

# Spotlight

## HEARING the UNHEARD VOICE OF YOUNG MSM & HIJRAS

Young and Adolescent MSM and Hijra/TG are living with fear of alienation and stigmatized in relation to their identity disclosure. The fear creates emotional distress exerts, of depression, suicidal ideation (Almeida et. al., 2009).

Considering the reality of these inevitable risks and vulnerabilities, BSWS planned to proceed with an aim to creating young MSM and Hijra friendly environment considering their views and feelings. Following the plan BSWS has established “HIM” (corner) in 2013. Afterwards, the UNICEF extended its supports from April 2014 under the project titled ‘HIV prevention, referral treatment and care’ for most at risk adolescent and young people in Bangladesh.’

Following initiatives have been taken with the aim to creating empathetic environment for the adolescent/young MSM and TG through HIM:

- Establish/enhance network through using IEC materials, Information and Communication Technology (e.g. opening and maintaining HIM Facebook page)
- Organize Open Adda<sup>1</sup> (within the HIM members)
- Organize Life Skill Education Trainings (especially to ensure safer sex practice and reduce the vulnerability of HIV & AIDS)
- Create scopes to generate knowledge on sexuality education, human rights issues
- Provide HTC (HIV Testing and Counseling ) to the HIM members
- Provide Free Medical Treatment
- Arrange Psychosocial and Psychosexual Counseling
- Make available of (free) Internet Browsing facility
- To create opportunities of Edu-Entertainment session



Divisional Consultation: Chittagong

With the notion to establish “HIM Corner” in all seven divisions, BSWS is moving forward. The “HIM Corner” in Dhaka has already been established and functional under UNICEF support.

Necessary measures are being taken to establish in other divisions (i.e. Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Rangpur). As part of the action plan, BSWS has organized two “consultations” in Chittagong and Sylhet with prospective HIM members and formed Core Groups in these two divisions.

Monthly Session/Meeting on various issues related to sexual and reproductive health care needs, mental health and human rights are being discussed regularly.

BSWS is experiencing that young and adolescent MSM and TG/hijra communities are recognizing HIM corner as the most coveted and convenient place for them where they can socialize with their fellows in a safe and empathetic environment together with getting mental and psychosexual counseling, medical care services and edutainment facilities.

<sup>1</sup>Open Adda is the gathering by specific group of people/people of different groups to share their day to day experiences, exchange views, knowledge generation from one to another and creating effective communication channel and network as well.



Divisional Consultation: Sylhet