



OUR STORY | INDONESIA + VIETNAM

Part two in a series sharing stories of change from MPact's Bridging the Gaps Program

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Introduction

This change story features the work of G-Link and Lighthouse, MPact's Bridging the Gaps partners in Vietnam, and the work of Inti Muda (formerly Focus Muda) and GWL-INA, MPact's Bridging the Gaps partners in Indonesia.

It highlights the critical role played by Bridging the Gaps in advancing the work of these community-based organizations (CBOs) to sensitize healthcare providers, research sexual and reproductive health (SRH), innovate technologies for the LGBTI community, knowledge-share, and expand access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment in the country. Through technical assistance and direct funding, MPact supported G-Link and Lighthouse in building a more enabling environment for LGBTI populations not only in Vietnam, but also regionally and internationally.

This story of change also highlights the critical role played by Bridging the Gaps II in supporting the missions of both Inti Muda and GWL-INA to sensitize healthcare providers, develop capacity for member organizations, and empower the young LGBTI (YLGBTI) community. Together, MPact and its partners sourced pressing challenges and solutions first identified by the community. This sourcing translated into a number of local and global activities supported by technical assistance and direct funding from MPact. With support from Bridging the Gaps, these activities yielded measurable changes in organizational and capacity development for Inti Muda and GWL-INA as community-based organizations (CBOs), as well as measurable improvements in health of LGBT communities in Indonesia.

The Problem

Limited capacity, stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings, and threats to funding for LGBTI organizations stymie sustainable HIV responses in both countries.

Despite a deluge of HIV infections, especially among key populations like gay and bisexual men, LGBTI CBOs in Vietnam have not received the investments needed in order to respond to the epidemic. Limited capacity prohibited Lighthouse and G-Link from scaling interventions to improve SRH. Direct funding and technical assistance were needed to build these organizations' capacities, and partnerships with a willing and able Ministry of Health needed to be tapped in the country. If MPact could invest in these CBOs, then Lighthouse and G-Link could innovate the solutions needed to advance the health of LGBTI populations in Vietnam.

A wave of conservative laws, policies, and programs in Indonesia – including penalization of same sex acts – foster violence, stigma, and discrimination against the LGBTI community. MPact and its partners identified this problem, which was felt in the press, the health system, and activists' capacity to organize.

Media, unreceptive to the stories of LGBTI people, rarely highlighted the community in the national conversation. Healthcare providers failed to deliver LGBTI-friendly healthcare services to the YLGBT community and to sex workers. Inadequate safe sex education for YLGBT exacerbated their vulnerability to HIV and other STIs. The Ministry of Health required clients under the age of 18 to secure parental consent, restricting these vulnerable populations' access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for HIV/STI prevention, testing, and treatment. CBOs struggled to source and implement solutions to overcome these pressing social, legal, and political barriers without adequate technical assistance for program management. Limited capacity stymied Inti Muda and GWL INA from scaling programs to address these barriers. Without streams of direct funding, their staff were unable to knowledge share at global trainings, workshops, meetings, and conferences.



LGBTI community members of Indonesia attending a BTG Organizational training

The Actions

MPact, G-Link, Lighthouse, Inti Muda, and GWL-INA organized the following actions during Bridging the Gaps.



Inti Muda workshoping at MPact's advocacy training

01

SENSITIZATION OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS:

In 2016, MPact funded local partners to attend a theory of change workshop. MPact hosted a series of workshops with Lighthouse and Glink to train staff on the methodology to sensitize healthcare workers. In 2017, Lighthouse and G-Link began trainings with staff. These CBOs conducted pre-assessments at healthcare facilities to assess healthcare providers's friendliness towards clients. Lighthouse and G-Link then drew an action plan to help healthcare providers make facilities more friendly. This included training healthcare providers with materials related to the health of LGBTI communities, linking providers to the community, strengthening referrals and building partnerships to better the relationship between the healthcare facility and clients.

