YKP Organizational Guideline for Crisis Situations

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Young Key Populations Programming Guidelines

Inspiration for a new era of SRHR and HIV programming for young key populations in Asia-Pacific

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Introduction

Youth LEAD is the biggest Asia-Pacific network of YKP (Young Key Populations), where consortium organisations and programs are led, designed, and implemented by young people, working for other young people. Youth-oriented characteristics make the challenges and mitigation measures unique during crisis situations.

The impact of the SARS-COV-2 (Coronavirus) global pandemic cannot be understated. Faced with significant challenges including but not limited to maintaining staffing levels, adapting to remote working conditions, continuing to provide services to those in need, and constraints around fundraising activities, etc., the non-profit sector, especially youth CSOs at the grassroot level, has been among the most impacted.

1.1 Background and Rationale

The world we are living in today seems to be impacted more and more by natural disasters and humanitarian crises. COVID-19 particularly, has had disastrous impacts in nearly all corners of the globe. Young key populations (YKPs) and young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) already face challenges in employment, social protection, accessing healthcare, psychosocial support and education, which have been further exacerbated by COVID-19. There are growing concerns about how COVID-19 has impacted the progress already made on HIV and the emerging challenges faced by youth and YKP led organizations.

In 2022, the 4 Youth consortium, made up of four regional organizations focusing on the rights and well-being of YKPs spanning from APAC, MENA, Africa, LAC and EEC raised the need for an organizational policy and best practices guideline to equip staff and network partners on how to look after themselves and each other during these types of crises situations for sustained advocacy whilst parallelly in the fight against HIV.

Responding to the need, Youth LEAD took lead on developing an organizational-level policy and best practices guidelines for crisis situations. The main task is to gather the existing good practices and compile those as a guideline, including preparedness, safety, remote work, and social and mental health support for staff and network partners.

Goals and Objectives

1. To develop a tool for youth and YKP led organizations in managing the wellbeing of members during crisis situations.
2. To develop a guideline applicable to various crisis situations.
3. To develop a guideline that is easy to navigate and contextualize for young people.

1.2 Methodology

As a first step, a thorough Desk review was carried out on existing best practices appropriate for young people and YKPs+ 4Youth consortium's policies in the areas of preparedness, safety, social and mental health support and remote work arrangements for youth-led organizations and any other topics the lead consultant considers relevant.

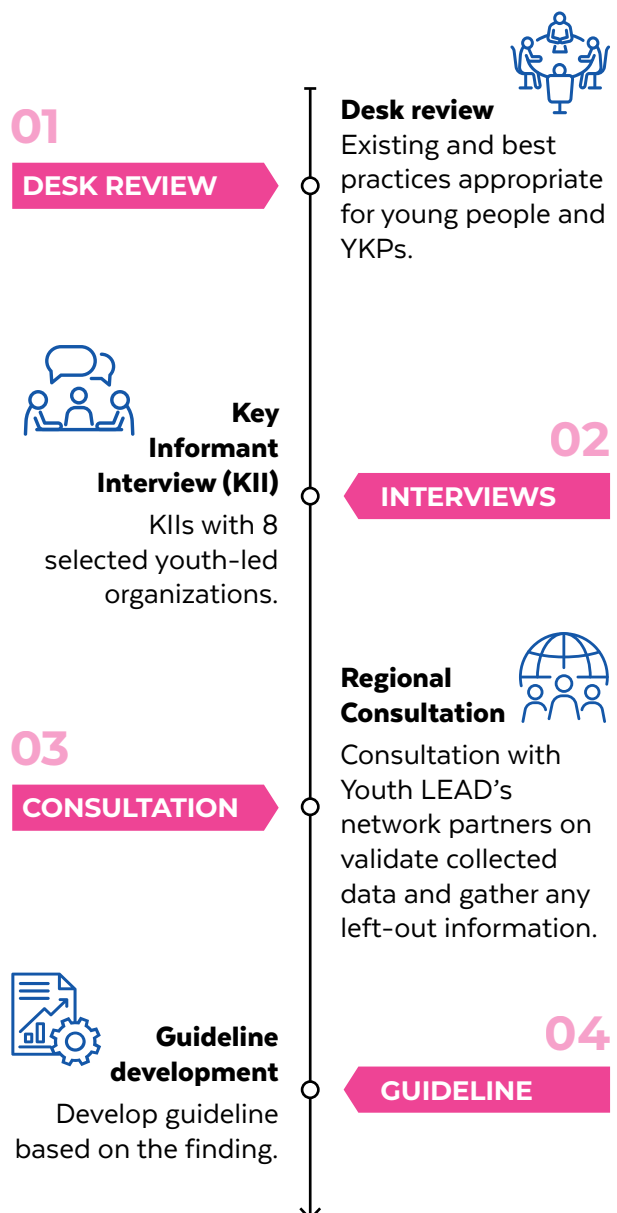Documents were read and analysed to look for:
• Current policies and guidelines
• Good practices

Afterwards, key informant interviews were conducted with 5 youth-led organizations and 4Youth consortium member organizations. The interviews were then analysed for the content development of the guideline. Youth LEAD nominated the organizations for this study based on Youth LEAD's existing knowledge of best practices and coping mechanisms during the pandemic. Each organization then delegated their key informants to take part in the interview.

