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Mission statement

"To reduce the harms associated with injecting drug use in Asia, especially HIV infection, through a process of networking, information sharing, advocacy, and programme and policy development."

More specifically, six objectives were formulated:

- To establish a sustainable harm reduction network based in Asia;
- To develop a more comprehensive understanding of patterns of injecting drug use and associated harms (especially HIV infection) in Asian countries;
- To provide a forum that will encourage communication and information exchange among individuals, organisations, and countries participating in the network;
- To provide training and support for individuals and organisations in Asia, sharing core skills and a coherent philosophy that can underpin their work;
- To facilitate policy and programme development at NGO, governmental, regional, and international levels;
- To promote national harm reduction networks;
- In 2002, the AHRN Executive Committee agreed to expand AHRN's role to include programme development and implementation.

AHRN Foundation

AHRN's legal representation is embedded in the HIV/AIDS Harm Reduction Foundation which was formally established in Thailand in 1999. The Foundation board currently consists of the following persons:

1. Dr. Chawalit Natpratan Chairperson
2. Dr. Jaroon Jittiwuttikarn Vice-chair
3. Mr. Sompoth Borwornsinsin Secretary General
4. Mr. Kriengsak Porpoach Treasurer
5. Dr. Usa Doungsaa Member

AHRN Executive Committee

For guidance on technical matters, the AHRN Executive Committee has been established. The AHRN Executive (AHRNEx) Committee currently consists of the following persons:

1. Mr. Tariq Zafar, Chair person Pakistan
2. Dr. Bijan Nassirimanesh Iran
3. Dr. Jaroon Jittiwuttikarn Thailand
4. Mr. Luke Samson India
5. Ms. Rosy Angela Indonesia
6. Mr. Ton Smits Thailand

Currently, AHRN has 17 staff members and three consultants at the AHRN Secretariat in Chiang Mai (Thailand) seven staff members at the country office in Jakarta (Indonesia), and 17 staff members at the country office in Yangon (Myanmar).

AHRN receives **core funding** from the Royal Netherlands Government. It initially secured a three-year seed funding for its core activities, followed by a five-year core funding extension (2001-2005). Evaluation for further funding is currently underway. **At the country-level**, AHRN receives programme support from the Family Health International/USAID, Fund for HIV/AIDS for Myanmar (FHAM), Global Fund on AIDS TB and Malaria (GFATM), and the Open Society Institute International Harm Reduction Development (OSI-IHRD). UNAIDS, UNODC, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank are among a long list of supporters and partners for activities under AHRN.

AHRN has recently received accreditation as a certified NGO by Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) in June 2005. This certifies that AHRN has demonstrated compliance with Best Practice requirements related to the following dimensions: board of trustees, strategic framework, integrity management, communication, advocacy, and public image, human resources, fundraising, resource allocations and financial controls, operations, outcomes and continuous improvement. SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. It is recognised as the global benchmark for quality and integrity.

Programme Capacity

AHRN is a key actor in the region on drug use and health promotion of people using/recovering from using drugs throughout the region. It has been documented as a best practice by the UNAIDS.

Advocacy, information sharing, networking, policy development

- Extensive efforts in advocacy and awareness raising;
- Co-organiser of the 14th International Conference on the Reduction of Drug-related Harms, 6-10 April 2003;
- Co-sponsor of the 7th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP), 1-5 July 2005;
- Organised and facilitated study visits and exposure tours for Asian delegations, namely the visit of a methadone treatment centre in Hong Kong by a Burmese delegation (2004); the visit of harm reduction programmes in the Netherlands by an Indonesian delegation (2003); and an exposure tour to harm reduction programmes in India and Pakistan for a Burmese delegation (2003);
- Information dissemination through printed and electronic media, including newsletters and daily news digests;
- Support to enabling policy environments in countries in Asia. This has been done through a variety of activities such as meetings with Ministers from Indonesia, Thailand, Iran and the Netherlands, exposure visits to Pakistan and the Netherlands, participation at major regional events, (co-) organising key international, regional and national events and as an implementing partner of the ASEAN Work Plan II on HIV/AIDS;
- Capacity building for programme development through the delivery of technical workshops and training of trainers via 'network-based solutions';
- Networking with people and programmes to promote peer support – over the last five years, the AHRN membership has grown steadily from 560 to over 1,600 individuals and organisations (and it continues to grow);
- Member of the Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Network on HIV/AIDS (the Seven Sisters), a broad-based alliance that brings together seven regional networks: AIDS Society of Asia Pacific (ASAP), Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO), Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+), Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW), Asia Pacific Rainbow (APR), Asian Harm Reduction Network (AHRN), and Co-ordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM Asia).