MPact and its partners prioritized efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination against LGBTI clients in nine cities across Indonesia. This allowed for sensitization healthcare providers about sexual orientation and gender expression leading to expanded clinic hours and an HIV-friendly room for testing and treatment in Pekanbaru. Regional trainings on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and the [MSMIT](#) also allowed for Inti Muda and GWL-INA to sensitize healthcare providers and to advocate for LGBTI-friendly healthcare services. In the summer of 2019, MPact convened a group of 23 HIV and LGBTI human rights advocates from seven countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Jamaica) in Cambodia. They discussed and strategized on PrEP access, rollout, and demand generation in their respective countries. Participants were invited to apply through a competitive process for a small grant funding opportunity.

02

COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION RESEARCH:

MPact's "Action 4 Access!" research team and training program engaged these CBOs, strengthening their capacity to conduct research that gathered data owned by the community. Advocate with different lawmakers, policymakers, and programmers. Investigators from MPact and local partners in Vietnam, Kenya, and Botswana focused on a qualitative study to identify barriers gay and bisexual men face when accessing HIV services. Investigators from Lighthouse developed a protocol, designed a questionnaire, received IRB approval, recruited participants, analyzed data, and wrote an abstract. This work also honed skills for investigators at Lighthouse to participate in MPact's Global Men Health & Rights Survey and oversee the MSM cohort study in Hanoi targeting young LGBTI people.

Partners also received direct funding support for research on gay and bisexual men's chemsex practices in Indonesia. MPact supported a partnership with a local university to design and implement this first-time research program. This allowed partners to do the following:

1. Respond to the syndemic of HIV and drug use that is occurring in the populations of gay and bisexual men.
2. Develop strategies for expanding HIV service coverage to reach the young gay and bisexual men.
3. Focus services on addressing the gap in HIV testing and treatment among gay and bisexual men.
4. Develop strategies that can prevent and reduce the harmful effect of sexualized drug/substance use.
5. Utilize and build on the study's findings on gay and bisexual men's use of drug/substances in sexual settings.

03

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

MPact's technical assistance and direct funding supported Lighthouse and G-Link in organizational development. G-Link, which opened the first HIV clinic in Vietnam for key populations, received funding to buy more equipment, maintain more personnel, and deliver more free services, including services for HIV treatment, mental health, and drug use. MPact provided technical assistance to these CBOs for proposal and grant writing, securing of legal statuses, branding, program management and implementation, improved data collection systems, and development of a community laboratory and pharmacy.

MPact focused its organizational development actions to elevate its partners' capacity and resilience. MPact provided technical assistance to Inti Muda and GWL-INA to translate the MSM Information Toolkit, specifically on actions related to YLGBTI. On site visits, MPact and its partners helped to write strategy maps for organizational development, build modules and materials for workshops, reorient mission statements, and supported training in financial management. Part of this organizational development for Inti Muda included growing a volunteer program to train YLGBTI as activists working for nongovernmental organizations. An opportunity for professional development, volunteers learned proposal and report writing, budgeting, and operating social media campaigns.

Additionally, MPact and its partners bolstered support for media staff who developed digital marketing strategies. These included online events, social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, and writing news articles for publication on websites. Inti Muda also used MPact's talk show, *Anal About My Health*, as a template to make 24 videos on SRH with actors and influencers to engage LGBTI allies and YLGBTI.

MPact also provided technical assistance to Inti Muda and GWL-INA to write proposals for social responsibility funds. These actions mobilized advocacy for local HIV funding.



Inti Muda workshoping at MPact's advocacy training

04

PEER EXCHANGE:

Offering opportunities to link local to global and knowledge-share positioned both Lighthouse and G-Link as CBOs with an expertise in scaling public health solutions. MPact funded these CBOs to attend AIDS 2018, the BtG Learning Institute, and the BtG Reflections Meeting, as well as the [BtG-PRIDE](#) annual meeting with COC, another BtG alliance partner. In 2016, COC and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs entered into this five-year partnership aimed at strengthening LGBTI communities and LGBTI lobbying and advocacy activities in the Caribbean, in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, in South and South East Asia, and in East and West Africa. While participating at AIDS 2018, Lighthouse won a Global Challenge Prize among young gay and bisexual men innovators for developing Hunt, a phone application that provides sexual health information, a map with directions to clinics, online counseling, and a forum to rate services. Data collected from the app feeds back to sensitize healthcare providers. MPact also linked representatives of Lighthouse with the Global Fund for local advocacy and with the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief for contributions to the Country and Regional Operational Plans.