The qualitative data of Key Informant Interviews (KII) were then analysed. A regional consultation with Youth LEAD's network partners was organized to validate the collected data and gather left-out information.

Based on the data gathered from the literature review, KIIs and regional consultation, the guideline was developed. Later, Youth LEAD provided the guideline to 4Youth Consortium members and partners for their input and feedback. In the final stage, the guideline was completed after incorporating all the feedback.

FIGURE 1. ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINE FOR CRISIS SITUATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

01 DESK REVIEW

Desk review
Existing and best practices appropriate for young people and YKPs.

Key Informant Interview (KII)
KIIs with 8 selected youth-led organizations.

02 INTERVIEWS

03 CONSULTATION

Regional Consultation
Consultation with Youth LEAD's network partners on validate collected data and gather any left-out information.

Guideline development
Develop guideline based on the finding.

04 GUIDELINE

2

Understanding Crises

The following section will both define 'crises' in an organisational context and elaborate on the various phases of crisis management.

2.1 What is a Crisis?

Crises are defined in many ways to reflect their impact upon individuals, organisations, and to a wider degree society. Crises may be defined as dramatic interruptions in the day-to-day routines of organizations or societies, which severely test the management capacity of decision makers, and threaten the core values which that organization or society holds dear (Dayton, 2009).

2.2 Understanding Phases of Crises

According to the Crisis Management Cycle Diagram (CMCD), crisis management typically encompasses four phases throughout which organisations enact strategies to prevent, prepare, respond/adapt, and recover in the onset of crises. Crisis management (CM), though a discipline of itself, encompasses risk management (RM), disaster planning (DP), and business continuity management (BCM) practices. Crisis management may also be deemed a component of organisational resilience (OR) i.e., the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for,

respond, and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper (Denyer, 2017). All organizations are in at least one phase of CMCD at any time. CMCD includes the sum of all activities, programs and measures which can be taken up before, during and after a crisis with the purpose to avoid a crisis, reduce its impact or recover from its losses.

The following section will address the four phases of crisis management as per the crisis management cycle.

Prevention

The prevention phase of crisis management encompasses an organisation's risk management practices, i.e., risk assessment (identification and measurement of risk), establishing a risk register (prioritisation), and the development of mitigation strategies to prevent/offset the effects of identified risks (risk management).

Preparedness

The preparedness phase refers to the organisation's capacity to offset, withstand, and adapt to an ongoing crisis. Preparedness encompasses an organisation's disaster planning (i.e., development of disaster specific strategies and responses, identification of required resources, capacity building, training, and drilling) and business continuity management practices (i.e., business

impact analysis, identification of core business functions and required resources, recovery strategy development, implementation, and testing). Though similar in many regards, disaster planning tends to be disaster specific while business continuity planning is primarily focussed on the development of capacity to not just withstand but potentially strive during the onset of general crises. Though BCM is traditionally rooted in maintaining the financial health of for-profit organisations, the principles of BCM may be equally applied to non-profit organisations.

