



Bangladesh Police in the Response to HIV

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Mily Biswas ppm, DIG
Additional Police Commissioner
Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Bangladesh





HIV in Bangladesh

- ▶ First case in the country was detected in 1989
- ▶ Prevalence of HIV is $<1\%$ among the general population
- ▶ It is estimated that 8000 people are infected with HIV

Who is affected?

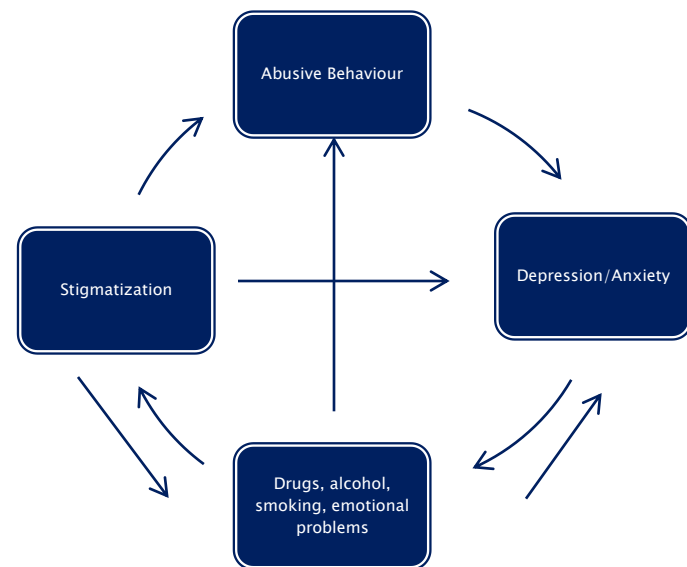
- ▶ Sex Workers, People Who Inject Drugs (PWID), Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM)/ Hijras are the population most profoundly affected by HIV
- ▶ Other Vulnerable Groups: International Migrant Workers, Transport Workers, Heroin Smokers, Prisoners, Especially vulnerable adolescents



How are these populations effected?

“AIDS is probably the most stigmatized disease in history...If we do not appreciate the nature and impact of stigma, none of our interventions can begin to be successful.”
Edward Cameron, Constitutional Court Justice in South Africa

- ▶ The affect of stigma on people living with HIV:
 - Social stigma excludes people living with HIV from family and community events
 - Physical stigma includes isolation and violence
 - Verbal stigma includes insults, taunts, blame, gossip and rumors
 - Institutional stigma includes job loss due to HIV status, eviction from housing, loss of educational opportunities and substandard health care



Laws affecting marginalized populations in Bangladesh



1. Lack of protective laws for the social and health rights of People Living with HIV
2. The law is not clear on the legal status of sex work. Vagrants and Shelterless Persons Act are reportedly used to discriminatorily harass and detain Female Sex Workers
3. Drug use is illegal in Bangladesh and therefore harm reduction programmes, such as needle exchange initiatives, are not supported by law enforcers
4. The law is not clear as to whether the act of Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) is legal; however, in a conservative Muslim country like Bangladesh officers do not accept this act.





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5. There is no protection policy for Hijras (Transgendered Persons), and hijras were not recognized as a gender. Just recently hijras were recognized as third gender.

6. The law on migration does not adequately address the needs of migrant workers and is not properly implemented.





Why are these laws disconcerting?



- ▶ Increase discrimination from society and the police
- ▶ Criminalize the jobs or lifestyles of vulnerable populations
- ▶ Help to dismantle harm reduction interventions



Trainings currently provided to the Bangladesh Police?

- ▶ Trainings and workshops on:
 - Human rights, law enforcement, humanitarian laws
 - gender
 - Responsive community policing
 - Reproductive health



Strengthening the Role of Police in National AIDS Response



1. Specific training on HIV/AIDS and the human rights of marginalized populations
2. Conduct workshops and trainings for the police on the alignment of Law Enforcement and HIV Prevention
3. Train the police on the intersection between police and Harm Reduction
 1. Participate in regional/global conferences/meetings to supplement knowledge on law enforcement and HIV.



The police need to build partnerships and collaborate with:

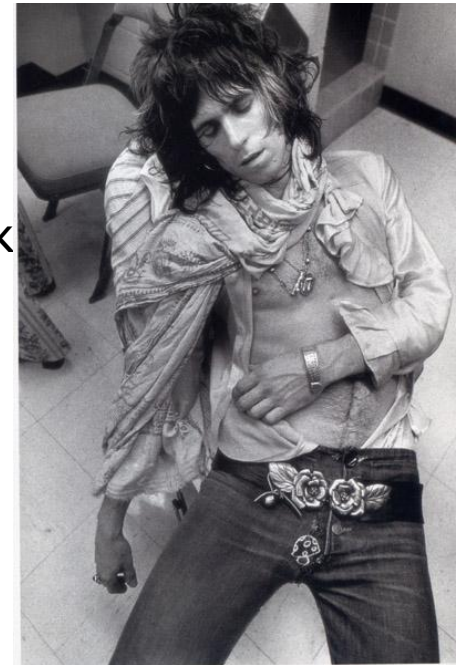
- ▶ organizations implementing harm reduction interventions
 - UNAIDS
 - I NGOs
 - NGOs
- ▶ Civil society and at risk groups
- ▶ The United Nations agencies



What Can Be Achieved with the Positive Involvement of Police



- ▶ Police can play a vital role in the response to HIV through:
 - Active support and leadership
 - Creating an enabling environment to allow harm reduction approaches to endure
 - Addressing human rights and social justice issues facing marginalized communities
 - Fostering trust and rapport that is needed to deliver effective HIV services to the most-at-risk populations
 - Help in reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS in communities and within their institution





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Grazie Danke Ευχαριστίες Dalu
Thank You Köszönöm
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Спасибо Dank Gracias
谢谢 **Merci** Seé
ありがとう

Any questions?