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HIV/TB Agency, Information and Services Activity

Preliminary finding on formative assessment on PrEP communication framework

Dr.Min Thet Phyo San
HIV Technical Officer
PATH

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Speaker's Profile



Dr. Min Thet Phyo San

HIV Technical Officer at PATH

His expertise in HIV prevention and sexual health programming, with over 8 years of experience in project implementation across research, health services, and community engagement and digital health solutions.

He worked as Network and Programme Coordinator at Myanmar Youth Stars, where he led the first-ever online behavioral survey among young MSM in Myanmar. During the COVID pandemic, he co-designed an online peer education approach using animated video clips and led a successful social media awareness campaign ("Doh A Htar") to promote sexual health.

He is also an active advocate for YKP in HIV/SRHR responses at both the national and international level, and has contributed to raising awareness of service needs for people who engage in Chemsex.

Speaking Topic – Preliminary finding on formative assessment on PrEP communication framework



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Awareness: Optimizing HIVST messaging and communications channels to increase demand

PATH, through the PEPFAR/USAID-funded Agency, Information, and Services Activity is developing a communications framework for PrEP/HIVST, with communications and demand generation strategies and messaging stratified by key population group (MSM, FSW, TG/W, and people who inject drugs) and tailored to each groups' communications preferences.

Objectives



Increasing awareness and understanding of PrEP/HIVST



Addressing PrEP/HIVST myths



Informing interested clients of PrEP/HIVST access points

Methodology



Focus group discussions with key population community members



Key informant interviews with key population influencers and opinion leaders, HIVST implementing partners/service providers, and technical support partners.