Response

The response phase encompasses the implementation of strategies developed during earlier phases (i.e., risk mitigation plans, disaster recovery plans, and business continuity plans) to offset the initial impact of the crisis and maintain core business functions and value adding activities to continue to achieve the organisation's critical
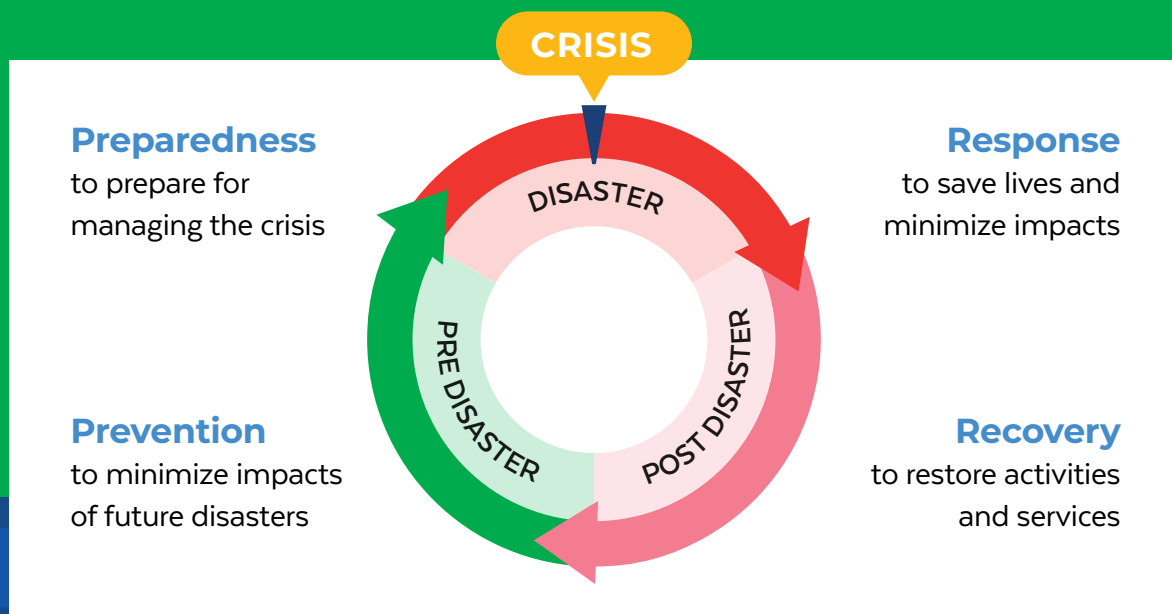
success factors (Bullen and Rockart, 1981) which contribute to the fulfilment of its mission.

Recovery

The recovery phase covers using the knowledge and lessons learned from the crisis to strengthen the organisation. It ideally enables organisations to measure the effectiveness of plans and strategies and be better prepared for future crises.

Though practices such as risk management, business continuity planning, and disaster recovery planning traditionally include input from risk management specialists and consultants, not necessarily cost-intensive. Utilizing existing resources should be at the forefront of all risk management activities with an emphasis on cross-training staff to delegate different tasks in response to potential risk in the future. Lessons learned from the Coronavirus pandemic present an ideal starting point from which to further strengthen organisational resilience

FIGURE 2: CRISIS MANAGEMENT CYCLE DIAGRAM

CRISIS

DISASTER

PRE DISASTER

POST DISASTER

Preparedness
to prepare for managing the crisis

Response
to save lives and minimize impacts

Prevention
to minimize impacts of future disasters

Recovery
to restore activities and services

3

Crises Induced Challenges

The following section will identify key crises induced challenges faced by the 8 participating organizations. While individual responses varied, four key themes emerged from the interviewing process – i) Safety, ii) Social and Mental Health, iii) Internal Communication, and iv) Working Approach.

3.1 Safety

Participants frequently cited the safety of its staff as a key challenge, be it due to Coronavirus pandemic or as a result of political tensions. The prevalence of misinformation across social media platforms has emerged as a key contributor to vaccine hesitancy among clients, thus endangering their wellbeing and breeding further resistance to a potentially lifesaving vaccination campaign. Furthermore, gender based violence and/or other types of discrimination against YKPs were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic in many places of the region.

3.2 Social and Mental Health

All participants cited some degree of negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of their employees and/or clients resulting from the pandemic. Themes of isolation, devastation, and anxiety coupled with personal accounts of sleep disruption and mental health struggles emerged most prominently.

3.4 Working Approach

A high volume of participants cited the transition to remote working conditions (WFH - Working from home) as a key challenge, which in most cases required some form of upskilling in the area of digital communication and software. The digital capability of clients and beneficiaries was also cited as a barrier to the provision of quality remote services in some cases. All but one organisation reported some form of business or financial disruption as a result of the pandemic, whether it was project delays, delays as a result of government imposed national restrictions surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic or delays due to the workforce transition to a primarily digital working environment.

3.3 Internal Communication

Many participants cited internal communication struggles in adapting to remote work. Reliance of video conferencing technologies, messaging apps, and social media were frequently mentioned as sources of communication with some organisations', leading to some employees initially struggling to adapt to these technologies and/or becoming disengaged from the organisation, it's work, and mission.

4

Strategies to Overcome Adversity

As evidenced, participating organizations faced a range of similar challenges resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic. The following section has amalgamated the responses of all 8 participants and thematically categorized them into 5 key strategies utilized to overcome the adversity of crises and maintain normal operational status.

