

SUMMARY BRIEF

# SOCIAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Screening &  
Counseling for HIV  
and Other Sexually  
Transmitted Infections

## **Social Business Guide: Screening and Counseling for HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections.**

2023

The development of this guide was completed by the Yunus Foundation in Thailand (Yunus Thailand) in collaboration with the AMS-PHPT Research Collaboration, Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Chiang Mai University. The research leading to this guide was conducted in consultation with stakeholder organizations and innovators in Thailand. It was made possible thanks to the support of Expertise France–L'Initiative, which works to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The contents of this guide reflect the views of its authors and not necessarily those of Expertise France, L'initiative, AMS-PHPT, or Yunus network organizations at large.

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**L'INITIATIVE**  
sida, tuberculose, paludisme



# Foreword

In the early 1980s, when the first whispers of the HIV/AIDS epidemic began to echo across the globe, Thailand entered a crisis that demanded more than just medical intervention. It required support at the very highest national level and profound societal shift: a collective awakening to the power of unity rather than panic and fear. In those trying times, the combined spirits of many organizations and their tireless work in promoting prevention and compassion eventually became a beacon of success. Through public awareness campaigns, grassroots education and in some cases humor. We also embarked on a mission to prevent the spread of the disease as well as to find an alternative to the stigma that clung to its victims through the positive partnership program between people who are HIV positive and those who are HIV negative.\* This program used economic empowerment as a means to reduce stigma and discrimination where the partners are provided a micro-credit loan fund to do business together.

More recently, as we emerge from the COVID-19 epidemic, the lessons learned during the first wave of the HIV/AIDS crisis resonate profoundly. The combined spirit of many organizations' resilience, innovation, and continued community support that defined the nation's work then were in bloom again, reminding us that in the face of adversity, our greatest strength lies in our determination and ability to come together.

Social entrepreneurs, armed with empathy and determination, play a pivotal role in reshaping our communities and fostering social progress. This guide is an invitation to harness the potential of collaboration and compassion by empowering entrepreneurs to cultivate a culture of sharing with those who need it.

I invite you to join those who have walked before you on this journey and to explore the possibilities that social business holds to support those that still face challenges to access healthcare and friendship. There are many social enterprises we need to get to know, learn from, and work with. Together, we can see a future where anyone and everyone can take part in combating HIV/AIDS and other STIs. As the world continues to evolve, together we can build a future where youth must lead the way forward.

With determination and heartfelt optimism,

**Mechai Viravaidya**  
Founder and Chairman  
Population and Community Development Association



\* UNAIDS. (2007). The Positive Partnerships Program in Thailand: Empowering People Living with HIV. UNAIDS Best Practice Collection (UNAIDS/07.22E / JC1260E). Geneva, Switzerland: WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

# Abbreviations

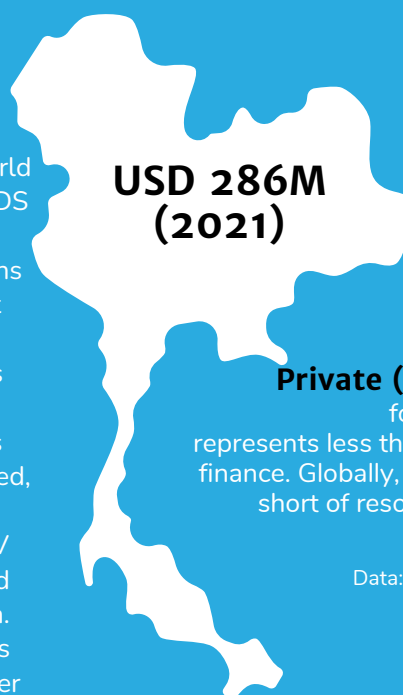
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMS	Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Chiang Mai University
ART	Anti-retroviral Treatment
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CD4	Clusters of Differentiation 4
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CT	<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i>
EpiC	Meeting Targets and Maintaining HIV Epidemic Control Project
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
HBV	Hepatitis B Virus
HCV	Hepatitis C Virus
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVST	HIV Self Test
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
KPL	Key Population-Led
NG	<i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i>
NHSO	National Health Security Office, Thailand
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health of Thailand
MoPH-TUC	Thai MoPH - US CDC Collaboration
MSM	Men Who Have Sex With Men
PDA	Population and Community Development Association
PLHIV	People Living With HIV
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
RRTTR	Reach-Recruit-Test-Treat-Retain Program
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SW	Sex Worker
SWING	Service Workers In Group Foundation
SY	Syphilis
TB	Tuberculosis
TG	Trans Gender
U=U	Undetectable = Untransmittable
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# SUMMARY BRIEF