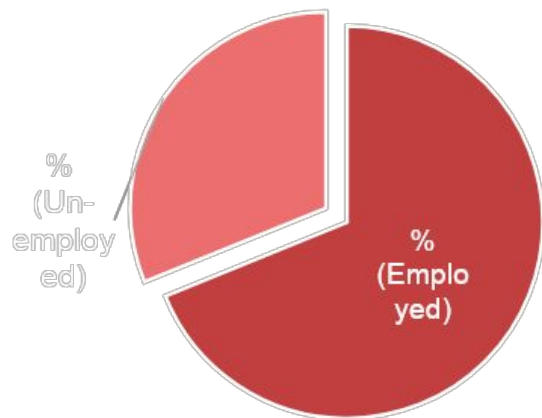
Characteristic of assessment population

• Total FGD participants - 32

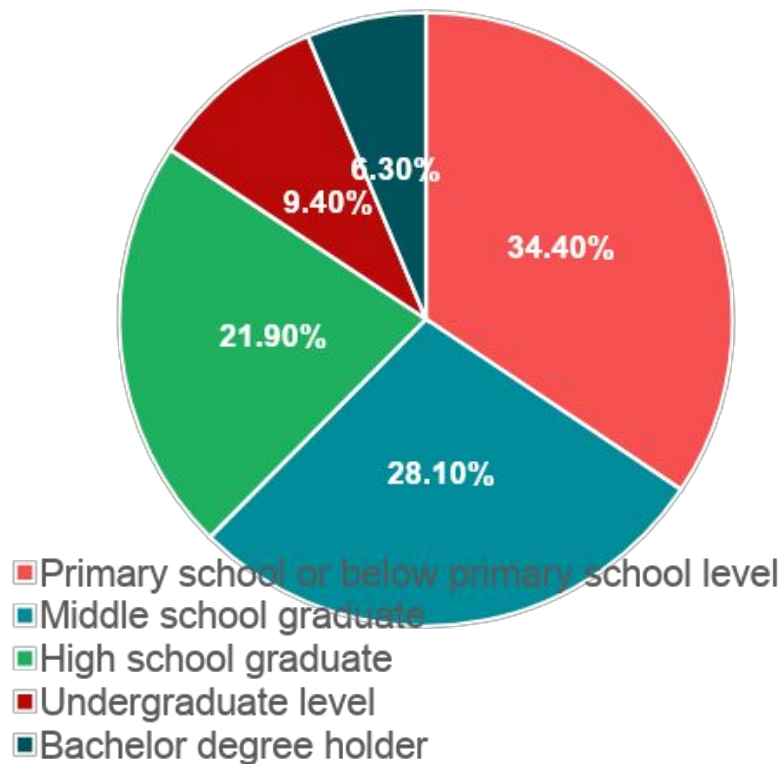
• MSM, TGW, PWID and FSW

• Age – 20 to 43 years

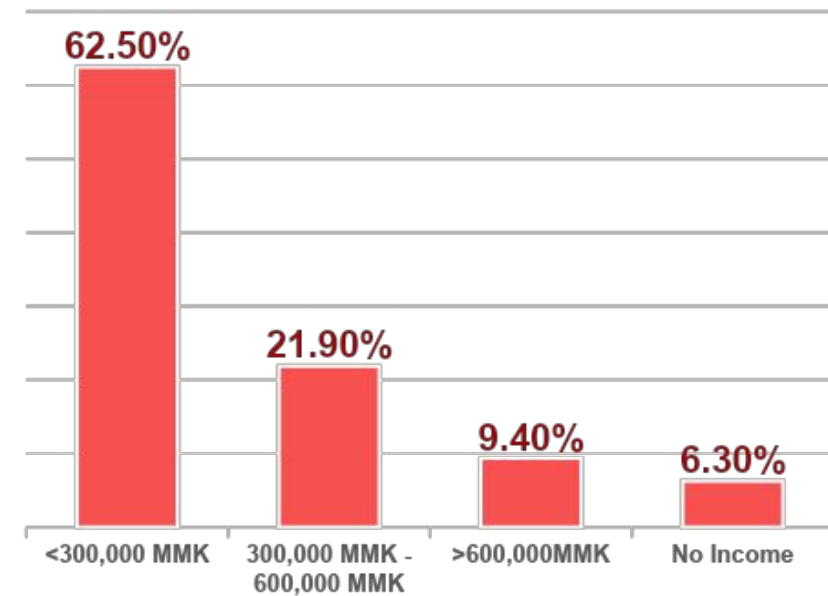
Employment status



Educational Status



Income Status (Per Month)