4.1 Change Process

All but one participating organization was relatively new to remote working conditions and the unique challenges which they present. As cited, the digitisation of internal communication and increased emphasis on the use of new software and technology required workforce adaption and in some cases upskilling. Among the practices cited to aid the change process were the following:

- Peer learning opportunities and best practice workshops for adapting to new apps, digital resources while working from home.
- Development of travel safety policies aligned with government restrictions and guidelines.
- Development of HR Department and HR policies to cover potential staff absences due to personal circumstances/wellbeing or emergency situations.

4.2 Coping Mechanisms

All participating organizations cited mental health struggles either of their staff, their clients, or both. Promisingly, participants reported a wide array of strategies implemented to combat these struggles including:

- Regularly scheduled informal check-in and catch-up sessions with staff.
- Provision of counselling and mental health support for staff.
- Development of community support systems such as support groups for staff.
- Provision of digital day-offs for staff.
- Development of digital support activities for clients and the community.

4.3 New Approaches to Work

The advent of the Coronavirus pandemic, despite being extremely disruptive, has acted as the catalyst for new ways of working which previously may have been unexplored or thought non-viable. While the transition to remote working has created opportunities for innovation, it has also come with challenges to the traditional operations of such organizations. The following are the strategies implemented by participating organizations to maintain normal operational status:

- Transition to online advocacy via social media channels, purpose-built websites, etc.
- Mobilizing volunteers in collaboration with organizations which share a similar ethos.
- Increased collaboration and networking with other organizations and their stakeholders.
- Increased focus on applying for grants and other funding sources.

4.4 Communication

Faced with the inability to hold in-person meetings, workshops, or events, participating organisations primarily switched their focus to digital communication via messaging apps, email, and video conferencing for internal communication. Spreading the organisation's message and engaging clients remained a struggle, however, many participating organisations harnessed the power of social media to much success. The following are the communication strategies implemented by participating organisations:

- Youth consultation to assure alignment between client needs and service provision.
- Transition to digital communication channels including video conferencing, messaging apps, social media, etc.
- Availability of alternative/backup messaging apps and communication channels in the event of an outage, disruption, and or government-imposed ban.
- Regular online group meetings to assure alignment with the organisation's mission.

4.5 Team Engagement

The Coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly had an impact on the ways in which organisations interact with and engage their employees and volunteers. Remote working conditions, while necessary, make it increasingly likely for employees to become disengaged or lose focus of the organisation's aims through no fault of their own. Without the physical office space from which to collaborate, interact, and bond as a team, NGOs have adapted digital strategies to maintain employee engagement including:

- Digital team meetings.
- Informalized work to avoid potential burnout or meeting fatigue.
- Peer learning events allowing team members to share best practices and experiences while bonding.

