

Gender, Sexualities, and Masculinities -

MSM and HIV/AIDS in South-East Asia

A Training Programme

2nd - 4th March, 2005

**Shivananda Khan
Naz Foundation International**

Population Services International, Asia



Workshop Agenda

Day One

Gender, Sexualities and Masculinities in South-East Asia

Participants will explore constructions of gender, sexuality and masculinity from their respective countries.

Day Two

Sexualities and male-to-male sexual frameworks in South-East Asia

Taking the understandings developed in the previous day, participants will explore at the social construction of male sexual behaviours including that of male-to-male sex in their own countries, developing a behavioural risk analysis in this regard.

Workshop Agenda

Day Three

Developing strategies for sexual health interventions

The focus of this day will be on utilising this knowledge and explore different intervention strategies for males who have sex with males with a particular emphasis on the work of PSI. From this, a series of recommendations for action will be developed.

Workshop Goals

- **Impact Level**

More effective sexual interventions for MSM populations developed in South-East Asia.

- **Organisation/Process Level**

Institutionalise knowledge and understanding within PSI and PSI supported agencies regarding male-to-male sexualities, masculinities and sexual behaviours.

- **Personnel/Capacity Level**

Increase the ability of key staff to use theory and knowledge to design, develop and implement more effective HIV/AIDS interventions for MSM populations.

Learning Outcomes

- **Have a better understanding of social constructions of masculinities and sexualities in their region.**
- **Have a better understanding of male-to-male sexual behaviours, genders and identities in their region.**
- **Be able to integrate this knowledge into programme planning and design for MSM sexual health interventions.**
- **Be able to develop an action plan for more effective intervention strategies focusing on MSM sexual health needs.**
- **Have access to a range of knowledge resources.**

What is sex?

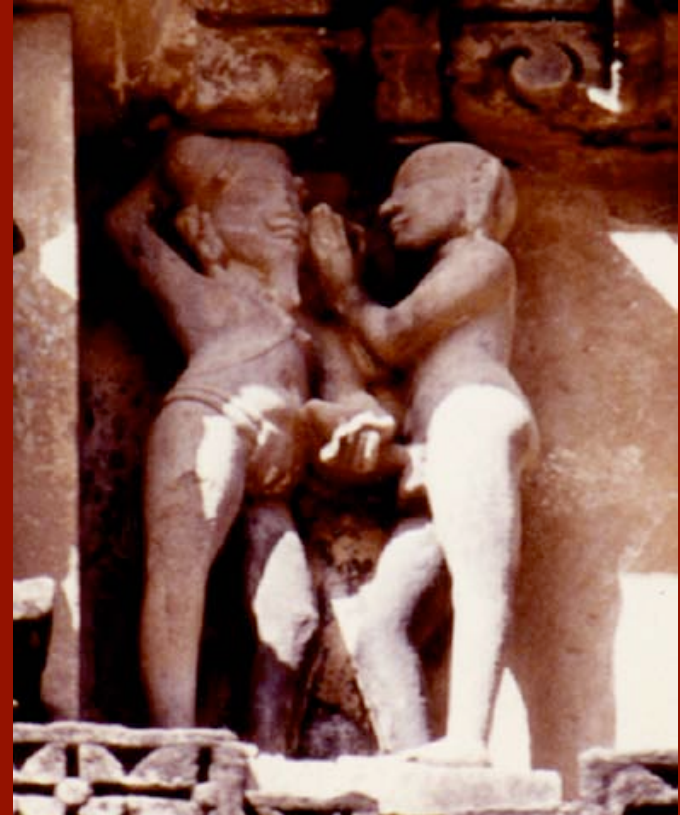
- **Sex as biology** **Male or Female**
- **Sex as gender** **Man or woman**
- **Sex as a behaviour** **Doing sex/having sex**

- **In many cultures, what is defined as sex will differ.**
- **Different people will have different understandings of the word sex.**
- **What is the word sex in your local language?**

What is sex?