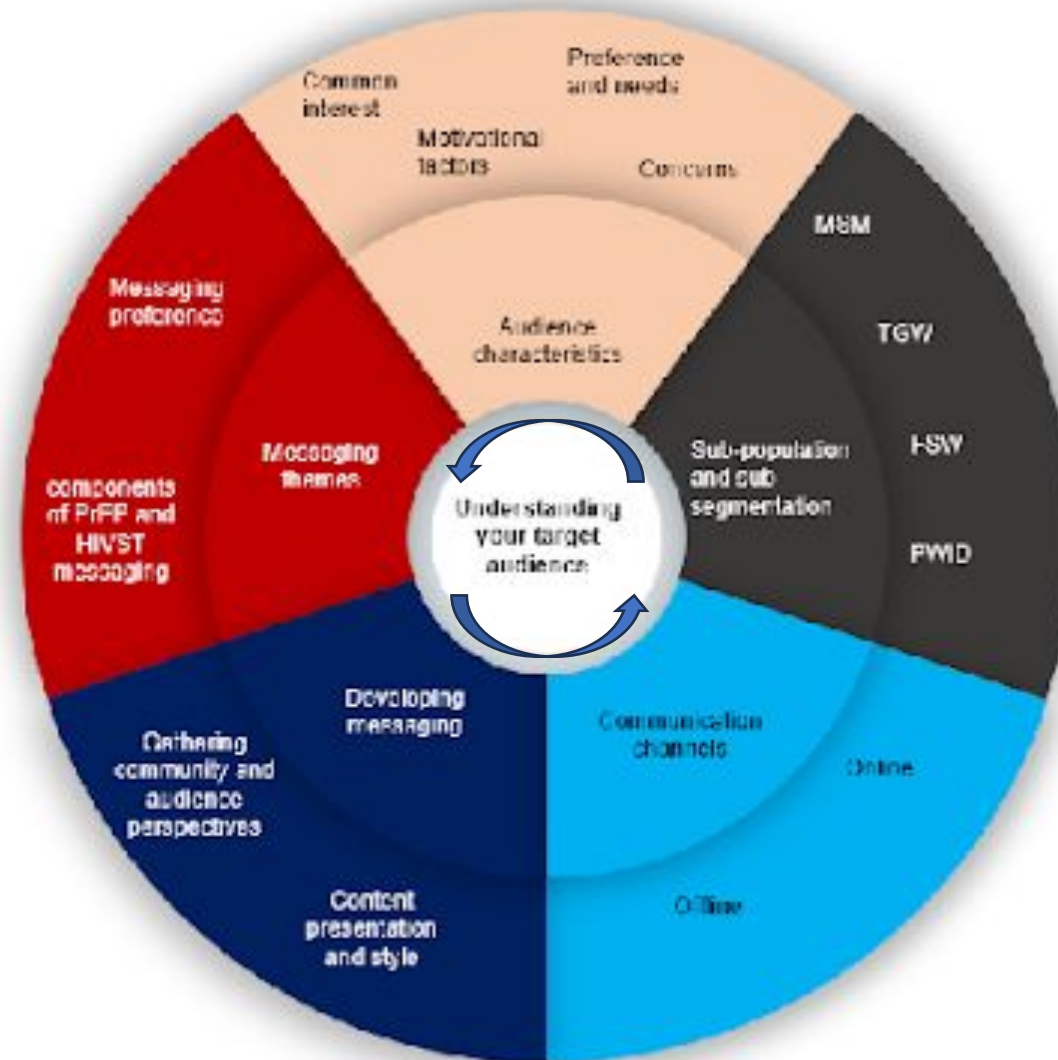


Characteristic of assessment population

Total KII participants - 30

Entity Type	Organizations
Technical support partners	UNAIDS, ICAP, WHO, USAID, CPI, EpiC, PSI
PrEP implementing partners	Lan Pya Kyel, Medical Action Myanmar, Asian Harm Reduction Network
CPDP partners	Aye Nyein Metta, Lotus, Myanmar MSM and Transgender Woman Network
Key population networks or civil society organizations	Sex Workers in Myanmar network, Aye Myanmar Association, National Drug Users Network, Myanmar Youth Stars Network, Center for Health Development and Initiative
Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) / Influencers	Selected KOL / Influencers among MSM, TGW, FSW and PWID

Understanding your target audience and communication strategies



Key population group segmentation

- It is critical for developing communication campaigns that reach these groups effectively by using content, messaging, and outreach channels
- While also ensuring that all sub-groups who can benefit from a campaign are being reached.

MSM	TGW	FSW	PWID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make-up artists and stylists • Freelance or location-based (e.g., spa) sex workers • Ritual specialist • Dating app users who engage in Chemsex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make-up artist and stylists • Street-based or freelance sex workers • Ritual specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freelance or brothel- or street-based • Escorts • Sexy models soliciting sex work online (hidden) • Female employees at karaoke, spa, and massage parlors (hidden) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female drug users • Recreational drug users • PWID in rural/remote areas (including mining areas/camps) that engage in needle-sharing

- Require specific attention to ensure inclusivity and reach – across different age group, geography location (urban, rural), hidden or undisclosed group
- Messaging should account for intersecting vulnerabilities e.g., sex work and drug use across KP
- Understanding the way to reach target audience via peer to peer network and different channels (both online and offline)

Common interest areas

- To enable **strategic integration of PrEP/HIVST messages** that aligns with their **interests, preferences** and **styles of target populations**

MSM	TGW	FSW	PWID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to music Singing Dancing; clubbing Fashion; make up Dating; socializing with friends Attending carnivals Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to music Singing Dancing Fashion; make up Socializing with friends Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to music Singing Dancing Beauty and make up Sewing handmade items Time with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to music (rock songs) Playing guitar Reading TV and movies Time with family and close friends who also use drugs Being alone while under the influence of drugs Drinking

Half of participants noting use of their mobile phone to read content and follow Facebook pages (including health-related pages) and using social media.

