



# Transcending Toolkit

**Cultivating Advocates for a Growing  
Trans Movement**



ASIA PACIFIC  
TRANSGENDER  
NETWORK



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# Executive Summary

## Foreword

The transgender community is critically impacted by stigma, and faces a multitude of human rights violations. They experience unique challenges in accessing critical health and legal services, employment and education due to the criminalisation and lack of recognition of their identity as well as discriminatory societal attitudes that impact on their mental and physical health and well-being.

The trans movement has grown from strength to strength, with various trans organisations and groups accumulating a wealth of experience, exposure and knowledge to advance trans rights across the Asia and the Pacific regions. Trans people in the region have heightened visibility nationally, regionally and globally where they have successfully influenced those spaces in terms of networking, strategizing and developing strong alliances with fellow activists worldwide. However, it is important that Asia and the Pacific is represented as a diverse region with many intersecting identities, languages and cultures. Trans organising requires continuous engagement and solidified efforts as access to resources are scarce, with regions so diverse, making physical solidarity difficult.

We hope that through the Regional Partnership Meeting trans organisations and leaders from across the region will join together in solidarity to strengthen trans movements and improve the lives of transgender people by joining in a dialogue on effective and innovative community-led programmes and learning about effective and innovative community-led programmes regarding transgender health, rights, and policies.

## Background

This regional partnership meeting will examine the current state of transgender affairs, from health, to human rights, to policies, and discover models and strategies for advancing where we are, to where we want to be, leading to collective building.

The series of events is funded by the Robert Carr civil society Network Funds, Global Fund through Save the Children, Global Equality Fund, and Open Society Foundation.

The workshop was attended by 27 participants from 14 countries from across the Asia and Pacific region, namely Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Samoa, Niue, and Papua New Guinea. The gender identities of the participants are trans and non-trans people who are working with trans people or issues in their respective groups, organisations or agencies. The workshop was also attended by APTN Secretariat and Regional Steering Committee (RSC).

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the participants and colleagues at APTN present at the meeting and the generous support of the funders that made this happen. We also thank the facilitators and rapporteur of the workshop, (Amar Alfikar, Phylesha Brown-Actor, Raine Cortes, Than Ha Chu, Garfield Gai Thong, Joe Wong, Cole Young, and Mitch Yusof) and everyone else we may have missed mentioning here.

# Who is this toolkit for?



This toolkit is intended to be an easy to use guide for trans or gender and sexual diverse community organisations to:

- Learn about the experiences of trans communities across the Asia and Pacific Region.
- Utilise the tools shown here within your own workshops or meetings.

This guide includes "Try it Out" sections with step-by-step instructions, as well as "Journal It" or "Draw It" sections to reflect upon your own experiences as a trans activist. Additionally, this guide can be used by non-trans organisations to learn about the experiences of the trans communities and your trans colleagues. We hope that this tool can further inspire you in your work with the trans communities in the diverse spaces your organising is in.



I am...  
curious

compassionate

## ICEBREAKER

3 words to describe yourself

### Try it Out

**What you need**

- Nametags
- Pens
- A list of personality traits, adjectives, identities, etc

**Steps**

Show the list of words on a wall/projector and ask each participant to write on their nametag three words they would use to describe themselves.

Ask participants to walk around the room and find another participant with one same or similar word as them. Participants introduce themselves (names, pronouns, country, and organisation) and then explain why they picked that word to describe themselves.

Repeat a few times to introduce participants to as many other participants as possible.

caring

angry

ambitious

dreamy



# WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?

A safe space is an environment in which one does not feel invalidated, under attack, threatened, at risk, or anxious. It is a place where one can bring their full and authentic self, without fear of being made to feel unwelcome on account of their any part of their identity; be it race/ethnicity, SOGIE, religion, ability, or any other characteristic. It is difficult to learn when one is afraid or anxious. A safe space is an open space for participation and engagement, however it is still possible to feel discomfort in a safe space because sometimes you must be vulnerable to learn new things. The point of a safe space is that you can trust the others around you to not take advantage of your vulnerability and to support you while you learn and grow.

**A safe space is a good practice to establish for all events, workshops/conferences, workplaces, or educational settings. Ask your participants to contribute guidelines/ "rules" for your safe space.**

## GUIDELINES FOR OUR SAFE SPACE FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS



# Session 1:

## MAPPING LOCAL TERMINOLOGIES FOR TRANS IDENTITIES

“Trans” and “transgender” are often used as all-encompassing terms for anyone who does not identify with the gender assigned at birth, but there are many culturally specific identities that cannot be simplified to the term “transgender” and many of these terms have a long and culturally specific history and context.



This exercise is to capture the diverse and rich cultural terms that exist in the region that represent trans identities locally and culturally.

### What is our understanding of terminologies?

Defined for study professional purpose



Definition for how we perceive a thing/ identity

Concept to understand the meaning behind the words



Terminology can be very diverse in interpretation and meaning

Meaning can be expanded, shifted over time



Terminology is evolving and ever-changing

Terminology develops from time to time Negative terms can be reclaimed, given a new meaning, and turned into a positive term



Terminologies can be process and systems

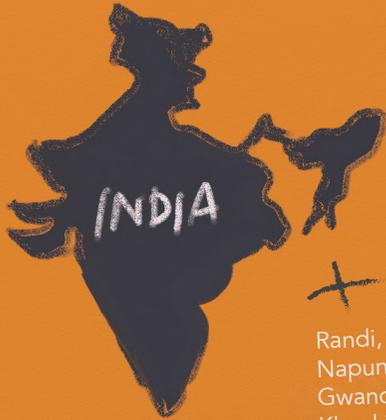
Cultural, thematic, racial specific, even history-related



Participants broke up into 3 sub-regional groups (South Asia, South East Asia, Pacific) and brainstormed what terminology is used in their region. They categorized those that were positive and those that were offensive. After sharing with the whole group, the leaders asked each country to cross off those words that were offensive, in order to show that these words were not to be used.