Also people will define sexual activity according to the meaning and significance they give to it. Further social values will also be relevant.

Thus for many sexual intercourse means only vaginal sex. Anything else, such as oral sex, or anal sex, or thigh sex will not be significant or meaningful enough to be defined as sex!



What is sex?

Example

In some parts of South Asia, husbands define sex with their wives as **DUTY**

While wives define sex with their husbands as **WORK**

While non-vaginal sex is defined as **PLAY/MISCHIEF**

What is sex?

The word sex as it will be used in this workshop relates to ANY activity that produces sexual arousal, or being a recipient of sexual arousal, whether it is with oneself or with any other(s).

Personal sensibilities

Questions on sex terms

- **Have you heard of these terms?**
- **Which words have a negative (bad) meaning? Why?**
- **Which words have a positive (good) meaning? Why?**
- **Who uses these words and in what situations?**

Sexual Messages

- **Genitals are dirty/they are bad/don't touch**
- **Boys/men have a stronger sex drive than girls/women**
- **Girls don't like sex**
- **Sex is bad/dirty**
- **“Nice” girls/women do not desire sex**
- **Boys/men will “play”**
- **Men must lead in sex**
- **Anal sex or “homosex” is wrong/bad/dirty/evil**
- **Don't be like a girl, behave like a man**

GENDER

A term used to describe:

- What sex we are born - as female, male, intersexed
- How society treats us from birth
- What rules apply as a result - social, legal, economic, cultural - at society level in organisations and families
- How we dress, behave, work, play, have sex, etc.



Gender

Gender includes differences in the way we are treated by society, based on whether we are men, women, or transgender



Gender is about culture and society, and not just individual identity - it is a system

Masculinities

A term used to think about men and how it is expected that they should behave.

- What does it mean to be a male?
- What does it mean to be a man?
- What does it mean to be masculine?
- What does it mean to be an “effeminate” man?



Sexualities

A term to describe a number of things-

- **Sex of a person (male, female, intersex)**
- **Sexual orientation/desire (same sex, other sex, both sexes)**
- **Sex acts (what we do when we have sex)**
- **Sexual attraction (types of partners)**
- **Sexual interests (monogamy, sex outside, etc.)**
- **Sexual rules and laws**
- **Cultural and historical influences**

Thinking about sexualities

Sexualities act on three levels

Individual: what we like and do in sex, what we want sexually, whom we want sexually, what our bodies can do sexually

Relationships: us and our partners, how our relationships happen, what we enjoy sexually with others together, what risks we face in sex with others

Society: what is 'okay' or 'not okay' sexually, how vulnerable we are in sex as a result of society's rules and ideas

To a significant extent, gender, masculinity and sexuality are framed by performance.

We also need to think in pluralities

**Gender variance, masculinities and sexualities
(also femininities)**

Why males, and not men?

The word MAN is a culturally loaded term, and carries significant beyond that of biological age and performance. It also is host to concepts of adulthood and personhood, social obligations and family duty.

A kathoey does not define himself as a man.

An adolescent male is not defined as a man.

Who is involved in male-to-male sex?

- Feminised males
- Masculine males
- Teachers
- Students
- Relatives
- Street males
- Prisoners
- Males in a occupational groups: truck drivers, boatmen, fishermen, taxi drivers, etc.
- Politicians
- Bureaucrats
- Labourers
- Farmers
- Male sex workers
- Males in uniformed services
- Male friends
- Foreigners
- Adolescent males

What distinguishes these men from each other?

Why do males have sex with males?

- **Desire for other males – gender/orientation**
- **Desire for specific acts – anal/oral**
- **Pleasure and enjoyment from discharge – “body heat” – also play and curiosity**
- **Wives do not do anal or oral sex – ashamed to ask**



Why do males have sex with males?