TikTok is particularly popular among **MSM, TGW, and FSW**, with many individuals tending to listen to **dance music** so that they can participate in TikTok trends.

Motivating factors

Group	Motivating factors for PrEP
FSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seen as a vital tool for occupational safety• Allows individuals to safely engage in sex work to provide for themselves and their family/dependents, while safeguarding their health
MSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers sense of control in making an informed choice to reduce personal risk of HIV• Lends a sense of empowerment• Enables safer sex; sense of feeling more protective while engaging in sexual activities
TGW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transgender women often experience higher rates of HIV infection due to stigma, discrimination, and limited access to healthcare. PrEP helps mitigate these risks and contributes to gender-affirming care, prioritizing well-being and reducing HIV-related disparities.
PWID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PrEP serves as a harm reduction strategy for individuals who inject drugs, offering protection against HIV transmission through needle sharing or other risk factors associated with drug use. Access to PrEP can be integrated into substance abuse treatment and harm reduction programs, supporting overall health and well-being

Reasons for opting HIVST

- Privacy
- Convenience
- Confidentiality
- Autonomy
- More immediate access to result

Understanding audience's motivating factors that almost all participants prefer to take PrEP/HIVST to reduce risk behavior and safer manner.

Concerns

"Taking PrEP worries me about experiencing severe side effects because it involves using ART pills"

PrEP မှာ အေအာတီ ဆေးတွေပါတော့ ဘေးထွက်ဆိုးကျိုးပြင်းပြင်းထန်ထန်ဖြစ်လာမှာတော့ စိတ်ပူတယ်

"Should I continue to take Daily PrEP even if I engage in sexual activity only periodically?"

တခါတလေမှ ဒီကိစ္စလုပ်ဖြစ်တာတောင် PrEP ကိုကျတော့

နေ့တိုင်းဆက်သောက်နေရမှာလား

The use of antiretrovirals implies being HIV infected.

HIV ဆေးတွေဆိုတော့ HIV ပိုးရှိလို့ သောက်ရတာလို့ ထင်ကုန်ကြမယ်

"Targeting only key populations for PrEP messaging can worsen stigma and discrimination by falsely labeling them as the only group at risk of HIV."

ဦးတည်အုပ်စုတွေကိုပဲ PrEP အကြောင်းပြောနေတော့ ဒီအုပ်စုဝင်တွေကို HIV နဲ့တွဲမြင်တဲ့ ခွဲခြားဆက်ဆံမှုတွေ အထင်မှားမှုတွေ ပိုဆိုးလာနိုင်မလား



Concerns

“If I find it necessary to use a condom while on PrEP, I would choose to rely solely on condom use and not take PrEP.”
“PrEP သောက်ပေမယ့်လည်း ကွန်ဒိုမ်းကဆက်သုံးနေရဦးမှာပဲဆိုရင်တော့ ကွန်ဒိုမ်းတစ်မျိုးတည်းပဲသုံးချင်တယ် ... PrEP မသောက်ချင်ဘူး”

“Sometimes, waiting for 7 days to achieve optimal HIV protection after taking PrEP is not practical for us.”
“တခါတလေတော့လည်း PrEP စသောက်ပြီး ၇ ရက်ထိစောင့်ပြီးမှ HIV ကာကွယ်မှုအပြည့်ရမယ်ဆိုတာက လက်တွေ့အခြေအနေမှာတော့ ကျွန်တော်တို့အတွက် သိပ်အဆင်မပြေလှဘူးလို့ထင်တယ်”