Tool development, assessment and research

- Conducting the Asia regional mapping project, “In Full View”;
- Conducting national assessments on Nepal and Thailand, regional assessments on drug use and HIV/AIDS in Asia;
- Co-development with the Center of Harm Reduction of key tools such as the Manual for the Reduction of Drug Related Harms in Asia (original and revised versions), and Revisiting the Hidden Epidemic, a situation assessment of drug use in Asia in the context of HIV/AIDS (original and revised versions), and development of demonstration sites selection tools;
- Co-translation and co-production with UNODC of the UN document ‘Breaking the Link between Drug Use and HIV/AIDS’ in five languages (Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Indonesian and Thai);
- Regional assessment on the scale-up of anti-retroviral treatment to injecting drug users under the WHO/UNAIDS ‘3 by 5’ initiative, contracted by WHO through the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA);
- Research on the environmental factors of drug use among young people in eight major cities/capitals including Jakarta (Indonesia), Tehran (I. R. of Iran), Delhi (India) and the five major cities in Pakistan with the financial support of UNODC Asia Regional Office and UNODC, I. R. of Iran;
- Assessment and documentation of good practices and lessons learnt of NGOs and CBOs in SAARC countries, under contract by UNODC South Asia Regional Office.

Video documentation (in-house production)

- Film documentation of study visits by government representatives and international and local NGOs (from Myanmar and Indonesia, respectively) to Pakistan and the Netherlands;
- Film documentation (20-minute DVD) on the background and response to drug use and HIV in Iran, under contract by UNAIDS Middle East North Africa (MENA); a comprehensive overview of pragmatic and humane response to the challenges posed by drug use and HIV;
- *Smile* – documents an initiative by Nai Zindagi to reach out to the significant street children population in Lahore, Pakistan;
- *Friends* – an overview on Mith Samlanh Friends which works with street children in Phnom Penh, Cambodia by trying to reunite them with their families, reintegrating them into their community and culture, and getting them back to school;
- Introduction of the issues related to stigma and other barriers faced by drug users, a multi-media for the 15th World AIDS Conference;
- *Window of Opportunity* – a tri-media advocacy tool that delves on the issues of harm reduction, including the statistical data on regional infection rates and the resources needed to tackle the twin epidemics of injecting drug use and HIV infection;
- *Hong Kong: Scaling up of pharmacotherapy for opioid users* – an overview of methadone treatment services for drug users provided by the health authorities of Hong Kong in partnership with the Red Ribbon Society;
- World AIDS Day 2004: vulnerability of girls and women to HIV infection;
- *Drug User Perspective: Stigma and Discrimination* – a documentary that brings to attention key issues when working with recovering drug users. Included statements of recovering or active users in South East and South Asia; developed for the 7th ICAAP, Kobe, Japan 2005 with financial support from the World Bank.

Programme and network support/development

- Establishment of a crisis fund for harm reduction;
- Support to the Thai Drug Users’ Network;

- Support to emerging national and regional harm reduction networks, i.e., Indonesia, Thailand, Northeast India, Iran;
- Secured support from Open Society Institute for service provision to street based clients in Tehran, Iran in partnership with Persepolis;
- Project development and key stakeholder implementation of 'From Margins to Mainstream' (M2M), a harm reduction and poverty alleviation project in seven countries (2005-2008). This project is supported by the Royal Netherlands Government, Department of Foreign Affairs. AHRN is working in partnership with Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), and with seven NGOs under contractual relationships. Scope: health service delivery and business/employment development;
- Together with the MacFarlane Burnet Institute - Center for Harm Reduction, AHRN-Indonesia secured a grant from Levi Strauss Foundation for the support of a needle syringe programme in Jakarta, and the strengthening of JANGKAR, the national network of non-government organisations in Indonesia who are working on drug use and HIV/AIDS (2005-2006).

In-country programme development

1) AHRN Myanmar

- Fully operational programmes under the Fund for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar (FHAM), Phase 1 and 2, and GFATM in Lashio, and the Northern Shan State. It includes the following services: drop-in center, primary health care, counselling, needle/syringe exchange, health education sessions, training/coaching of other implementing partners in the area on harm reduction activities;
- Funding from the Global Fund on AIDS, TB and Malaria Round three was secured in the second quarter of 2005 to 'strengthen of prevention and control programme on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the Union of Myanmar'. Activities include: Outreach training and six assessments (RAR).

2) AHRN Indonesia

Advocacy programmes under a sub-contract with Family Health International's Aksi Stop AIDS Programme (ASA), supported by USAID, to support and facilitate a range of advocacy activities to the police, the parliament, and NGOs. Note that on January 19, 2004, the **Sentani Commitment** was signed by the Governors of the six Priority Provinces (Bali, Jakarta, East-Java, West-Java, Papua, and Riau) and relevant ministers (Welfare, Health, Social Affairs, Religious Affairs, Education, Social Affairs, Internal Affairs) as well as the Head of Commission VII of the national Parliament. This reflects the commitment to the national movement to combat HIV/AIDS. In this context, AHRN's main focus includes:

- harm reduction advocacy targeting the criminal justice system, the police and law enforcement agencies at national and regional levels, as well as the national parliament; and
- support the creation of a network of Indonesian NGOs implementing harm reduction programmes (JANGKAR).