## SOUTH ASIA

Good Words ✓  
Bad Words ✗



Trans Women: Koti, Kinnar  
Trans Men: Bhai (means brothers)  
Tonna (Trans man)  
\*Trans men in India do not know the terminologies and mostly use tomboy

Randi,  
Napunsak  
Gwandu  
Khanki

Common words  
for Nepal and India:

Cha  
Durani

### HIJRAS

This term can be good or bad. Hijras are all trans women, but not all trans women are Hijras. Hijras is a community. Trans people in India have had this traditional occupation and identity.

We reclaim the bad words instead of erasing them



## SOUTHEAST ASIA

Trans Men:  
Lesbi, Buci  
Tuna social

(government used this term to describe trans people as having social illness)  
Penyakit Sosial, Bishu

Trans women:  
Banci, Wadan  
Transpuan, Calabay,  
calalay, Conci (Bugis society have 5 genders, tribal term)  
Similar to hijra

Waria (Trans Woman)  
Priawan (Trans Man)



Transgender  
MTF/FTM

Ah gua



Kra toey  
(reclaimed and normalised terminology)  
Tom

THAILAND

Pe-de (French colonial term)  
Omoi  
Chuyen gioi  
Chuyen doi gioi tinh  
Bong lo  
Bong kim  
Bong lai cai  
Dong bong  
FTM, TG, MTF  
Chan ciu ciu



Tussy, Tood (gay and sissy, trans woman), Sao prak ped song (another type of woman, secondclass woman)  
E-Phu



Tom  
Bakla  
Binabae  
Bayot  
Transpinoy  
(pinoy means man)  
Transpinay  
Lesboy  
FTM

PHILLIPINES

Pengkid (trans man in the 1990s)  
Pondan  
Kunyat  
(used for trans woman and gay)



Mak Nyah  
Pak Nyah

# PACIFIC

✓  
Fa'afafine: Trans Women  
Fa'atama: Trans Man



x  
Stir spoon (used for trans man, asimilar to act of a sexual act)

Vaka lewawa - In the manner of a woman  
Vaka saleawawa - In the manner of a man (Wanting to be a man (trans man do not like the term as it has a negative tone)

✓  
BRASTOS - Butch  
Revelutionary Activist  
Stud Trans and other  
Gender non-conforming



x  
Most negative terms are derived from sexual acts  
Panakay kay  
Brestiwo  
Gauri

TRANS IDENTITIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ROOTED THERE BEFORE WESTERN TERMINOLOGIES CAME IN.



✓  
Palopa (Trans Woman)  
No term for trans man yet



## Journal It:

### Think about Identities and Terminology

Take some time to think about the importance of local terminology for yourself and your community.

**What words have been used to call trans people in your country/sub-region/region?**

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**Which do you like/dislike? Why?**

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**What has been used historically and what is a new term?**

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**Why are these terms important?**

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## Session 2:

### OUR COLLECTIVE JOURNEYS IN THE MOVEMENT

We often march right into community organising and work without taking time to pause, reflect and celebrate what we've done. In the last decade, the trans rights movement nationally, regionally and globally has seen progress, as well as steps back. Laws prohibiting legal genderrecognition have been improved, trans people have better access to health services, and trans people are in decision-making positions on matters that involve their lives. Yet, laws are also regressing in places such as Indonesia and Brunei where criminalisation of gender and sexually diverse people is made legal. This year, Asia Pacific Transgender Network is celebrating 10 years as a regional organisation and continues to fight alongside the trans community in the movement to progress our rights.

Since its founding in 2009, APTN has grown from the first trans-led regional network in the region to become an all-inclusive organisation that has worked in 23 different countries across both Asia and the Pacific regions. Over the years, APTN has developed numerous strategic documents, data, and situational reports that have been used as advocacy tools including:

- 2012/13: Co-developing the first-of-its kind SEARO WHO technical document on the needs of trans people.
- 2014: Developing the Trans Agenda in Action.
- 2015: Trans Health Blueprint in 2015. APTN disbursed its first sub-grants to 6 trans group.
- 2017: Convened two large conferences; 'From Barriers to Bridges', to close in gaps on the provision of healthcare services and a trans masculine well-being and care workshop.
- 2018: We expanded our scope of work to 3 countries in the Pacific and lobbied successfully for the ICD-11 which removed all trans-related categories from the section on mental and behavioral health. This year, APTN led an IRB approved trans-led research in 4 countries throughout Asia and the Pacific.

APTN has experienced 10 years of growth, challenges, and innovation, 10 years of changing perception and changing minds, and 10 years of breaking barriers. During this time, we grew alongside the trans movement and saw the fruition of our efforts with the extended visibility and saw intergenerational trans leadership being passed on from our elders to young trans folks taking the front stage in this joint effort in progressing trans rights.

What APTN has done:

- Increase funding for trans groups
- Improving well-being and decreasing burnt out
- Increase trans leadership representation and capacity, knowledge transference and grooming second line leaders
- Advancing trans health has been at the front of APTN work
- LGR reports and provide support for HRD to document violations and referral on where to seek support
- Generating trans specific that is trans led and community owned

*"APTN created visibility for the work that national organisations have done and has been the backbone of trans work in Asia. Local organisations need to support the growth and strength of APTN so it can continue connecting people to the global issues."*



# Charting our growth as a movement

APTN wants to visually chart the progress of the last ten years to see all that has been accomplished, both those activities related to APTN's work, and those that participants/organisations/countries have done separately.

Participants were given "leaves" to write activities on; light pink for local/national initiatives, and deep pink for regional/global. This could be changes in the law, the forming of trans organisations, research projects, or more.