"I believe that taking daily PrEP will make me more burdensome and it will make me easier to start using clean needles instead."
“နေ့တိုင်း PrEP သောက်နေရမယ့် ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးထက်စာရင်တော့ အပ်အသစ်ပဲသုံးလိုက်တာကမှ ပိုလွယ်ဦးမယ်”



Critical components of PrEP and HIVST messaging

Concerns and misconceptions

Safety and interactions with other medicines
Side effects
Pre/post test counseling

Stigma and discrimination

Positive and empowering messaging to normalize PrEP use
Inclusive environment to sexuality



PrEP and HIVST literacy

HIVST efficacy data
Self risk assessment
PrEP eligibility (weight/age limits)
PrEP and HIVST product/dosing options
Missed dose management
Comprehensive HIVST instructions
Service access and linkages, especially for HIVST

Safer sex practices

Rights based approach
Safer sex practices, including prevention options for STI protection

MY BOYFRIEND
GAVE ME AIDS.

I WAS ONLY WORRIED ABOUT
GETTING PREGNANT.

AIDS IS A KILLER.
PROTECT YOURSELF.

AIDS causes
blindness.



People with AIDS know there's a chance they'll lose their sight. But that's no reason for the people around them to lose sight of the fact

that AIDS cannot be caught by touching someone. Or by working around them. Which means the best way to fight AIDS is not with fear and anger, but with compassion and support.

AIDS ACTION COMMITTEE
400 Wisconsin Street, Boston, MA 02118
1-800-458-5231



**BANG.
YOU'RE DEAD!**

There's one serious AIDS risk. You can't get the AIDS virus by having sex with an infected partner, but you can catch the virus when you're blind. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a new study that shows the symptoms of AIDS can be so severe that you can't see.

You have to see to stay safe. So avoid AIDS. But if you can't see, you're blind. You can't see the things you need to look for to stay safe.

AIDS
If you think you can't get it, you're dead wrong.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-458-5231

Messaging preferences by key population group

“Sex-Positive” focus means

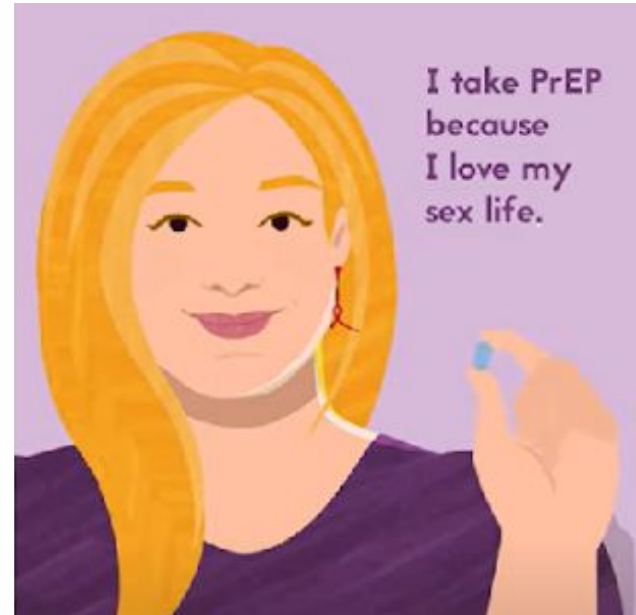
- Recognizing that sexuality is an important component of health.
- Respecting diversity in practices, in partners, and in our pat
- Recognizing that everyone is deserving of non judgmental c
- Promoting healthy and good sex!!