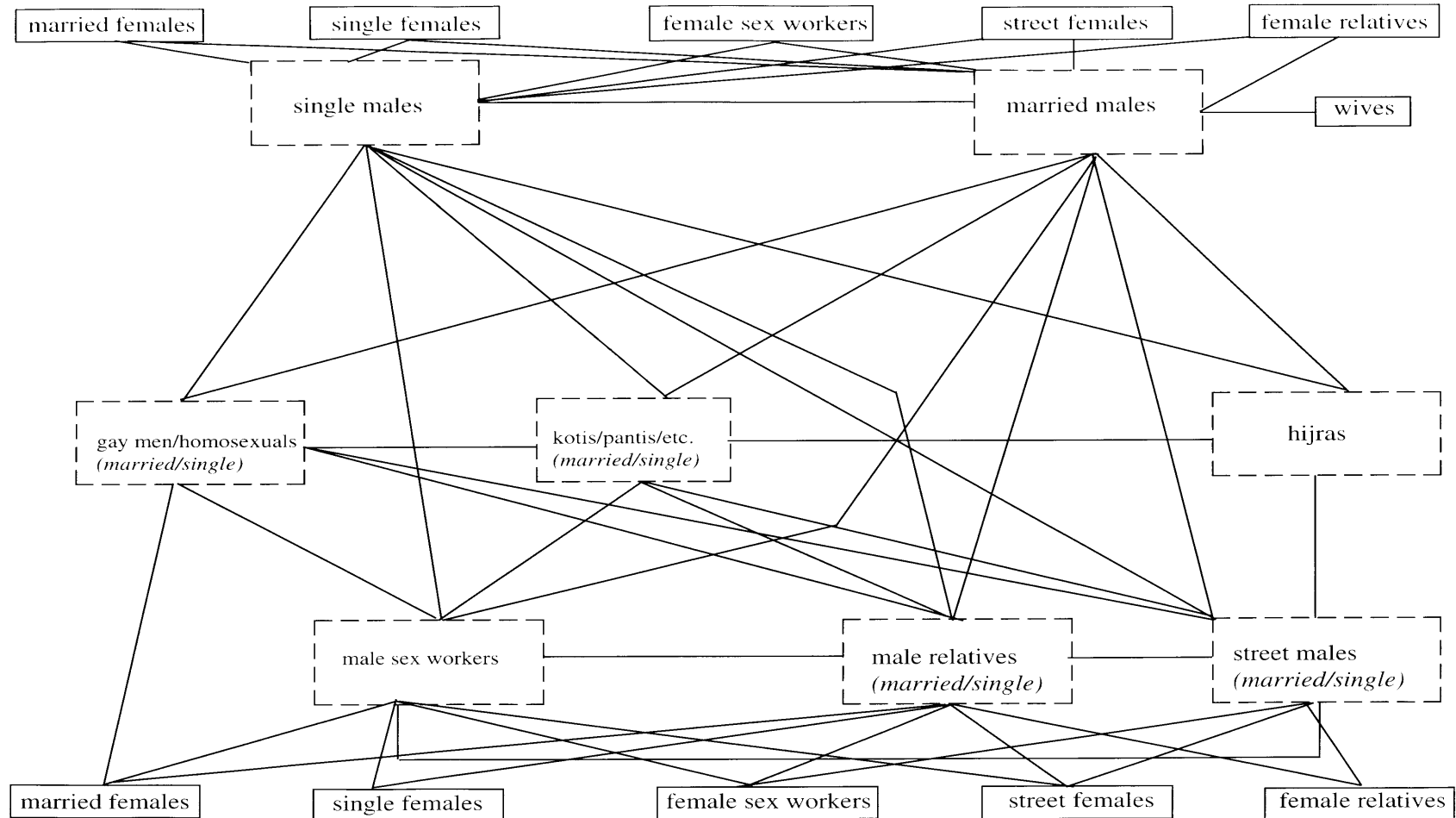
- **Males are easier to access – shared beds and spaces while females are more socially policed and can be more difficult to access**
- **Protecting a girls virginity – maintaining chastity**
- **For money, employment, favours**

Why do males have sex with males?