Nearly a quarter of new HIV infections in the world occur in Asia and the Pacific (UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2023), a region with the second-highest number of people living with HIV. Other infections are of concern in the region, several of them that can be sexually transmitted (STIs), including syphilis, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), *Chlamydia trachomatis* (CT), *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (NG), Mpox, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and tuberculosis (TB). At-risk, marginalized, and groups at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid face a range of challenges to access HIV and other sexual and reproductive health-related services, in part due to stigma and discrimination. The prevalence of HIV among at-risk populations globally ranges from four to fourteen times higher than other sexually active groups based on 2022 estimates. With the aim of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, a global effort with screening and testing as a core component aims to reach 95-95-95 targets by diagnosing at least 95% of people living with HIV, provide timely treatment to positive cases, link at-risk individuals to prevention, and suppress HIV viral loads to undetectable levels. Counseling services are also key in order to provide education and awareness, technical guidance, and mental health support.

However, from an estimated 6500 new HIV infections in 2021, almost half were among youth

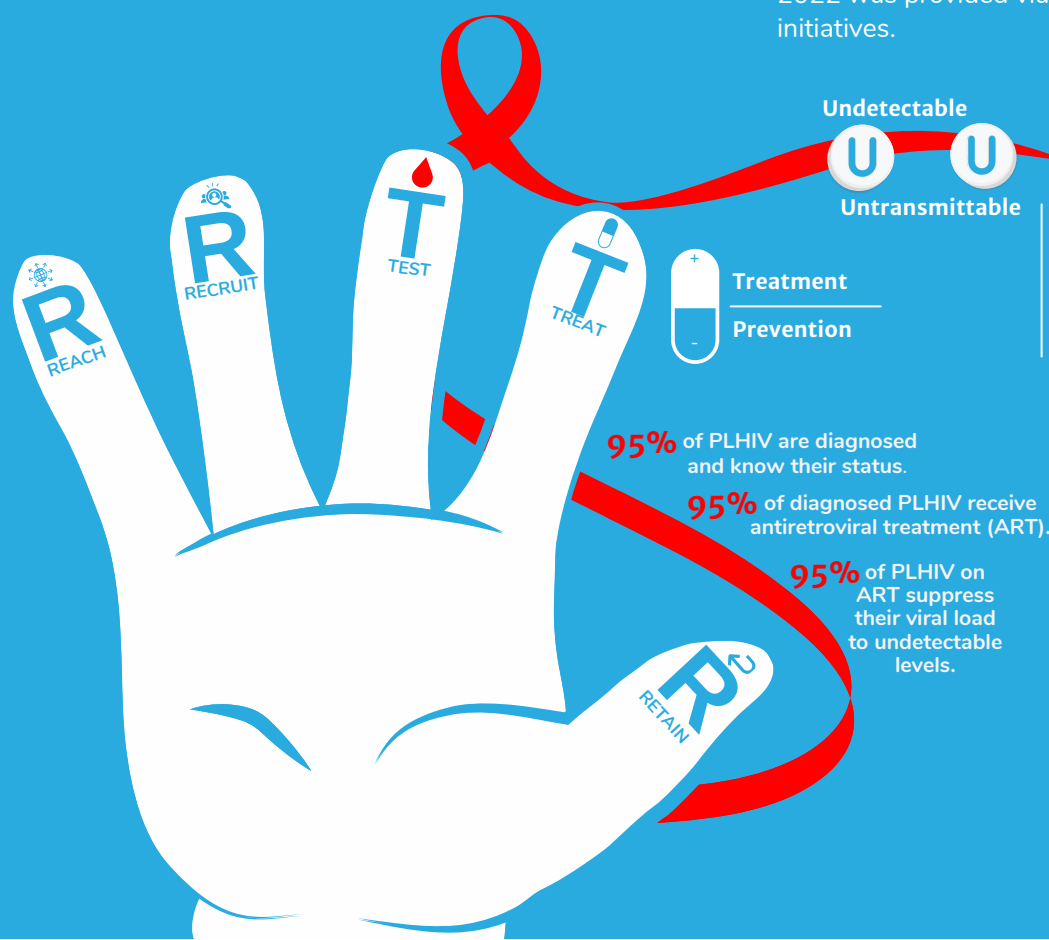
under 24 years old and most of all new cases among people in key at-risk population, according to a UNAIDS report (2022). At the time of writing this report, Thailand has made significant advancements in diagnosing approximately 90% of PLHIV. A combination of public health initiatives from government, community and key-population led organizations, and private clinics providing screening and testing for HIV and other STIs has been at the forefront of Thailand's success in diagnosing. Analysis by the Institute for HIV Research and Innovation (IHRI) reports that over a third of HIV preventative treatment in Thailand in 2022 was provided via key population-led initiatives.