လိင်မှုကိစ္စနှင့်
လိင်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာဖြစ်တည်မှုဆိုင်ရာများအတွက်
ပွင့်လင်း၍ ခွဲခြားမှုမရှိသည့် သဘောထားအမြင်ဖြင့်
ချဉ်းကပ်သည့် သတင်းစကားများ

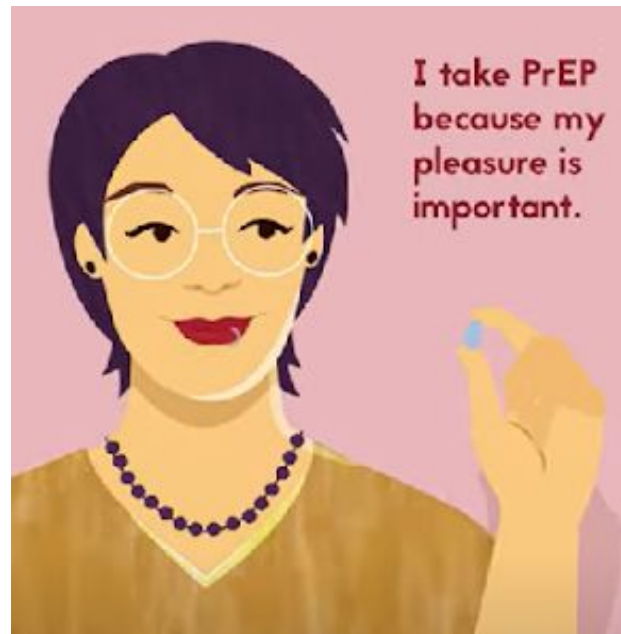




I take PrEP because I'm in control.



I take PrEP because I love my sex life.



I take PrEP because my pleasure is important.



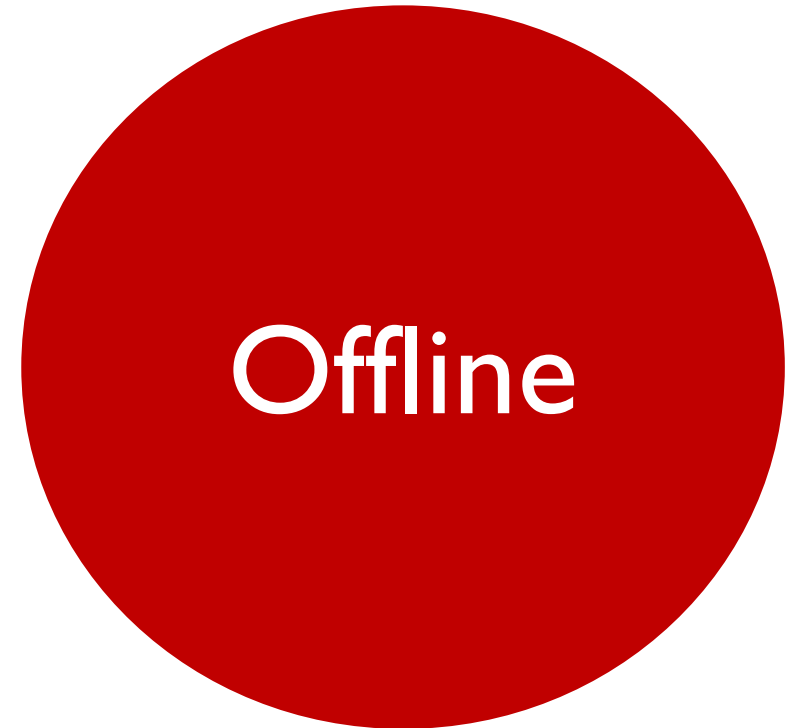
I take PrEP because it's safe and effective.

Messaging preferences by key population group

- **MSM** - sex-positive framing that promotes a non-judgmental attitude towards sex (thus removing stigma) and supports embracing sexuality responsibly
- **TGW** - sex-positive and empowering framing, but in a more subdued tone, as they are generally perceived and accepted as women and may not exhibit the same level of sexual liberalism as MSM
- **FSW** – not prefer for sex-positive messaging as they consider work as separate from their personal sex life
- **PWID** – while sexual transmission may not be the primary risk factor for some, promoting PrEP as a way to reduce the risk of HIV transmission through shared injecting equipment.

