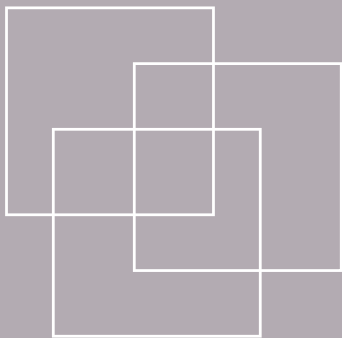
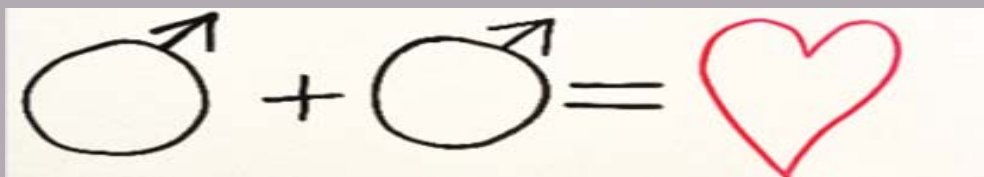




Reducing HIV Vulnerabilities of Men Who Have Sex with Men in Saunas (Bangkok, Thailand)

– Policy development, Social Dialogue, and Workplace Education



AT A GLANCE

→ Partners

Bangkok Rainbow Organization (BRO), Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand (RSAT), Bangkok Municipal Authority (BMA), Ministry of Public Health (Department of Disease Control), Ministry of Labour (Department of Labour Protection and Welfare)

→ Donor

UNAIDS Programme Acceleration Funds - Part B Fund

→ Duration

2011-2012

→ Target beneficiaries

Employers and workers in the Bangkok gay sauna industry, and the men-who-have-sex-with-men customers who frequent these venues

→ Geographical focus

Bangkok, Thailand.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

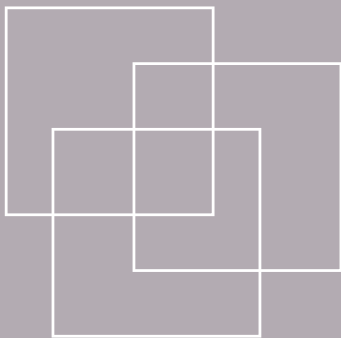
Men who have sex with men (MSM) are one of the most vulnerable groups for HIV infection in Thailand and throughout Asia Pacific. New infections among MSM tested in Bangkok have risen to 31.3% in recent years and national HIV estimates for 2012–2016 calculate that 1 in 3 of all new infections, among all groups, will occur in Bangkok, 70% of these among MSM.

HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue for saunas not simply because staff are known to be MSM but also because these workplaces can play a vital role in limiting the spread and effects of the epidemic. Saunas are one of the most important and effective points for targeting at-risk behaviours in the actual places where MSM negotiate sex and engage in potentially risky behaviours. Venue staff can be trained as peer educators who are empowered to reach out to customers, and owners/managers can implement structural changes that set higher minimum standards for HIV prevention and promote safer behaviours among customers. Through an HIV-related public-private partnership the sauna industry in Bangkok can play an important role in national efforts to reduce new infections.

The project aims to:

- Improve the enabling environment for HIV programmes at Bangkok saunas.
- Provide access to HIV/AIDS education and training for the staff of saunas, to protect themselves and reach out to MSM customers in the workplace.
- Develop new vending units and distribution arrangements for condoms and lubricants within saunas to reduce HIV-related risks and vulnerabilities.





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MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Rapid needs assessment for workplace HIV programmes to address risks and vulnerabilities in Bangkok venues.
- Industry consultation meeting for tripartite partners to learn about HIV risks and vulnerabilities in saunas, providing an update on the local epidemic, sharing enterprise-based approaches used in sauna businesses around the region, and identifying new partners for prevention activities.
- Employers supported to develop and produce new vending units to support condoms and water-based lubricant distribution in the workplace, consistent with international standards for saunas.
- Workplace training package developed for Bangkok sauna staff to help them protect themselves from HIV, reach out to customers and uphold minimum standards.
- A five-episode 'edutainment' video series produced to raise awareness about HIV-related risks and vulnerabilities in MSM saunas.
- Capacity building for local stakeholders involved in providing peer-based services to Bangkok saunas through training, knowledge-sharing, and technical support.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Improved knowledge and understanding by key stakeholders of HIV prevention and management needs in the Bangkok sauna industry.
- A network of 19 businesses (from the 31 saunas operating in Bangkok) mobilized as partners for prevention.
- 6 pilot sites established to implement enterprise-based workplace programmes.
- An estimated 200 workers in the industry have improved access to workplace HIV programmes with training, resources and referral services.
- MSM customers of saunas have improved access to condom and lubricant distribution within Bangkok venues.
- Guidelines created on minimum HIV prevention and management standards in the Bangkok sauna industry and a business case for taking action.
- Improved capacity of local tripartite partners to support workplace programmes in Bangkok saunas.
- Technical support provided to the government for policy development to regulate standards for the sauna industry.

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