- No one is suspicious when males mix with other males
- Anus is tighter than vagina and gives more pleasure
- No marriage involvement
- Its not real sex



Pattern of male-to-male sex in South Asia



Where does male-to-male sex occur?

ANYWHERE

Frameworks of male-to-male sex

- ***Gendered framework***

Male to male desire based on feminised gendered roles an identification - sexual acts based on gender roles, i.e. man/not-man



- ***Discharge framework***

Male to male sexual behaviours arising from immediate access, opportunity, and “body heat”. They involve males/boys/men from the general male population



Frameworks of male-to-male sex

Many males from the general male population will also access feminised-identified males or boys for anal/oral sex . These males do not see themselves as “homosexuals”, or even their behaviour as “homosexual”, since they take on the “manly” penetrating role in male to male sex. Nor do their partners see themselves as homosexuals because they either see themselves as “not men”, or they are involved in play - not sex.

Frameworks of male-to-male sex

- *Emergent gay framework*

Male to male desire framed by sexual orientation. Primarily used by middle and upper classes. Such gay identified men usually seek other gay identified men as sex partners.

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO QUEBEC

Cosmopolitan and gay Montréal & the bustling charm of Québec City. You get so much more.

Black and Blue Festival, October 2004

A fabulous 5 night Montréal weekend.
Including Bronze VIP passes and accommodation.
From an amazing £489 per person.

Visit www.manaround.com or call 020 8902 7177

Frameworks of male-to-male sex

And of course not to forget, males/men in all male institutions, such as prisons, the uniformed forces, colleges, university, schools, religious institutions, And just places where males congregate

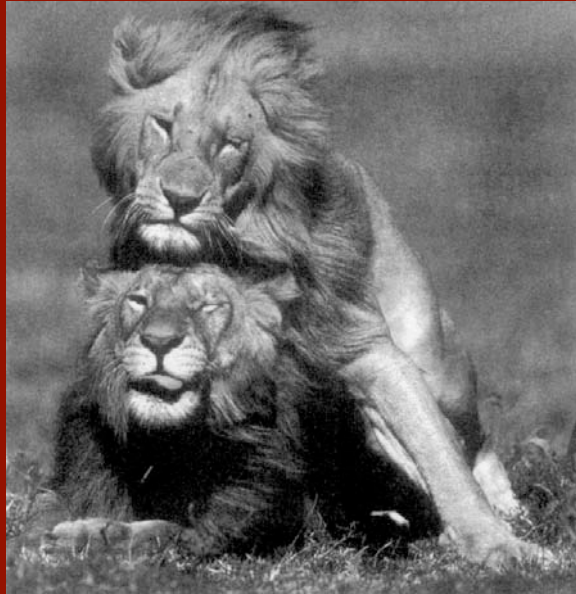
Frameworks of male-to-male sex

- Egalitarian
- Gender-based
- Intergenerational
- Family
- Discharge
- Coercive
- Institutional
- Ritual/Cultural
- Occupational
- Practice
- Play

Frameworks of male-to-male sex

- **Most male-to-male sexual behaviours are invisible and not gay/homosexual/kathoey identified**
- **Sexual/gender identities tend to be based on class, education, and sex roles**
- **Many males involved in male-to-male sex will also often have sex with wives/other women**
- **Male-to-male sex is not uncommon and involves males across the economic and social spectrum, rural and urban**
- **MSM then is no an exclusive category or “target group” – it reflects a behaviour which may be relatively common**

Natural or unnatural?