“We like if the content is fun and [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender]-themed approach, that goes beyond being purely informative, offering a more enjoyable experience while still emphasizing the importance of HIV prevention.” MSM group participant

Communication channels



Online social media platforms and usage

Online Channels	Usage
Facebook	<p>Majority use Facebook for posting about their own emotions, exploring information (related with their hobby and health), viewing comedy posts and meeting with new friends.</p> <p>MSM/TGW – joined in closed group e.g., adult content group, dating group, etc.</p> <p>Sexy models and hidden FSW – created fan groups and to connect with their fans.</p> <p>PWID – most occasionally use Facebook and they received health related information from Facebook via their family members.</p>
TikTok	Commonly used among all target groups for entertainment purpose
Blued/Grindr	Commonly used among gay for sex dating purpose including High Fun
Telegram	Most of the participants use telegram by joining channels which posted about sex related contents and dating channels.
Tinder	More recently became popular as a location-based dating app that connects users through mutual interests; however, use remains somewhat limited due to restrictions on adding new friends in the unpaid version.
Twitter	Majority use twitter for sex related contents and political contents because those contents are not banned on the twitter. They use twitter for viewing the contents rather than posting and dating.
MyID	Most of the participants (MSM/TGW/FSW) used MyID because the application can be used online without phone bill. The sex related contents are not banned on that platform and has become popular for sex chatting.
Others	<p>Bigo is also commonly using among FSW for finding clients.</p> <p>Some MSM/TGW also use Instagram for their hobby purposes, such as fashion and makeup.</p> <p>Some PWID prefer to use Youtube for listening to music and watching news channels.</p>

It's crucial to understand that **social media trends can vary among different targeted audiences**. Hence, it's essential to analyze and understand your target audience's preferred social media **platforms, content types, and trends** before crafting and sharing your campaign message.

Content presentation and formats



FORMAT

- Interview videos
- Live question-and-answer sessions
- Interactive surveys incorporating gamification
- Edutainment
- Client testimonials/success stories
- Photo or video campaigns with influencers, key opinion leaders, or PrEP or HIVST users



CONTENT

- User-generated content—client testimonials and real life stories
- Healthcare professionals providing credible, accurate PrEP or HIVST information
- Daily life or relationship-related scripts (e.g., boylove)
- Popular culture and trends (movies; music; social media)



STYLE

- Attractive visualizations
- Comics
- Animation
- Sexy or comedic styling

Preferred offline communication and outreach strategies

Passive

IEC and promotional materials: Pamphlets and flyers; customized and tailored to different types of key population preferences and leveraging other items (e.g., T-shirts, hats, tote bags etc.)

Advertising and other communication channels: Static or video based advertising at bus stops or other public transportation systems, shopping centers, and waiting areas, with QR codes to access additional information.

Mass media campaigns: Using mass media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers/magazines) to raise public awareness for reduction of PrEP- and HIVST-associated stigma, among broader communities as well as partners, families, and friends of key populations.



Active

Peer-based outreach: Using peer educators (current or former community members) to lead outreach; they can leverage to successfully engage with and provide support to peers.

Hot spot-based outreach: Locations/hot spots frequented by key population groups, such as spiritual events or venues; spas, brothels, and other street-based venues for sex work or drug use; clubs/karaoke bars; mining areas etc.

School-based education: To share information on sexual and reproductive health, including HIV transmission, prevention, and safe sex practices.