5

Promising Practices and Key Takeaways

Though it is undoubtedly easier to focus on the negative aspects of crises, particularly the relentless impact of the Coronavirus pandemic which still affects our work and personal lives to this day, crises present an opportunity for positive changes also. It is only fitting that attention be brought to the exceptional performance of some organisations under these immensely difficult conditions with emphasis on the lessons that can be learned from each.
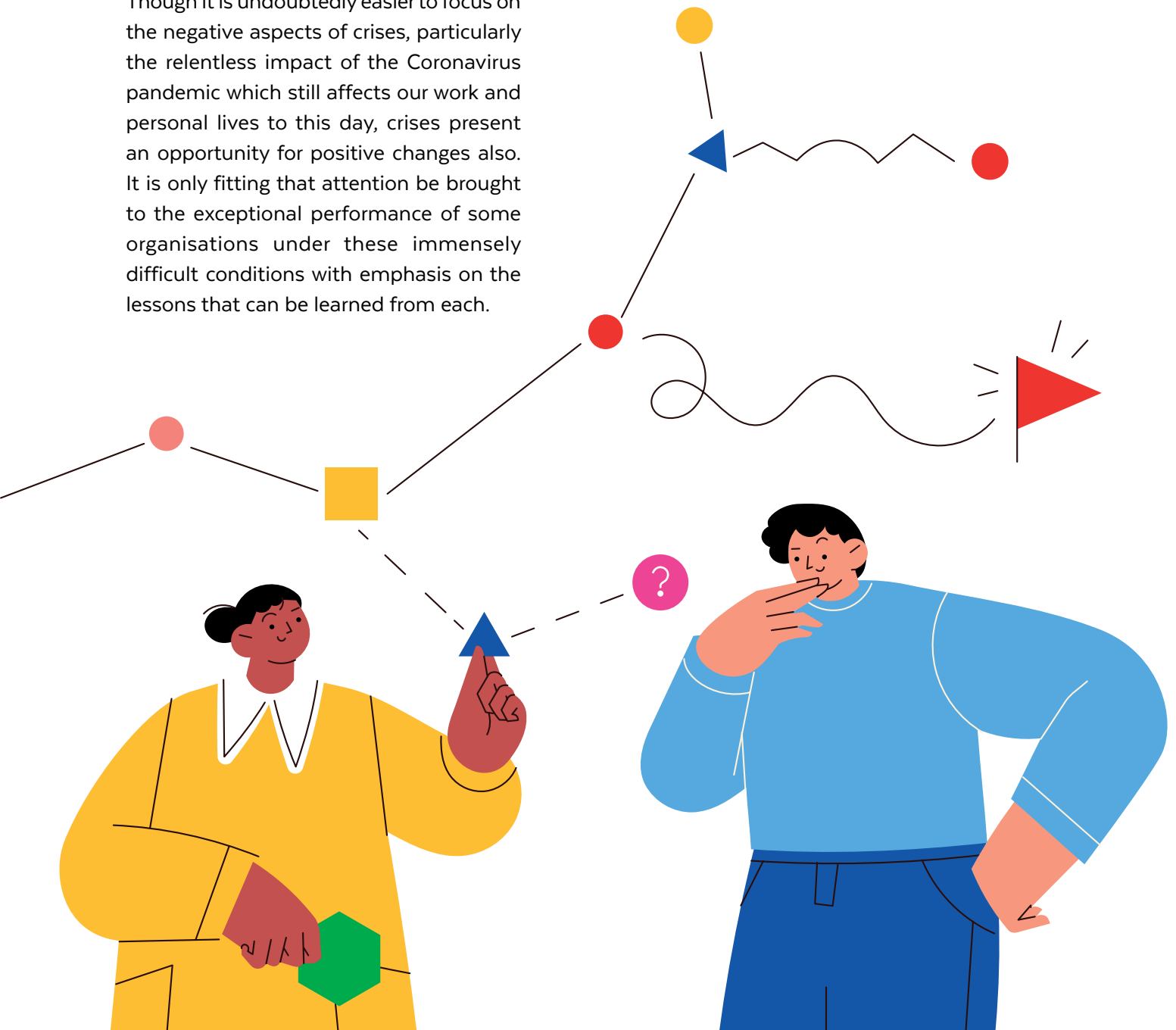
Resilience and Recovery – YKP LEAD Nepal, Nepal

> "The pandemic time has brought a new beginning for YKP LEAD Nepal."

YKP Lead Nepal has led the way in terms of resilience during the pandemic. Recognising the opportunities presented by the pandemic, YKP LEAD Nepal collaborated with Youth LEAD to fund an online consultation with over 100 young people to highlight the needs of the young key population (YKP) during Covid times and to plead for YKPs to participate in implementing Global Fund projects in Nepal.

Taking on board the recommendations derived from the consultation, the organisation worked tirelessly to gain legal registration from the Nepal Government to enable it to receive global grants. Once successful, YKP LEAD Nepal has continued to consult with the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Nepal and collaborated with various key population networks. Advocating for the YKP, YKP LEAD Nepal relentlessly raised its concerns and demanded an individual network to be an SR in Nepal, remaining true to their motto; 'Let's not assume what youth want'.

YKP LEAD Nepal's communication developed advocacy messages for the engagement of YKP in the GF process, continuously advocating networks, CCM, PR and CR, lobbying tirelessly along the way. YKP LEAD Nepal cite evidenced-based advocacy as among their key strengths, noting that the youth consultation provided strong evidence to lobby in the CCM for YKP engagement and participation in the implementation of GF projects.

Among YKP LEAD Nepal's incredible achievements have been collaborating with PLHIV and PUD Network to link with the service provider to provide ART for YPLHIV who couldn't access treatment.
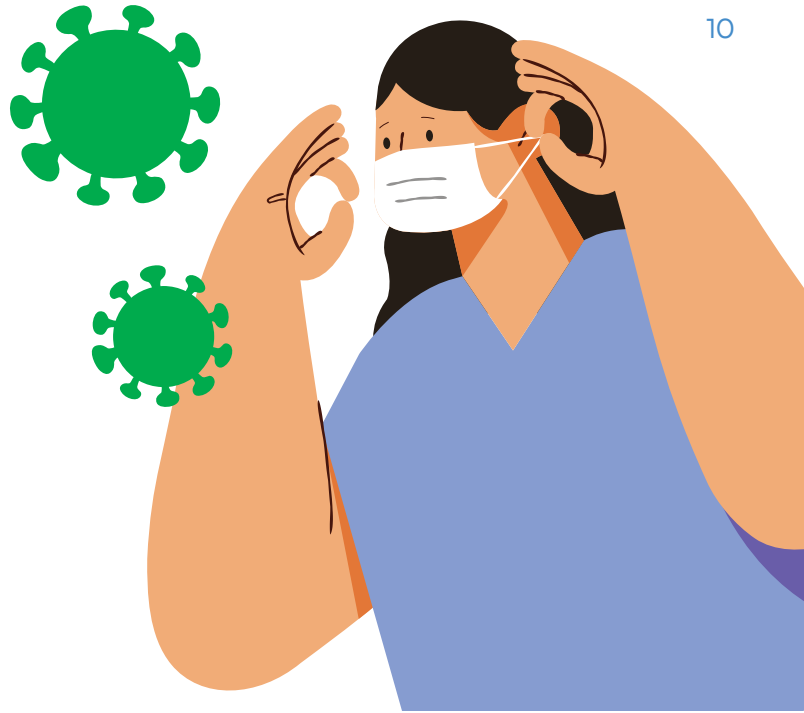
Combatting a Crisis – Myanmar Youth Stars, Myanmar

