategies, plans, and tools
- Establish regional advocacy initiatives that increase the engagement of key populations in policy development
- Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes and hold government, healthcare providers, and others accountable
- Help stakeholders employ high-impact, cost-effective, and participatory methods to implement changes in policy



The Health Policy Project's HIV policy analysis and advocacy decision models are systematic methodologies and tools designed to help users create an inventory of country policies, analyze these policies against international best practices and human rights frameworks, assess policy implementation, and create strategic advocacy plans to improve the policy environment and access to HIV-related services for key populations.

The tools can be found at: <http://www.healthpolicyproject.com/index.cfm?id=topics-KeyPopulations>

How to Work with Us

For over 40 years, Futures Group has managed large and complex international health and development projects for a range of major development players, achieving significant results on the ground in more than 100 countries. Host-country partners with interest in receiving project assistance should contact their USAID Mission. All Missions may participate through field support. For information on how to work with the Health Policy Project please contact:

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The Health Policy Project is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-10-00067, beginning September 30, 2010. The project's HIV activities are supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It is implemented by Futures Group, in collaboration with CEDPA (part of Plan International USA), Futures Institute, Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), RTI International, and the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRA).

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