2009

Samoa  
My Girls Club founded by a group of facebook friends responding on charitable assistance to those members affected by tsunami

Nepal  
Constitution of Nepal includes LGBTI Rights

Asia Pacific Trans Health Blueprint

Vietnam  
Legalized Article 37 Civil Code 2015 to recognise the right to transition of transgender people who to have medical intervention

India  
Organised state level dialogue for the first time about intersectional trans feminist movement

Philippines  
Started PFTM Trans Men Support Group

Publication of APTN's "Lost in Transition" Report

Conducted Denied work study in Singapore, worst discrimination based on resume

Conducted JARA research as National Research Assistant for APTN (Vietnam)

Blueprint Training for Pacific in Fiji

Being LGBT in Asia Conference

Beginning in 2015-2019, was a focal point for the "unjust, unequal, unstoppable research"

2011  
ISEAN-LIVOS Program Global Fund for MSM & Trans

2016

Vietnam  
KKU Angel - 1st time of Kiron Kaen University to have a program for trans women (35 participants)

2013

Trans man joined APTN adding trans men into the org mandate

2010

Involvement in the development meeting for the Lancel Trans Health Series

2014

Ran an awareness campaign for trans men

Indonesia  
SAMABHABONA Founded

# Reflections

- Since being introduced to APTN, lots of work started happening on the ground
- The tree is getting fuller in the recent years showing the growth and blossoming of the movement.
- The initial funding was primarily HIV in the early years and has since expanded focus areas.
- In different regions people are starting to mobilise
- Increased representation of diversity and identities
- Meeting other trans men in the region gave them ideas and suggestions on what to do in the community back home
- Created visibility for trans people throughout the region with local and regional activities
- Solidarity and unity
- The organisations did not need APTN to start. The community was already visible before 2009 when APTN was formed
- APTN is an incubator and empowering force for new leaders and activists
- Solidarity across the regions for similar memorable days (IDAHOT, TDoR)
- Before APTN we did not have the right information to identify the gaps and move forward together across different communities and regions.
- Funding allocations have been shifting, more distribution of resources towards trans organising
- Hope and new blood, expansion, flourishing
- Ensuring nobody is left behind



"Not only does the tree show where we have come from and the work that has been done, seeing the progress this way was inspiring – it gives us hope and motivation for the future"

## Session 3:

### The strings of connection

Your connections with others in the movement

This session is meant to show solidarity between trans movements throughout the region. Though each participant comes from different countries, organisations, contexts, and experiences, they are now joined here together. They have others in this fight with them. Sitting in a circle, each person got a chance to speak about their journey in the movement, with APTN, and connections with others in the group. After each person spoke, they then held on to an end of a ball of yarn, tossing that ball to another person in the circle. The ball of yarn was tossed from person to person, with the string connecting each other, creating a web, or net, of connections with others.



I am not trans but previously worked in the HIV, TB, and Malaria sector. While there I got to know about trans people and their stories which provided motivation to work for the trans community.

This is the first time I have worked in a non-profit and it has changed my life and thinking.

It was intimidating for me at the beginning to participate in regional meetings, but since then I became involved in research, started advocating for LGR, and formed our own trans man movement in my country that's embedded in the culture.

Through APTN I have been able to meet other trans activists and to progress work in my own country

I attended the FB&B conference and that encouraged me to gather more information about the work that needs to be done in my country. I want to advocate for the inclusion of trans people in the National Health System

When I received a regional invite, I didn't know why I was invited or how I could contribute, but I'm glad I did because I had an amazing experience meeting other trans men and it inspired me to do more things when I went back home

When I first attended an event with APTN I was shy and afraid of participating. Since then, I have grown and become a leader in my country and have done research.

I am new to the movement but I think the way APTN operates and functions as a network can inspire my country to set up our own transgender network. I want to learn more.

I am grateful to be in an international meeting and hope that this connection will help my organisation develop its technical abilities

I connected with APTN in 2016 by participating in the trans health blueprint development and training in Fiji. While there, I met other Pacific brothers and sisters and miss that space and conversations till date

I find it fulfilling to be part of a trans-led organisation

For most of my life I didn't meet a trans person, until I moved to Asia, but I got to know APTN when I was starting out my transitioning journey

I am a newcomer to the issue of trans people, but when I found out about my HIV status I felt lost and didn't know where to go. But I found connection in the trans community and realised I could contribute to the movement.

I always wanted to find an ally and wanted to find a community or space to belong to. Professional trans people are seldom included in the movement, or choose not to. But I am now finding that space.

I have built my capacity by doing research with APTN under the KPRA project I have built my capacity by doing research with APTN under the KPRA project

## Try it Out

### All you need

A long ball of yarn/string

### Steps

Ask participants to sit in a circle

Explain the task: Each participant will get 2 minutes to speak about their journey in the movement and connections with others in the group

Start: One person will speak and when finished, they will hold onto the end of the string and toss the ball to someone across from them, forming a connection

That person will speak and pass the ball to someone else  
Repeat until everybody is connected by the string  
Take some time for reflection to discuss how you feel when seeing the web/net

### Variations

Consider trying a different task while still using the net - such as asking participants to toss the ball to someone they haven't met before, or have them speak about challenges they've faced and tossing the ball to someone who has experienced something similar.

## Session 4:

### Visioning: Imagine Success

How do you define success? The session was a visioning exercise, but rather than focusing on the movement as a whole, it was focused on the individual. Participants had to grapple with how they defined success for themselves, then figure out how to get there. Participants were tasked with drawing their own vision of "success" as a magazine cover. Everyone worked quietly and reflectively, thinking about what that looks like for them and how to draw that visually.

Participants were then invited to share with the group. Everyone had something different; from personal goals such as becoming a better singer, to professional accomplishments such as being a "jack of all trades". More than one person shared that their cover story wasn't even about themselves at all, but their country. They wanted to see the first ever gay marriages in their country or have legal gender recongition.

Participants had to think about all the steps required to meet their goal; from partnerships and fundraising, to events, and trainings, and even necessary changes in laws and policies. Though it may be hard to reach their vision, participants left inspired and reflective on the changes they wanted to see and what they would have to do to get there.





