An orientation to the Burnet Institute’s:

Young Male Peer Education Project

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HIV situation in the Lao PDR

The first HIV+ case: 1990
The first AIDS case: 1992

Cumulative number of HIV/AIDS from 1990 - 2005:
- No. of provinces reported: 16
- No. of blood samples: 124,531
- No. of HIV positive: 1,827
- No. of AIDS cases: 1,069
- No. of deaths: 637

Source: CHAS, end of 2005
Mode of HIV transmission

- Heterosexual: 85%
- Not specified: 10.3%
- Homosexual: 0.7%
- MTCT: 3.5%
- Bl. product: 0.3%
- Needle use: 0.2%
Background

- The Burnet institute started working in the Lao PDR in 1998
- Approach mainly in capacity building with the Lao Youth Union around HIV interventions
- Focus has been on ‘young people’s involvement in responses to the epidemic’
- In 2004 conducted Study of young men’s sexual behaviour in Vientiane
- A number of projects since then have had a focus on ‘working with young men’
Goal and Objectives

Goal
To promote the adoption of safe sexual behaviour and increase the uptake of STI treatment services among young men who have sex with men in Vientiane Capital.

Objectives

1) To increase awareness about sexual and reproductive health issues and safer sex options

2) To increase correct and consistent use of condoms with all non-regular partners

3) To promote appropriate STI care-seeking practices among young men
Timeline

- **The project start date**
  1st June 2005

- **Expected completion date**
  31st Dec 2006
Donor(s) and Budget

- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- The yearly budget is around 28,000 USD
Activities

- Recruitment of young male volunteers
- Training of Peer Educators
- Ongoing Peer Education in the community
- Targeted Outreach events at entertainment venues
- Educational health camp with peer Educators
Partner organizations / collaborators

- The Burnet Institute (BI) work in partnership with UNESCO Bangkok.

- Sharing information and experience with government and local organizations:
  - Centre for HIV AIDS and STI (CHAS)
  - UNAIDS,
  - Population Services International,
  - LYAP
  - LNP+
Outcomes / results

- 49 Gay men have been recruited and trained so far.

- 25 started peer education activities about a year ago and the other 24 have just finished training so will start soon.

- 258 Gay men had discussions with our the first 25 peer educators (July 2005-February 2006) about safer sex, HIV and STIs.
Outcomes / results

- More than 1,900 packages of condoms with lubricants have been distributed

- More than 1,240 project brochures were distributed in Urban area (Nov 2005 to Feb 2006)

- Approximately 1,745 people participated in the targeted outreach activities at 7 nightclubs hotspots
Obstacles encountered

- Highly mobile population
- Difficult to keep in contact with everyone - mobile phones
- Hidden men who identify as ‘gay’, and men who have sex with men and women, who do not have an identity matched to same sex behaviour
- Voluntary work (Not paid)
Lessons Learned / Recommendations

- Be in constant contact with Peer Educators
- Group activities are needed to complement individual PE activities
- Provide support/feedback to the PE
- Provide incentives although volunteer work