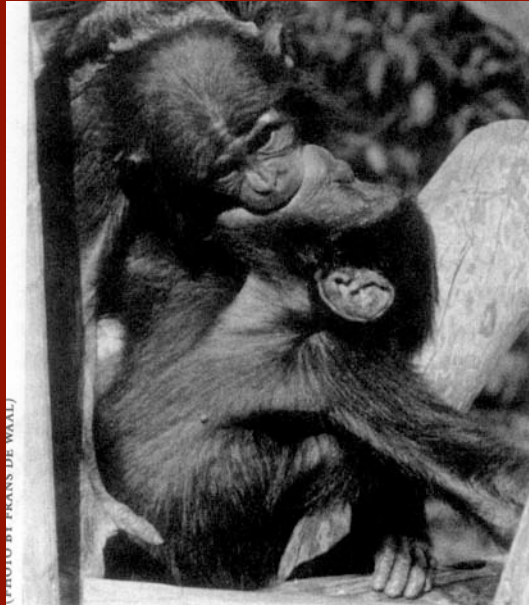
Male lions

Deer



Male bighorn ram

Natural or unnatural?

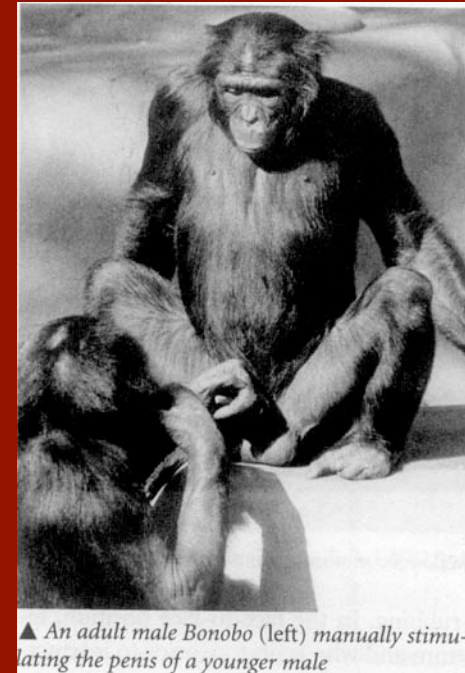


kissing between male bonobos



▲ *A male Bonobo mounting another male from behind*

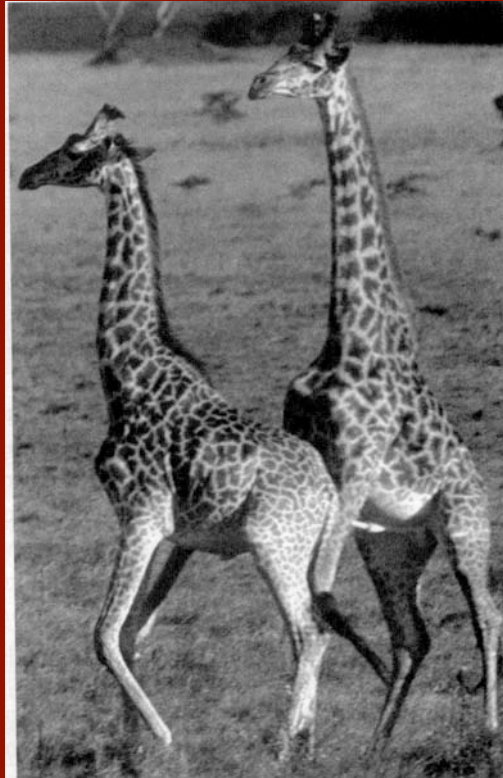
anal sex between male bonobos



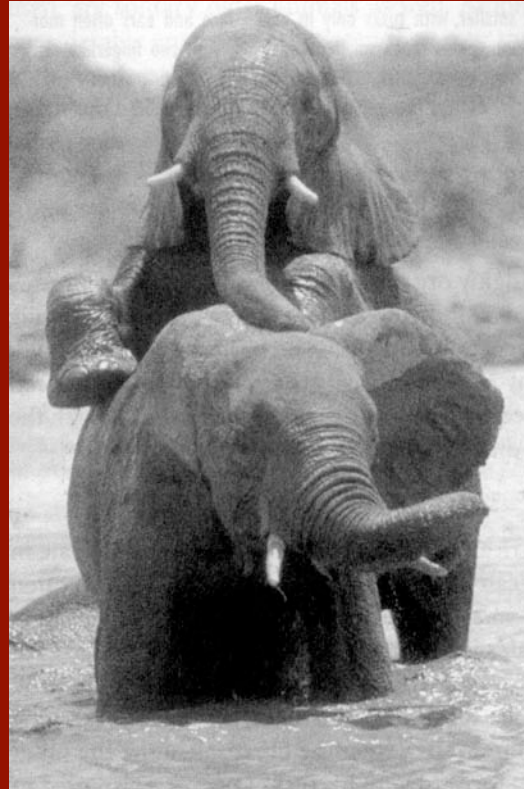
▲ *An adult male Bonobo (left) manually stimulating the penis of a younger male*

masturbation between male bonobos

Natural or unnatural?



male giraffes



male elephants

Vulnerability and risk

- **Stigma and discrimination: who is stigmatised?**
- **Partner rates**
- **Penetrating, being penetrated, or both?**