## Draw it

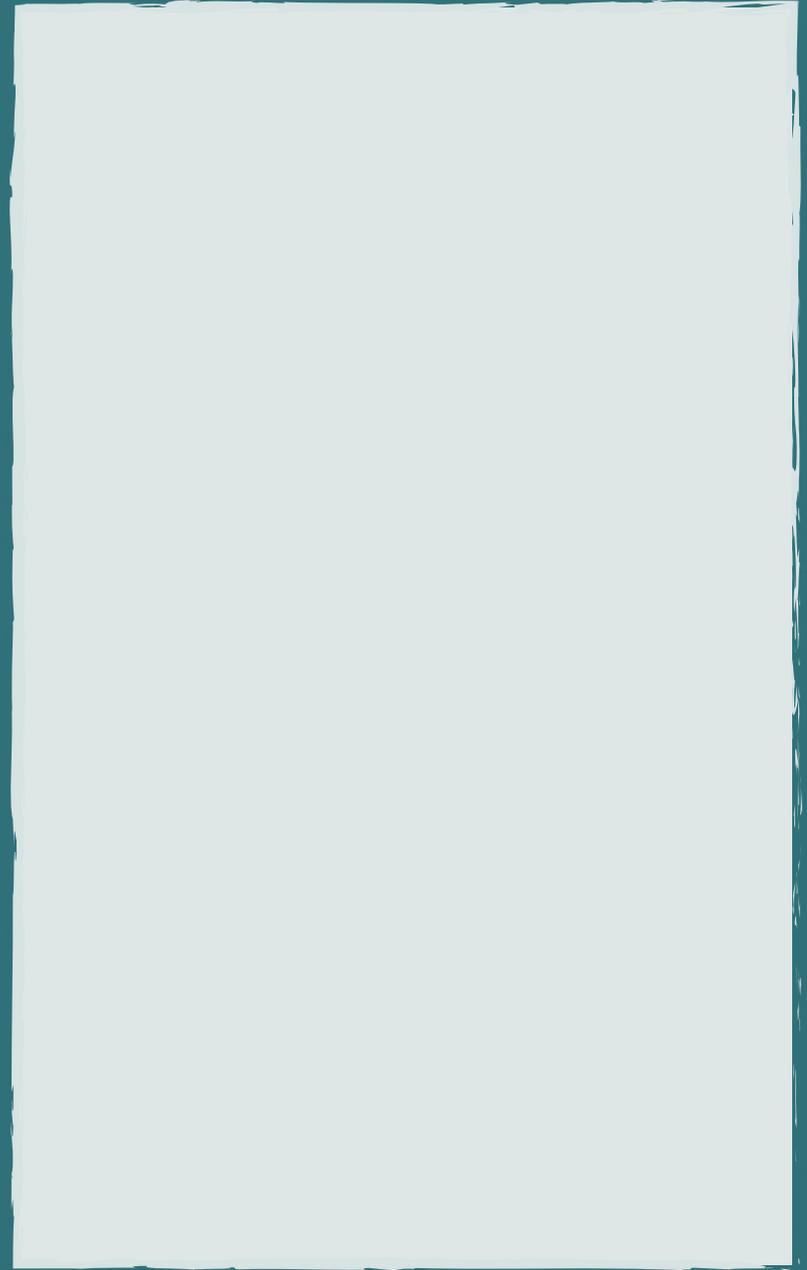
### What you need:

Blank Paper  
Coloring Items  
Vision



Think about what success looks like you to you - take some time to be reflective - then draw it out. If you were featured on a magazine cover, what would it show?

Then, write out the action steps to achieving your vision. Think about who you need to partner with, how much money is needed and how you plan to fundraise it, what changes in law, culture, or other would have to occur, what events, education or trainings would be required.



## SESSION 5: MENTI QUESTIONNAIRE

### Mapping Country Contexts

To gather information about each country's current context in regards to trans rights, a platform called Menti was introduced in this session. Using this tool, participants can type answers on their own phones/computers and everyone's responses are shown in real-time on the screen. Here's what we learned according to the participants:

#### Question 1: Are there policies in your country that affect trans people?

##### Vietnam

"There are no laws for transgender people in Vietnam."  
"In the draft law on HIV prevention, they are including all trans people."  
"Civil code is being reviewed."  
"Activists are advocating for depathologization models."

##### Indonesia

"There is local regulation and it is different for each area, for example qonun jinayah in Aceh. Qonun jinayah is sharia law based on islamic regulation In Aceh, queer people are not visible and cannot be out in the public for safety."  
"People in Aceh have to be dressed religiously or they will be arrested."  
"There are some local regulations that are targeting trans people and limiting the freedom of expression and assembly."  
"There are signs in the parks in Bogur that places sign that banned trans people from entering."

##### Thailand

"Everyone in Thailand who is assigned male at birth is required to undergo military service. Trans women required to do this are at risk of health and mental issues."  
"In order to skip military service, they have to undergo a psychiatric assessment and be diagnosed with gender dysphoria. Some trans people experienced suicidal thoughts about going to the military. Not everyone can get this letter causing stress for trans people who may have to undergo conscription."  
"Lack of gender sensitive policies such as no gender recognition law or same sex marriage."

##### Malaysia

"Yes, in both the civil and sharia law"  
"Cross-dressing laws"  
"Those who do not go for Friday prayers can be arrested for not attending prayers"  
"In private events where trans people organised and where alcohol is served are, trans people  
"Will be arrested on the pretence of alcohol used"

\*All the above statements are the opinions and perspectives of participants

## New Zealand

"Birth/death marriages registry and relationships act (NZ) select committee to provide recommendations to GOVT to improve LGR processes for trans people. Act under attack by conservative and trans exclusionary groups."

"The process of applying for a birth certificate has to go through the family court and this may take 6 months."

"TERFs from U.K and the US have infiltrated the other lesbian communities influencing policy makers and governments decision with more progressive policies."

"There are 3 gender markers in New Zealand. Male, Female, X."