> "No matter how hard the battle gets, never give up!"

Myanmar Youth Stars have done some incredible work during the pandemic and political unrest situation. Recognising that urgent need of YKP, including young Sex Workers are beginning to opt out of treatment due to ART being solely available through National Aids Programmes with excessive wait times, Myanmar Youth Star's collaborated with SWING in providing input to assure programmes are more effective and targeted. In addition, Myanmar Youth Stars provide online information for HIV prevention and GBV.

Myanmar Youth Star's transformation has been inspirational, through perseverance and determination Myanmar Youth Stars has become one of the fundamental 8 KP networks in Myanmar, now operating from its own office with 15 paid staff members.

Addressing Mental Health Inequalities Arising from the Pandemic – Ya_All, Manipur, India

> "Familiarity and comfort are good practices since we all work in these fields now."

Ya_All did not ignore the mental health implications of the pandemic. Addressing the impact of endless calls, Ya_All held sessions for self-care and made retreat time available to overcome the stress. The success of Ya_All in tackling mental health struggles can be attributed to normalising the conversation around mental health. Ya_All was able to set up an initiative to distribute emergency supplies, which included first aid kits, sanitary pads and condoms to middle-class and low-income families across the state. In total, Ya_all was able to support approximately 500 families. Through Ya_All's COVID vaccine campaign, 15000 people have access to COVID vaccines.

Respond, Recover, and Thrive – Inti Muda Indonesia

> "Be creative, solve the problem and get over the challenge. Employ tools like new digital technology."

Inti Muda noted that there were various lifestyle changes among young YKP during this period due to concerns about their livelihoods. With the support of the YKP Emergency Relief Fund, Inti Muda Indonesia, took a multi-faceted approach to the pandemic. Inti Muda Indonesia has provided temporary assistance to young key populations in seven provinces (DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, South Sulawesi, North Sumatera, Bali and Papua) to provide essential items and services. This included the provision of basic needs such as food, face masks and anti-bacterial soaps and an allowance for transportation costs, to facilitate access to health services and assist with medical expenses. Also, Inti Muda has provided a shelter in Jakarta housing 6-8 people at any given time throughout the pandemic, helping members to access to online counselling.

Diversified funds, financial security – Youth LEAD Mongolia

> "Ensuring financial security in order to protect the community from the impacts of the pandemic was the utmost priority for the Youth LEAD Mongolia staff."

Responding to the disruption to external funding and opportunities to engage members and beneficiaries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Youth LEAD Mongolia sought to empower its staff in the areas of proposal development, project management and other technical skills through a "Call for mini-project proposals." With increased capacity, the staff came up with novel activities aiming for COVID-19 resilience and applied to various grants, resulting in the organisation receiving grants from RFSL Sweden and Outright Action International.

Leading in Crisis – Youth LEAD: Emergency Relief Fund, Leadership

"Youth LEAD team is my pride. They are the blood of the organization. Secretariat team, and member organizations. Board members (including Thai) are also supportive."

"We did not get blown away by the wind. We keep changing and adapting according to the time."

When the COVID-19 hit the Asia Pacific and the world, Youth LEAD immediately responded. Young key populations (YKPs) and young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) already face inequalities in employment, social protection, accessing healthcare, and education, which were made worse by the impacts of the pandemic.

At the beginning of the pandemic (April 2020), Youth LEAD conducted a situational analysis of COVID-19 among its members to identify areas for support and intervention. In addition, the results from a previously conducted survey by the Inter Agency Task Team on YKPs on the impact of COVID-19 supported many of the claims and challenges experienced by young people across the region. In response, Youth LEAD reached out to existing donors to explore the possibility of fund-reallocation for the YKP COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

The Robert Carr Fund (RCF), one of Youth LEAD's prominent donors, agreed to the reallocation of programme costs and the first phase of the Emergency Relief Fund was launched on the 20th of April 2020 with a total budget of **USD 29,000.**

In August 2020, after the first phase was completed, civil society organisations and, in particular, youth-led organisations were unable to access due to the rising cases and poorly coordinated responses from governments (from which the World AIDS Day 2020 report points out) resources and financial assistance.