- **STI : anal/penile**
- **Rectal damage**
- **Gender roles**
- **Legal/Social**
- **Female partners**
- **Wives**

Transmission routes

male-to-male

male - male - female

female - male - male

Sexual Health

Sexual health is the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of sexual being in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication and love.

WHO, 1975

Changing behaviour requires

Knowledge

Desire to change

Will to change

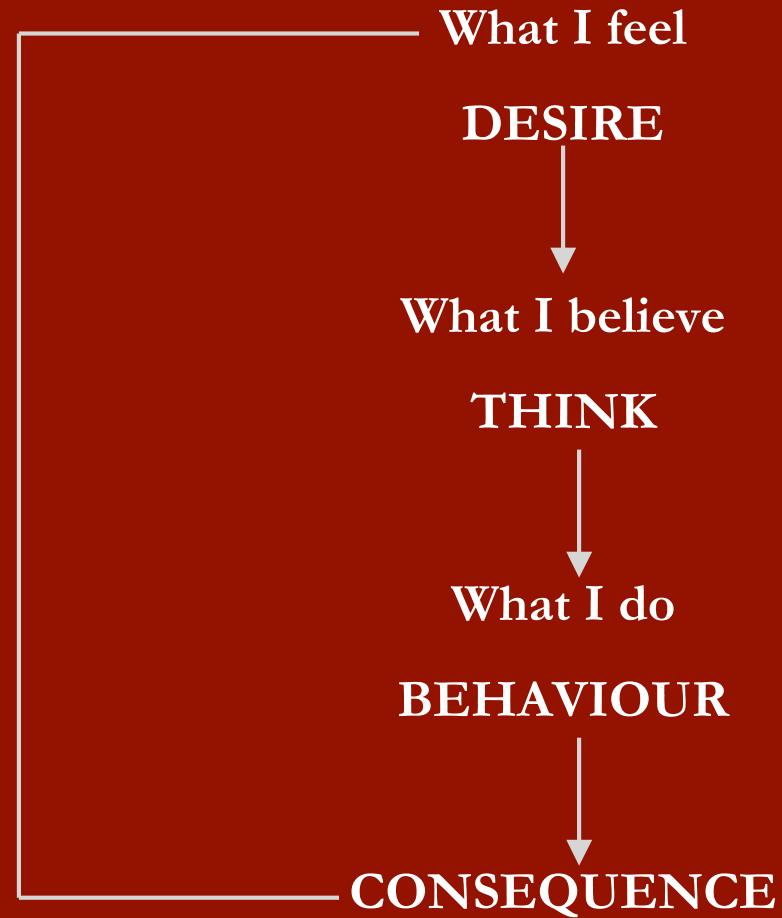
Skills to change practice

Power

Access to sexual health services and products

An enabling environment

Behaviour is based on:



A disempowering environment

What does this mean?