## Samoa

"Samoa National Youth policy now includes gender diverse community with particular reference to fa'afafine and Faatama."

"Crimes Act 2013 removed impersonation of a female as an office it was in Crimes Ordinance '96"

"HIV prevention, getting to zero, same sex marriages on the process, reduce stigma and discrimination."

"Equality for transgender with military selection."

"Sexual reproductive health rights policy has been pushed 2 weeks ago with the public and there has been awareness to be made with ministries that such a policy exists."

## Fiji

"Section 26 of the constitution protects against SOGIESC, but are never practised."

"No implementation of the constitution that are supposed to protect the rights of individuals."

"Trans people are not included in the policies or legislation"

## India

"Transgender Protection Rights Bill 2010 violates NALSA (2014 Supreme Court Judgement which had given trans persons right to self determination.) New bill pushes towards compulsory surgical intervention and violates fundamental citizenship rights."

"There is a transgender Welfare board and district level schemes in few states to provide trans people with basic stipend and representation."

Name change: Allowed

Gender marker: Male, Female, Transgender/ Third gender

## Nepal

"Constitutional law: Only those who have undergone all surgical intervention can receive their citizenship."

"Assigned male or female people do not need to undergo the above."

Name change: Not allowed

Gender marker: Male, Female, Trans, others

\*All the above statements are the opinions and perspectives of participants



## Question 2: What is the biggest human rights issue in your country trans people are facing right now?

### Indonesia

- "Freedom of expression of trans identity."
- "Right to education, including higher education."
- "Right to work in formal employment in various sectors."
- "Right to a safe comfortable life without worries to facing persecution, stigma and discrimination from society."

### Malaysia

"Legal Gender Recognition."

### Samoa

- "Health and wellbeing"
- "Unemployment particularly for fafatama community."
- "Third gender markers."
- "Redefining family in the context of trans communities."
- "Sexual reproductive health rights now in place."
- "Transgender groups and the general public have to understand about human rights as already in place (especially in communities and workplaces)."

### Nepal

- "Lack of opportunities to academic exams from government."
- "Lack of employment."

### Vietnam

- "Right to health."
- "Zero access to services."
- "Facing a lot of risky issues since they can not change their gender marker."
- "Being forced to participate in a pathologizing procedure to change their GM (law is being drafted and not passed yet)."

### Fiji

- "Trans people in Fiji are viewed as curses/evil, and natural disasters are blamed on them."
- "Seen as a western concept, and being trans is perceived as a passing phase."

### Papua New Guinea

- "Freedom - gender inclusion services and being accepted."
- "High rates of stigma and discrimination."

\*All the above statements are the opinions and perspectives of participants.

### Question 3: What is ONE urgent health need of trans people in your country?

#### Malaysia

"Health insurance."  
"Separate medical wards for trans people."  
"HRT and care."

#### Indonesia

"HRT"  
"Psychosocial service"  
"Trans friendly affordable hospitals, doctors and psychiatrists"

#### Fiji

"Self-care"  
"A policy on trans health that focuses on HRT that empowers both the community and health providers. People are currently self-medicating and doctors are not trained and not legally covered to treat trans people."



#### Thailand

"Trans competent health care, suitable health care services. e.g. housed in the correct wards when accessing government services."  
"Hormones, and other health checkup to be included in the basic health package."

#### Vietnam

"Access to general and gender affirming healthcare"

#### Samoa

"Healthy lifestyle; trans people in Samoa do not place their health as a priority"  
"Creating a health framework (policy or laws) that caters particularly for trans related issues"

#### India

"Separate medical wards."

#### New Zealand

"The NZ govt not prioritising or committing to trans health, services and programming."

"It was good to see the similarities and differences in the issues facing the trans community across the region."



\*All the above statements are the opinions and perspectives of participants

## Try it Out:

### USE TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE INTERACTIVE SPACES

There are many great resources online to create fun and engaging workshop sessions. At APTN, we often use Menti and Kahoot.

Menti (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>) is an easy to use platform great for gathering participant's answers and feedback. You can use it for long answer Q&A's, ratings, or voting. Each participant uses their own smartphone or computer to answer.

Kahoot: (<https://kahoot.com/schools-u/>) is a fun way to add competition to your workshop. Need to review or check participant's understanding? Use Kahoot to quiz the participants and reward the winner with a prize!



## Session 6:

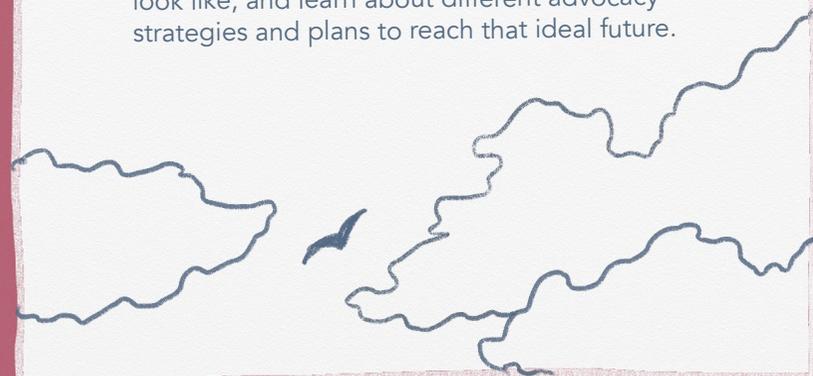
### OUR IDEAL TRANS FUTURE

"What does the perfect world look like for trans people?" This session asked participants to envision their ideal future for trans people; then develop advocacy strategies and an action plan to get there.

Facilitators led the participants in a world-cafe style visioning activity where participants wrote or drew on flip charts their ideal future for trans people in three areas; health, law/policy, and community/movement building.

Participants shared their thoughts about their ideal trans future; from countries seeing trans rights as human rights, to universal, trans-competent healthcare, to sustainability for trans organisations.

From this session, participants were able to collectively see what our shared future should look like, and learn about different advocacy strategies and plans to reach that ideal future.



