### Promising Policy Responses for Two Vulnerable Groups: Sex Workers and Males Who Have Sex with Males

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<th>Sex Workers</th>
<th>Key Factors in Vulnerability</th>
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| **Individual And Relationship** | - Power differentials and greater pay to not use condoms.  
- Increased incidence of STIs.  
- Physical and sexual violence.  
- Poor self-esteem.  
- Increased drug and alcohol use.  
- Trust issues with stable partners and decreased likelihood of condom use. | See below. |
| **Social Norms** | - Marginalized and stigmatized as “vectors” of HIV transmission.  
- Assumed that sexual violence toward sex workers impossible or not cause for concern. | - Programs and media representation address stigma, shifting narrative of blame and shame.  
- Address norms of masculinity associated with violence, and risk-taking/dominance (e.g., not using condoms). |
| **Access To Information, Education, Services** | - Poor access to needed, relevant information.  
- Stigma and discrimination in services and lack of access. | - Access to female condoms.  
- Relevant, explicit peer education programs.  
- STI programs that rely on education and respect for sex workers (not coercion).  
- Training to combat stigma & discrimination in services. |
| **Policy and Legal Environment** | - Police harassment and violence.  
- Policies that place responsibility on individual sex worker, not on clients and owners.  
- In some cases, mandatory testing policies that violate human rights.  
- Policies that prohibit congregating, directed toward effeminate-looking men.  
- Policies that inhibit sex worker exchange of information and organizing. | - Human rights training for police; special centers or units to handle reports of violence and abuse (mixed evidence).  
- Policies that target responsibility of brothel owners and clients for safer sex and working conditions.  
- Policies/laws that do not interfere with ability of sex workers to organize, exchange information, etc.  
Note: Success of these depends on the amount of input and control sex workers have in their implementation, see below. |
| **Economic Resources** | - Lack of access to economic resources. | - Access to economic opportunities (microfinance, credit; education for children; youth livelihoods). |
| **Social Networks and Political Capital** | - Barriers to organizing and participation in programs/policies. | - Support for peer organizing /solidarity approach.  
- Inclusion of groups in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programming. |
### Key Factors in Vulnerability

#### Individual And Relationship Factors
- **Background:**
  - MSM does not imply gay or bisexual identities.
  - Complex interaction between identity, desire, behavior and gender roles.
    - Active and passive.
  - Patterns of protection with partners.
- Sexual identity is source of stigma.
- Lower self-esteem and sense of control.
- Potential family & community rejection.
- Link to drugs and alcohol.

#### Social Norms
- Homophobia limits recognition of MSM sexualities by policy makers & programmers, as well as men and communities at risk.
- Culture of silence about sexuality.
- Conservative religious environment.

#### Access To Information, Education, Services
- Lack of programs, information or services addressed towards diversity of identities and practices
- Often secretive relations. Link between secretive relations and mobility make it harder to reach with information
- Stigma & discrimination in services and lack of capacity among providers to address and respond to concerns
- Inadequate focus on MSM in many health programs and systems (i.e. MOH)
- Inadequate epidemiology

### Promising Policy Responses

#### Males Who Have Sex With Males
- Supportive communities that are open about identity and sexuality are linked to increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, access to information, and protective practices.
- See below.

- Programs and media representations needed to break silence, promote positive coverage of MSM issues, human rights & HIV/AIDS
- Challenge dominant norms of masculinities that sustain homophobia, and related S&D
- Promote support in FBOs open to support for MSM, HIV, & HR issues

- Interventions need to consider range of identities and practices in order to reach different groups and personalize understanding of risk and protective behaviors
- Explicit, relevant information needs developed and shared via effective, peer-informed and peer-led outreach
- Development of appropriate, accessible service and training to combat stigma & discrimination in services – and operational policies that provide for this
- Adequate, nuanced epidemiology

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### Males Who Have Sex With Males (continued)

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| **Policy And Legal Environment** | • Police abuse and harassment, especially of male sex workers, transvestites and “feminized” male clients  
• Existing laws and policies legislate against sexual rights and other human rights, e.g.:  
  ⇒ Laws against congregating  
  ⇒ Laws that penalize same sex sexual relations and discriminate against sexual minorities  
  ⇒ Vague morality laws used to persecute MSM  
• Where supportive legislation exists, disjuncture in laws and implementation | • Prioritization of MSM issues within health system and policy  
• HR training for police on harassment/violence  
• Legal and policy framework support sexual and human rights, and  
• Decriminalize sexual behavior  
• Permit sexually explicit information  
• Support freedom of movement/congregation  
• Compliance with existing legal frameworks that support human rights in implementation and local ordinances  
• Capacity building at all levels and sectors to support HR approach |
| **Economic Resources** | • Education and employment barriers due to stigma and discrimination | • Approach to livelihood needs included |
| **Social And Political Capital** | • Social stigma and hostile legal environment makes it harder to organize  
• Barriers to participation in programs/policies | • Support for peer org./solidarity approach  
• Inclusion of MSM groups in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programming |