MPact fostered opportunities for these CBOs to knowledge share at regional trainings, workshops, meetings, and conferences. Both Inti Muda and GWL INA joined MPact's organizational development trainings in Vietnam. Both CBOs also attended the BtG Reflections Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia with MPact and global partners. MPact also supported Inti Muda and GWL-INA to attend the International AIDS Society's AIDS 2018 conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands to present its programming. Additionally, MPact and COC, another BtG alliance partner, convened 40 LGBT and sexual health organizations to strategize, plan, and knowledge-share at the BTG-PRIDE annual meeting.



BTG PRIDE National Coordination Meeting in Vietnam (2019)



Drag performers at the Every Youth Summer Festival

The Changes

The changes outlined here correspond to the actions mentioned above.

01

EXPANDED ACCESS TO RESPONSIVE, LGBTI-FRIENDLY HEALTHCARE SERVICES:

Sensitization of healthcare providers and organizational development enabled Lighthouse and G-Link to create a more favorable environment for gay and bisexual men and other key populations to access healthcare services, particularly HIV prevention, testing, and treatment. Trainings equipped more healthcare providers to deliver LGBTI-friendly healthcare services at public and private clinics in the country. G-Link's development of a community laboratory and pharmacy allowed for clients to receive same-day results of HIV testing, linkage to HIV prevention and treatment, and access to more affordable, generic medications, which increases adherence to PrEP and antiretroviral therapy.

Trainings — like the one facilitated by GWL-INA at a clinic in Pekanbaru, Indonesia — changed the attitudes, work, and behaviors of healthcare providers. This reduction in stigma and discrimination and improvement in healthcare service delivery allows for a more enabling environment for the LGBTI community in Indonesia. Gay and bisexual men more easily access healthcare for HIV prevention, testing, and treatment at clinics with LGBTI-friendly rooms and longer hours.

02

SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION THROUGH MARKETING AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:

The MSM cohort study conducted in Hanoi showed nearly 50% of participants reported having at least one sexually transmitted infection (STI). To fill gaps in HIV and STI prevention, testing, and treatment, Lighthouse provided information on sexual health using social media, a website, and a smartphone app. These tools mobilized the LGBTI community in Vietnam online and connected users with services and commodities, like clean needles, condoms, and lube. Those who tested positive for HIV were linked to free treatment. Those who tested negative linked to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). In addition, with support from MPact, G-Link redeveloped its branding so clients could better recognize its services.

With a more polished media strategy, the LGBTI community, especially the YLGBTI community, in Indonesia has increased knowledge on PrEP and sexual and reproductive health. After implementation of the Bridging the Gaps actions, Intu Muda and GWL-INA are well positioned and stronger to work with stakeholders. For example, Inti Muda has improved their financial capacity in managing resources and reporting. A more robust external communications strategy has also helped the organization better engage the YLGBTI community around SRH. Employees and volunteers possess increased knowledge and skills, which will translate again to increased funding and capacity. A demonstration of improved outcomes in the public's health through sensitization of healthcare providers and better program management, including stronger oversight of finances and resources, led to these CBOs sourcing local funding.

03

SCALING INTERVENTIONS:

Following MPact-facilitated trainings on sensitization of healthcare providers in Vietnam, Lighthouse collaborated with partners to scale these interventions. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Oxfam identified Lighthouse's work sensitizing healthcare providers as a pilot and then partnered with the CBO to scale the program in five different provinces with LGBTI CBOs.