# Rights and Policy

Rights as Citizens



Inclusivity



Minimum and Equal Wage Rights



Equity and Opportunity



No Discrimination

Health: Hormonal Therapy and Counseling

Formal Employment: Trans specific employment rights



Freedom of Expression

## Trans Equality



Affirming Cultural traditions, practices, and beliefs



Education



Family, legal marital rights, self defined and chosen family, adoption rights



Legal Gender Recognition



Migrant/Asylum Seeker Rights

The rights/policy group focused on just one part; family rights as transgender people. They reinvisioned "traditional" families to include trans people, chosen families, adoptive children, same-sex marriage and other forms of partnership. The group planned to draft a policy informed by experts, research and data collection from surveys, and public advocacy. Finally, they would have consultations with relevant groups before finalising their policy.



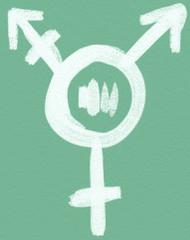
# Community Building



Knowledge sharing/  
raising awareness



Support/Networking

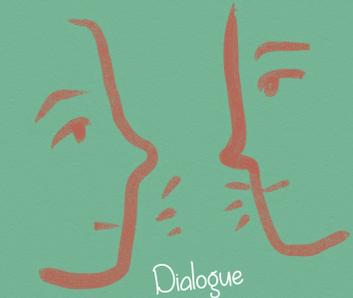


Trans Feminism



Safe Spaces

Sensitisation



Dialogue

No Discrimination within the community



Nurturing/Growing Leadership

Capacity Building



Genuine Alliances and Relationships

Volunteers Compensated



Resources and Sustainability



Solidarity



Influencing Policy Making (including  
in communities and governments)



Reforming religious narratives

Reclaiming Indigenous Identities



The Community Building group envisioned their advocacy action/strategy as a tree, with the leaves of the tree being a strong community and the trunk and roots of the tree building a strong foundation.



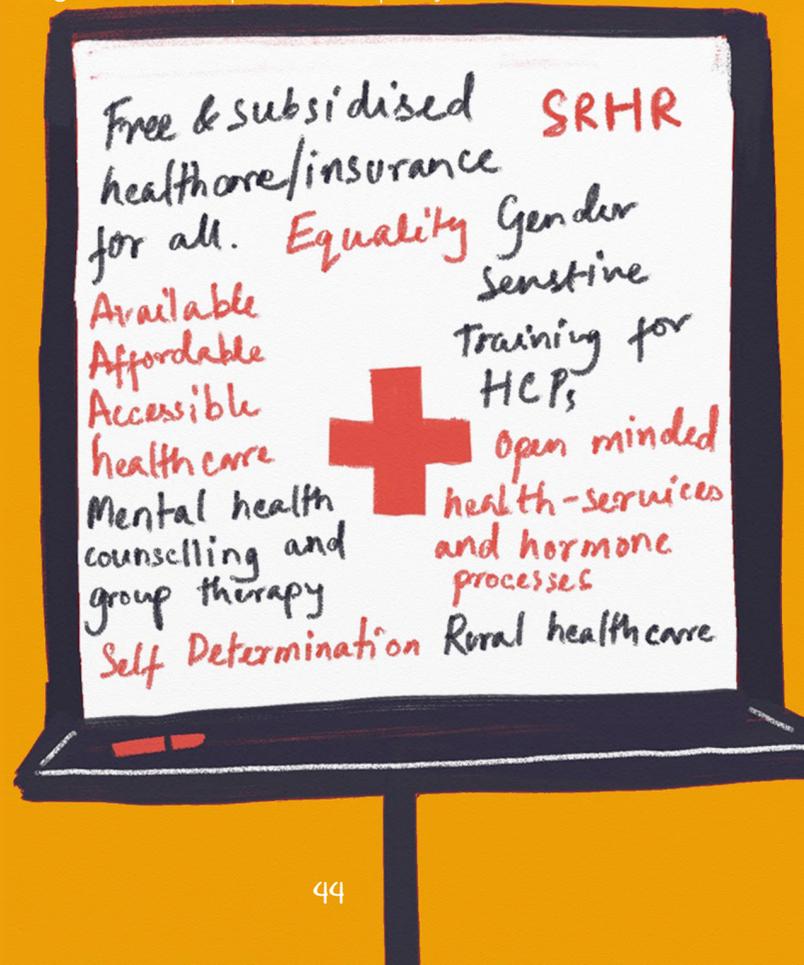
## Health

They envisioned a connected health framework that includes:

- Optional counselling center for psychosocial services
- Inclusive intake forms
- A trans health department
- Certified pharmacies for hormones covered by insurance

Their advocacy strategy for achieving any of these goals is:

- Data collection/research
- Dialogues and consultations with different levels and parties and including community
- Strategic Planning by all stakeholders (HCPs, community members, government) and informed by best practices.
- Piloting and an M&E process for quality control.



### **Which of these programmes/ initiatives can a regional body/network such as APTN support?**

- Research: Current state on the definition of families
- Process document on the research that has been done for and by community.
- Organise study visits and tour
- Connecting healthcare provider to each other in the region
- Replicating the FB2B structure in the Pacific region
- Mapping a list of healthcare providers in the region
- Online healthcare provider module with accreditation
- Map out the dates of the medical provider conferences/ information
- Mapping of CBOS, Healthcare provider list

## *Try it Out*

### **What you need:**

Flipcharts/Poster Paper  
Markers/Pens

### **Steps:**

#### **Phase 1: Brainstorming Cafe**

Divide the participants into groups. 3 groups = 3 categories  
In this case:

1. Health
2. Law/policy
3. Community/movement building

Each group stands at one flipchart with one category.

**Explain the task** Groups will be given 5-10 minutes to brainstorm their ideal future for trans people in each of the three areas. They will draw and write this ideal vision on their flipchart.

### **Example - What does the perfect world for trans people look like in regards to healthcare?**

After the time is up, all groups will rotate to a new flipchart and do the same thing, but this time with a shorter time limit.