Thus Phase 2 of the Relief Fund was launched and supported by RCF and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) with a total of **USD 23,000.** Phase 2 organisations included Human Touch (India), Ya_All (India), the Dove Foundation (India), Inti Muda (Indonesia), YKP LEAD Nepal and NAP+N (Nepal), YPEER Philippines, KHANA Cambodia, Wasaib Sanwaro (Pakistan), Youth LEAD Mongolia, VYKAP Vietnam, and Haus of Khamelon (Fiji).

In 2021, cases were not only still rising, but many countries were seeing second and third waves with new variants. In collaboration with the RCF and UNAIDS RST, Youth LEAD decided on a crucial third phase contributing USD 32,000 to five youth/YKP led organisations in the Asia Pacific from May to October 2021.

The quick response and necessary collaborations among regional partners and donors maximised equitable and equal access to HIV services and solutions during COVID-19 through the leadership of youth and young key population-led organisations.

Some examples of these responses include:

Access to COVID-19 prevention tools

Access was necessary as many organisations noted a loss of motivation and fear from staff and outreach workers when they did not have access to simple hygiene items such as masks and sanitisers. Due to the Emergency funding, organisations such as VYKAP were able to distribute 2,000 face masks, 1,000 sanitiser bottles and Ya_All in Manipur, India, where the second wave devastated their communities, provided vaccination support to ensure YKPs weren't left behind.

HIV prevention measures

So much focus was put on COVID-19 that CSOs and YKP led organisations felt they had to fight even harder to keep their programmes afloat. Even though Viet Nam was completely locked down, VYKAP managed to produce HIV and SRHR digital educational content for their YKP members and distribute harm reduction materials to 15 provinces. In addition, the Emergency Relief

funding allowed YPEER Philippines to continue their essential work under their #GetCondomPH Programme where they distributed 11,520 condoms and trained 930 young people on HIV combination strategies and screened 899 young people for HIV.

Other successful initiatives among the grantees were essential care packages for young people living with HIV that included food, medicine and cash support, psychosocial support, and socio-economic support. Over the three YKP COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund phases spanning two years, Youth LEAD has raised USD 84,000 supporting 12 youth/YKP led organisations in the Asia Pacific.

We need to acknowledge that it's not just the fight against HIV these days but climate change, migration, and now pandemics. COVID-19 is not going anywhere soon, especially with the occurrence of new variants. As youth and YKP led organisations, we must be ready, adaptable and flexible to changing environments and crises. In terms of the future of HIV programming, it will most likely be that it will have to run parallel to COVID-19 or future crisis funding. We may no longer have a separate YKP COVID-19 emergency relief funding but rather COVID/crisis components integrated into our programming; as the World AIDS Day Report (2021) reflects, we no longer can afford to be unequal, underprepared and under threat.

6

Recommendations and Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that while all participating organisations struggled to varying degrees throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, strategies have emerged which were proven successful in offsetting the impact of the crisis. Most notably, many of these strategies did not require additional resources but were instead the result of maximising the use of existing resources and the expertise of employees to develop sustainable solutions. These strategies and practices will form the basis for the best practice recommendations.

The following generic strategies are recommended to offset the impact of future crises and maintain core organisational functions:

1. Undertake a Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

BIAs are traditionally a business continuity management (BCM) practice rooted in building the organisational resilience of for-profit organisations, however, the purpose of the BIA can be applied to organisations of all structures and purposes. The objective of the BIA is to identify the effects of a disruption to business functions and provide strategies to mitigate and minimise the risk to the organisation. Youth-led organisations can adopt the method in their own contexts and assess how different factors contribute to the normal flow of their operations and human resources in order to further improve and adapt during critical phases.

2. Digital Upskilling of the organisation

The organisation and members will require the skills to adapt to future crises which may require long-term remote working similar to that of the Coronavirus pandemic. To limit business disruption, it is suggested that organisations' members and staff are assisted in developing/ refreshing the skills required to work comfortably and efficiently from a remote location. This could be implemented through the continued practice of regular peer learning events or in-house digital skills programs. In CSOs mostly made up of young people and YKPs, informal and peer-oriented practical exercises can be considered as ideal means of equitable digital growth.