- Stigma, discrimination and social exclusion affects the ability of vulnerable populations to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS.**
- It disempowers them from support and care.**
- It disenfranchises them from accessing what services may be available.**
- It reduces opportunities to develop appropriate services.**

Abuse follows infection follows abuse

An enabling environment

What does this mean?

To enable: Authorise, empower, supply with means to take action.

To provide with adequate power, means opportunity, or authority.

Equity: A system of justice founded on principles of natural justice and fair conduct.

Thus to develop an enabling environment means to create systems of empowerment, social justice, and equity for the most marginalised populations.

An enabling environment

What does this involve?

- To reduce human rights abuse and violence.**
- To reduce stigma and discrimination.**
- To increase self-esteem and empowerment.**
- To ensure that adequate sanctions exist so that the above are implemented appropriately and adequately.**

An enabling environment

What does this involve?

- To empower affected and infected populations to develop and deliver their own self-help services.
- To increase the technical skills of service providers.
- To ensure appropriate resources are easily available.



Issues that must be addressed

- **Advocacy and policy**
Repeal of legislation and training of law enforcement agencies, judiciary and media
- **Identity-based self-help interventions**
kathoey and gay self-help groups supported in community building and mobilisation, along with recognition of gender variance and diversity
- **Anal sex as a mainstream behaviour**
Partners of feminised males are from the general male population, many of whom also have anal sex with women

Issues that must be addressed

- **Capacity and skills building**

With low income populations there are a lack of skills, knowledge and capacity. They require on-going technical support.

- **Promote sexual responsibility**

The majority of males who have sex with males will become married. Female partners are at risk also.



Key Recommendations

Legal, legislative, socio-cultural and judicial impediments to MSM sexual health interventions need to be addressed.

At the very least, this means that there needs to be a positive dialogue between the Health and Interior Ministries in regard to support for marginalised populations in the fight against AIDS.

Along with this is required concerted advocacy to repeal and legal Impediments.

Key Recommendations

Address human rights abuse and reduce the levels of sexual violence, harassment and abuse of MSM, and against staff of MSM sexual health service providers through:

- a. appropriate sensitisation and training of law enforcement personnel at all levels, the judiciary, and the legal profession**
- b. ensure that laws against male-on-male rape and sexual abuse are on the statute books and that these laws are adequately implemented with appropriate sanctions**
- c. constructions of masculinity that support gender violence are challenged through appropriate education and awareness**

Key Recommendations

Empower local networks of self-identified MSM networks to develop their own self-help HIV/AIDS service provision including support and care.

This means ensuring that

- ✓ *appropriate skills training, management support and safe spaces to meet are readily available*
- ✓ *adequate levels of on-going funding are provided*
- ✓ *appropriate resources and tools, such as low-cost condoms and water-based lubricant, education materials, STI treatment, ARVs are easily accessible*

Key Recommendations

Ensure that any enabling strategy include key indicators that can be measured in terms of impact assessment.

This will also mean that sanctions will need to be place to ensure compliance by key stakeholders.

Key Recommendations

Central involvement of MSM in policy making, advocacy, and HIV/AIDS interventions at national, state and local level.

This means that appropriately skilled MSM should be a part of decision making on policy and advocacy through direct involvement and consultation.

Key Recommendations

National, state and local HIV/AIDS agencies, both government and non-government, as well as the general community, should be sensitised to the specific issues, concerns and needs of MSM.

This means education and training programmes targeted at specific organisations, groups and individuals utilising a broad range of resources and media.

Key Recommendations

Staff of STI treatment centres and VTCs should be provided with skills training to ensure that their services are appropriate, empowering and accessible to MSM.

This means that such staff understand issues, concerns and sexual health, support and care needs of MSM and can ensure that they provide a sympathetic and caring service.