Repeat until each group has contributed to each category. Review and Reflect. Spend some time at each flipchart to have a conversation about their shared visions

### **Phase 2: Action Planning**

Divide the participants into groups, this time based on which area is most interesting to them. For example, if the participant is most interested in healthcare, they should join the health group

New Task: Give participants 30 minutes to 1 hour to develop an advocacy plan and strategies for their category.

**Tip: Pick just one aspect of their category. For example, under the "Laws/Policies" section, just pick one sub-category such as Legal Gender Recognition or Same-Sex Marriage.**

### **Group Presentations:**

Each group will get the chance to present their ideas and discuss potential challenges, feasibility, missing steps, or other ideas for their advocacy strategies.

## Session 7: Managing differences

Different issues often arise in movement building work, whether internally or externally. Using real life examples of conflicts that have occurred, the facilitators forced participants to grapple with how they would deal with those conflicts and offer suggestions to their peers on how they have dealt with similar issues in the past.

### Examples of conflicts that arise in community building:

- Internal community politics
- Gatekeeping
- Politics between trans men and trans women
- Representing the country you no longer live in
- Disagreement on views (e.g. acceptable terminologies (trans, priawan)
- Bridging conversations between those who are professional and others that are from the grassroots
- Funding
- Funders who are not aligned with your vision or mission
- Lack of funding for all organisations and the decisions this causes

### Examples of strategies for managing those conflicts and differences:

- Mediation
- Shifting power and attitudes
- Magnifying the focus to look beyond one community
- Educating people, developing resources
- Holding dialogues

"The foundation has been laid out by the trans woman community which even helped establish the trans man community - causing several frictions amongst the older trans women as to why the trans man community is riding on the work/ success of the trans women movement."

"In some cases, the feminist movement is not inclusive of trans people, but in my country the feminist movement has become more inclusive of trans movements over the years."

"I faced bullying and gatekeeping from within the community itself. There was insufficient support to manage the situation because often regional organisations are not able to mitigate or mediate without understanding the local community politics."

"When there is a funding opportunity, conflict often arises as to who should be getting the funding."

*Managing differences and conflict are dealt with in different ways affected by cultural aspects.*

"60% of the world population is in the Asia Pacific region, and funders have their own set of criterias in funding issues and areas which can perpetually lead to conflict amongst regions"

"The trans masculine movement is new and there is an ongoing debate about masculinity that is often being challenged. There is an assumption about what it means to be a trans man that has created discussions and conflicts about identities. When trans men work with women (co-op projects/ work), these are mostly for the purpose of funding."

"Senior trans women are intimidated by trans youth and vice versa. Communities are insecure when there is success from another trans person other than them."

"In the trans community, there are disagreements on the terminologies used to best describe their identity."

"Funders cut off funding from one trans organisation and provided this fund to another new organisation."



## **Do's and Don'ts of Managing Conflicts:**

### **Don't:**

- X Do not assume national contexts, experiences, and priorities are the same everywhere.
- X Do not tolerate community violations.

### **Do:**

- ✓ Do listen to all sides when conflict arises
- ✓ Do include conflict management into binding agreements if it comes to project management and indicate how conflict will be managed if and when it arises
- ✓ Do share examples of conflict management policy that can be shared and adapted to each group or organisation needs
- ✓ Do provide an accessible mechanism for feedback and complaints and protection for whistleblowers
- ✓ Do regular check-ins with partners/ community to foster common understanding on the things happening on the ground
- ✓ Do document conflict resolution that can be turned into case studies for study learnings
- ✓ Do be more proactive in addressing and seeking support for managing conflicts
- ✓ Do know that when communications are done via email, it may be misinterpreted. It is essential to understand the modes of communication and be cognizant.

## Session 8:

# Partnership/ Alliance

Forming partnerships and alliances is essential for robust and resilient organisations and movement building. In this session, participants were given a moment to reflect on the challenges and issues with building alliances and partnerships across two differing regions; Asia and the Pacific. They shared these challenges in a group discussion, highlighting the diversity of the regions; from culture, language and religion, to movement building priorities, as both a cause for division, as well as opportunities for engagement. Finally, in groups that combined members from different regions, participants came up with strategies that could be used to manage differences and unite the two regions.

For organisations to become more effective partners and advocates the priorities of people leading the movements should align with those working on the ground.

There's a need to build mutual understanding and not further dividing relationships between trans and cis partners."

Community group representatives hoped to seek support and find opportunities to meet annually and not solely relying on APTN to organise workshops.