In 2018, G-Link piloted a program with the government to distribute PrEP to gay and bisexual men in Vietnam at a cost of \$18 per month. Following the pilot, the creation of a self-financing model allowed G-Link and Vietnam's Ministry of Health to deliver PrEP to over 700 gay and bisexual men at no cost. To scale, G-Link also collaborated with the government and other CBOs to sensitize providers delivering PrEP.

Analysis and Significance of the Changes

Together, MPact, Lighthouse, and G-Link innovated solutions to measurably improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes among gay and bisexual men in Vietnam. This work positioned both CBOs for success in responding to HIV and the other health of key populations.

Direct funding from MPact allowed for purchasing of medical equipment at G-Link's clinic and attendance at AIDS 2018, **the BtG Learning Institute, the BtG Reflections Meeting, and the BtG-Pride annual meeting**. Peer exchange and knowledge-sharing at these international fora provided Lighthouse and G-Link an opportunity to scale interventions that showed positive changes in LGBTI health. A Global Challenge Prize awarded at AIDS 2018 also accelerated Lighthouse's medtech innovation, the smartphone app, Hunt.

Technical assistance from MPact allowed for capacity building, organizational development, sensitization of healthcare providers, community-based action research, and expanded access to responsive, LGBTI-friendly healthcare services.



Without MPact, we could not become G-Link.
- Lu, G-Link

MPact and its partners implemented community-based activities with measurable changes — locally and globally and across generations — during a wave of conservatism, crackdowns, and arrests in Indonesia.

Technical assistance from MPact better enabled Inti Muda and GWL-INA to develop organizationally through engagement with the YLGBTI community and training in human resource, financial, and program management. This technical assistance also allowed for a more LGBT-friendly delivery of healthcare services via securing of local HIV funding, sensitizing of healthcare providers, monitoring and evaluating services, and building knowledge of SRH among the YLGBTI community.

Roles

MPact linked Lighthouse, G-Link, *GWL-INA*, and *Inti Muda* to global networks in order to facilitate change at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Global Networks	Knowledge sharing at AIDS 2018, BtG Learning Institute, and BtG Reflections Meeting	LGBT rights movement building with COC	
MPact	Technical assistance	Direct funding	Peer exchange at global level
Lighthouse, G-Link, <i>GWL-INA</i> and <i>Inti Muda</i>	Sensitization of healthcare providers, securing local funding for HIV services, monitoring and evaluation of HIV services, expanded service delivery	Community-based action research and digital marketing strategies	Organizational development, program management, and YLGBTI engagement



MPact has made us more flexible, asking us to propose activities following our needs. All the activities are based on the community's needs.

- Davi, Inti Muda

Conclusion

The healthcare system today in Vietnam looks very different from the healthcare system in the country before the start of BtG. The efforts of Lighthouse and G-Link, with MPact's support, have brought innovation to the country's public health landscape. Gay and bisexual men can continue to access affordable HIV prevention, testing, and treatment from more LGBTI-friendly healthcare providers at equipped clinics. Community-based action research and innovation can continue to inform best practices for delivering healthcare services. Other LGBTI CBOs can continue to scale interventions after pilot programs in Vietnam. With MPact's investments, both Lighthouse and G-Link now have the capacity as social enterprises to adequately respond to the HIV epidemic challenging the health of so many gay and bisexual in Vietnam.

While still prioritizing sustainability, MPact and its partners note community-identified wants and needs. These include a scaling up of existing interventions across the country, additional research on chemsex in the LGBTI community, implementation of recommendations to address findings in prior research on chemsex, continued advocacy for local funding for HIV services, and legal support to navigate the penalization of homosexuality in Indonesia.

ABOUT MPACT

MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights was founded in 2006 by a group of activists concerned about the disproportionate HIV disease burden shouldered by men who have sex with men. MPact works at the intersection of sexual health and human rights and is linked to more than 120 community-based organizations in 62 countries who are leading innovative solutions to the challenges faced by gay and bisexual men around the world.

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FUNDED BY

Bridging the Gaps
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

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