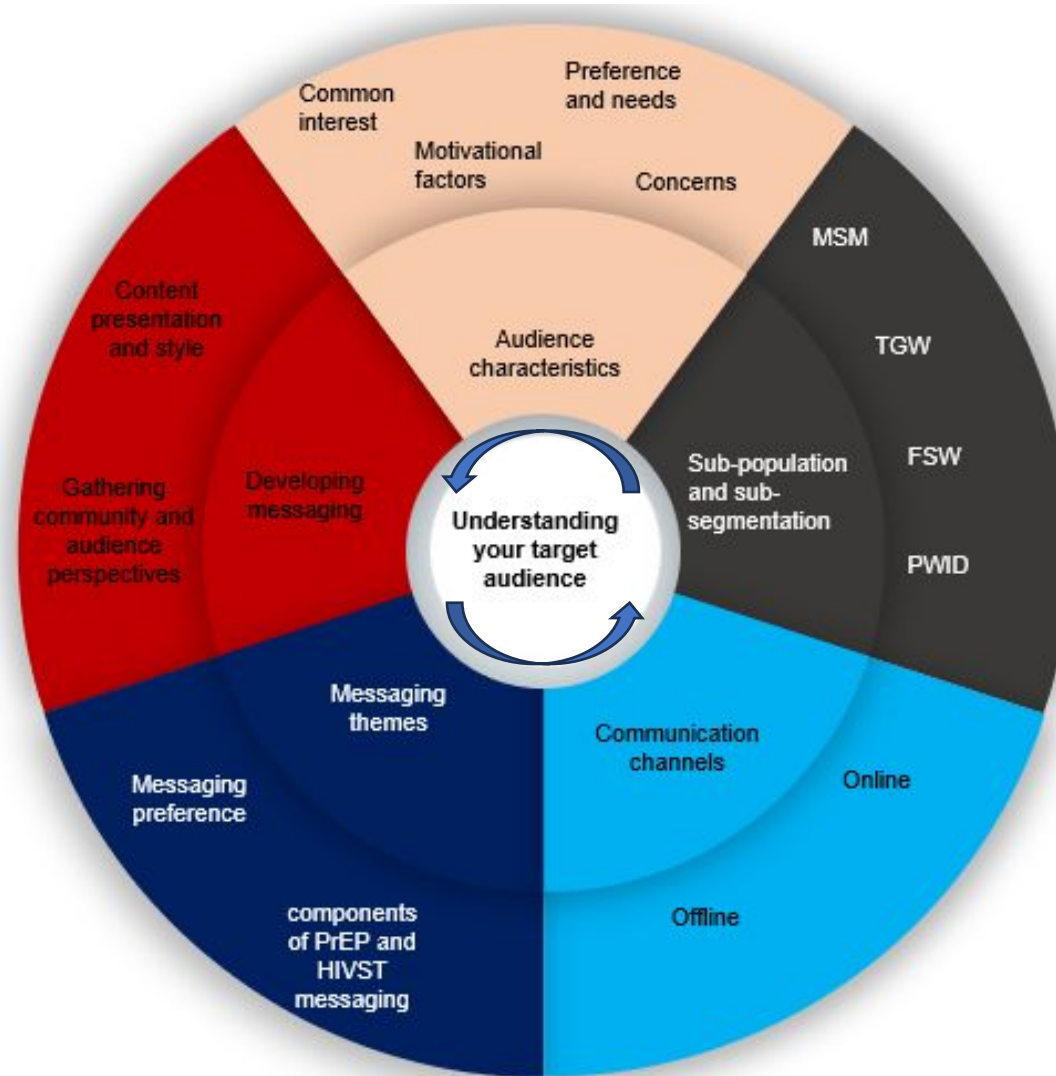
Annual events/campaigns: Pride Month; & Proud event; TGW or Sex Worker days; 16 Days of Activism; Support Don't Punish Day; World AIDS Day; to raise awareness and offer service campaigns.

Other considerations for audience engagement and outreach

- ❑ Using **KOLs and influencers** including other popular and influential people, such as actors/actresses, musicians, and religious leaders, as influencers for the FSW and PWID communities.
- ❑ Active involvement of **peers and community members**
- ❑ Empowering and supportive work environment for **peer educators**
- ❑ **Integration** with other topic beyond HIV e.g., sexual health, lifestyle and gender and sexuality, community rights, Chemsex, etc.

“We have not seen a social influencer who stands for FSW; only [community-based and non-governmental] organizations stand for the FSW community.”
FSW group participants

Wrap up: Understanding your target audience and communication strategies





HIV/TB Agency, Information and Services Activity

THANK YOU.