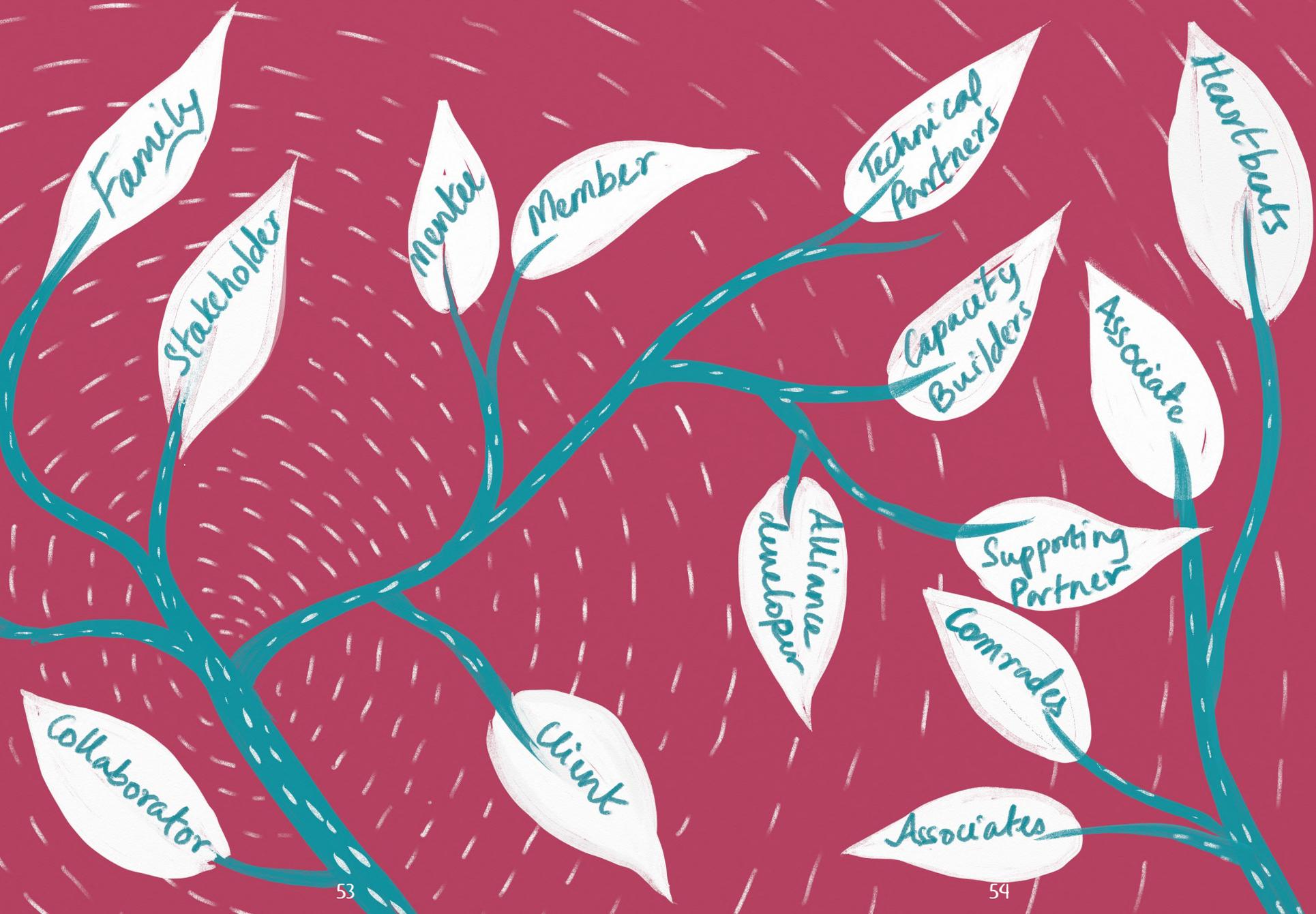
We need to identify strategies and methods that communities engage to profile their cause and efforts.



## What is causing the breakdown in alliance and partnership building between the two regions (Asia and the Pacific)?



What are some of the words you would like APTN to refer to your organisation, community as?







## Session 10:

### FEEDBACK, APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

"All seasoned activists know that the journey toward justice is a long one indeed, and that we need to take care of ourselves in order to avoid burnout. We frequently struggle with stress because we lose perspective. We fixate on how life fails to meet our expectations. We become trapped in a web of anxiety and forget to appreciate the blessings in our life. Gratitude reminds us of what truly matters in life. It creates a pause in our busy schedule, allows us to breathe and appreciate everything that's around us . . . including us. Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the mind. Gratitude turns what we have into enough"

- Mitch Yusof, RSC Co-Chair

The final session of the workshop saw all participants expressing their true feelings and gratitude. Participants sat in the darkened room, and in silence, were encouraged to forgive themselves for things left unsaid, things that have been said, as well as things they were yet to say.

Then, participants expressed their feelings to each other. All participants stood in a circle, and they took turns to walk around the inside of the circle, addressing each of the other participants personally. They would do this by making eye contact, holding the hands of each person in front of them and expressing any feedback, appreciation, or gratitude. Each person was allowed to take as long as they needed, and were each accompanied by a moderator who encouraged participants to stay connected and focused. This intimate interaction resulted in many hugs and tears.

The APTN team was then asked to sit on chairs with their eyes closed, while participants were encouraged to go up to each team member and whisper feedback and words of encouragement in their ears.



# Try It Out

## What you need:

Dim Lighting (no glaring overhead lights, use lamps, or a little lighting from outdoors)  
Soft Music

## Steps:

Set the mood and tone. Dim the lights and play the music. Discuss with participants that this is a moment to be quiet and reflect. Wait for participants to be calm and not talk before moving on.

Ask participants to close their eyes and forgive themselves for things left unsaid, things that have been said, as well as things they were yet to say.

Have participants stand in a circle.

One participant at a time, (accompanied by a moderator) will enter the circle and stand directly in front of another person. They must make eye contact and can even hold hands if comfortable.

The participant inside the circle will express feedback, appreciation, and gratitude. The participant on the outside must not speak, just say thank you.

Depending on the number of moderators, you can have 2-3 groups going at one time, as long as people do not feel rushed or it is too loud.

Finally, ask the hosts of the workshop to close their eyes and sit in chairs inside the circle.

The participants will go to each host and whisper their feedback and appreciation.

## What does the moderator do?

The moderator accompanies the participant so as to make sure that participants stay connected -keeping eye contact and no talking back. Repeat with each participant until the first one makes it around the entire circle, speaking with everyone





This workshop toolkit documents the knowledge and experiences shared by trans activists during the Regional Partnership Meeting: Transcending agenda on health, rights and policy in Asia and the Pacific hosted by APTN in December 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The tools, methods, and session ideas can be used and adapted for your own organisations as well as yourself to reflect on your journey as a trans activist and your part in the trans movement.

## *We are* **APTN**

The Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) is a regional, trans-led organisation. Since 2009, APTN has worked to build relationships with trans communities, organizations, governments, healthcare providers and other key stakeholders throughout the region. The mission of APTN is to enable transgender people in the Asia and Pacific region to organize and advocate for the improvement of their health, protection of their legal, social and human rights, and enhance their social wellbeing and quality of life.



## Asia Pacific Transgender Network

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