3. Develop Support Networks and Strategic Partnerships

As evidenced, participants that sought the assistance of similar organisations on a local or regional basis with shared values could mobilise volunteers, strengthen their capabilities,

share resources, and update each other on the developing situation. It is suggested that organisations seek out similar organisations with which they can liaise, collaborate, and mutually support in the advent of future crises. In many parts of the Asia Pacific region, especially within the civil society context, forming coalitions has been proven to be essential in scaling up the advocacy work during times of common hardships.

4. Develop a Standard but Flexible Travel Safety Policy

Possessing a travel safety policy has become increasingly necessary due to the Coronavirus pandemic and political situation. Though these policies are often necessitated based on government-imposed restrictions and thus subject to change, it is advisable that organisations develop a standard travel safety policy which may be revised to reflect the requirements of emergent crises at a later point. The aim of the travel safety policy is to possess a foundation from which to add to as opposed to developing a policy from scratch during a crisis or improvising a response. To assist in this a free to use travel safety policy template from workable.com has been included with this document.

5. Develop a Wellbeing Strategy

Assuring the wellbeing of members and staff in the advent of a crisis is of paramount importance. The Coronavirus pandemic has showcased that organisation which have provided mental health support to their members and staff have benefitted from increased members engagement. While this strategy may include the provision of services such as counselling, it may also include cost-effective but impactful practices such as regular staff and members welfare checks, informal courtesy calls, rest days, developing a community support system, or providing access to online mental health resources. Particularly regarding the permanent digital shifts made to interorganizational or

international collaborations, a wellbeing strategy with specific focus on digital wellbeing and mental health is important.

6. Develop Adaptation Strategies and Prepare to Seek Funding

Finding new ways to continue the daily operations of the organisation with minimal disruption requires foresight and flexibility. Participating organisations predominantly approached this in 3 ways:

Transitioning to online advocacy via social media channels, purpose-built websites, etc.

Collaboration with like-minded organisations to mobilise volunteers and assist each other in campaigns

Utilising all available sources of funding including grants and donors.

To enable these strategies to be successful in the advent of crises it is advised that organisations do the following 1) Develop a strong social media presence or add up on their previous digital advocacy efforts across platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube and/or TikTok to increase their reach, 2) Develop strategic partnerships and network with similar organisations on local, regional, or national basis to share best practices and collaborate on projects, and 3) Prepare generic proposals and documents likely to be required by funding bodies for financial support in the advent of crises, these documents can always be revised and updated prior to application.

7. Develop Internal and External Communication Strategies and Backups

Maintaining communication during a crisis is crucial to the safety of staff, the ability to maintain operations, and to reach and engage the organisation's clients. As evidenced, organisations primarily migrated to digital communication channels for both internal and external communication purposes throughout the pandemic with popular video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meets among the most popular choices.

During an unfolding crisis there is a constant risk that an organisations' primary communication tool may not be available due to outages, government bans, or damage to critical infrastructure. For this reason, it is advised that NGOs develop a prioritised list of first, second, and third choice communication tools for

Email e.g., internal email, Outlook, Gmail, Protonmail, etc.

Video Conferencing e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, etc.

Messaging e.g., WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, etc.

This will enable the organisation to quickly adapt to an outage. For this to be successful, the organisation needs to assure each employee is set up with these communication tools and capable of using them in advance.

Morning huddles (i.e., group video conferencing meetings) are suggested at the start of each working day, especially in the early stages of a crisis to assure staff are updated regarding the dynamics of the crisis and strategies/priorities moving forward.

8. Prepare to Lead

Those in higher management or leadership roles serve a vital role in managing crises. It is advised that leadership regularly update staff regarding the direction of the organisation both at the onset and throughout a crisis. This can be achieved via email updates, participation in daily/weekly group meetings, newsletters, etc. The engagement and direction of leadership may serve to motivate, inspire, and comfort staff during a difficult and stressful period. Furthermore, empowering employees and volunteers in pursuing management roles at the appropriate scale, dealing with the creation of new activities and proposals and having their voices heard about organisational wellbeing concerns.

9. Continue to Engage

Despite the many benefits of remote work, a consistent drawback tends to be loneliness. Organisations can maintain engagement among members and staff by fostering team connections through social hours, video chats, and virtual team-building activities. It's also advisable to plan virtual get-togethers for non-work-related chats and activities to allow teams to engage and bond outside of the work dynamic. Moreover, having a sense of community and compassion during critical times can have a far-reaching positive impact on not only the staff but also the youth and YKP around them.

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to the organisations that volunteered to participate in the development of these guidelines including YKP LEAD Nepal, Intimuda, Myanmar Youth Stars, Ya_all, Youth Rise, YPeer AP, Y+ Global, and Youth LEAD. You have all truly led the way in developing resilience among youth advocacy organisations and your contributions will serve as a guiding light during future crises.

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