## Private (domestic) finance

for HIV/AIDS in Thailand represents less than 1% of total available finance. Globally, available financing falls short of resource need estimates by UNAIDS.

Data: UNAIDS (2022) Global AIDS Monitoring GARPR Reports.



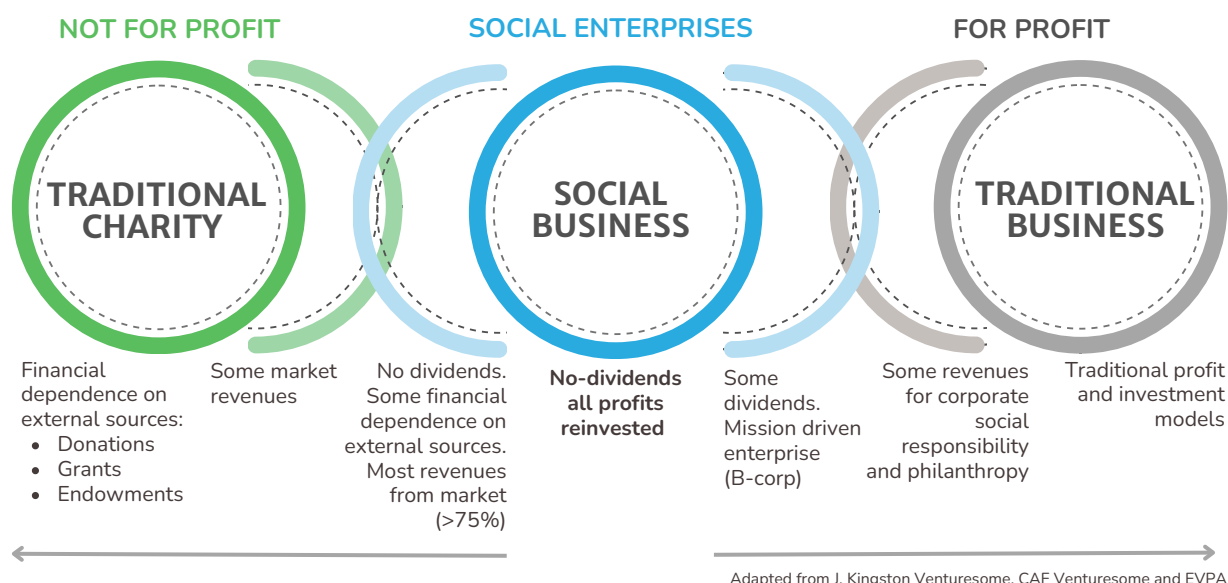
## SELF TESTING AND SAMPLING

Thailand's Ministerial Regulation No. 1/2015 on HIV self tests (HIVST) was approved to promote people knowing their HIV status by increasing access to HIVST. Self-sampling products for STIs include HPV, NG, and CT which are widely accepted and deemed as safe and with high relative accuracy. Self-testing and sampling for HIV and other STIs provides an opportunity to increase the coverage and frequency of testing for early detection.

# “Social business is a bet in favor of life instead of profit”

Prof. Muhammad Yunus

Identifying and implementing innovative approaches to finance and scale the provision of HIV and STIs testing, treatment and prevention, and counseling services to at-risk and marginalized populations is needed in the race to end AIDS by 2030. This guide aims to contextualize and present practical innovations and opportunities from a people-centered and social business perspective, which strive to follow the principles of models with no financial losses to ensure financial independence and sustainability, and no financial dividends to finance the expansion and scaling of activities for long-term impact. Whereas this guide focuses on the context of Thailand, it may also inform others and requires critical and careful consideration of local conditions.



## SOCIAL BUSINESS Beyond the binary of financing and operating interventions for HIV and other STIs

### 0% DIVIDENDS

to invest in expanding activities and scaling impact

### 100% SOCIAL MISSION DRIVEN

as the primary objective of operating

### 0% LOSSES

to achieve financial independence and sustainability

## Five Aspects of People-Centered Service Delivery of Screening and Counseling

### ACCESSIBLE

Availability to all regardless of risk behavior, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, language or legal barriers, operating schedules, nationality, disabilities, religious affiliation, etc.

### ADAPTABLE

Meet needs and preferences of beneficiaries, partners, and existing conditions on the ground.

### ANONYMOUS

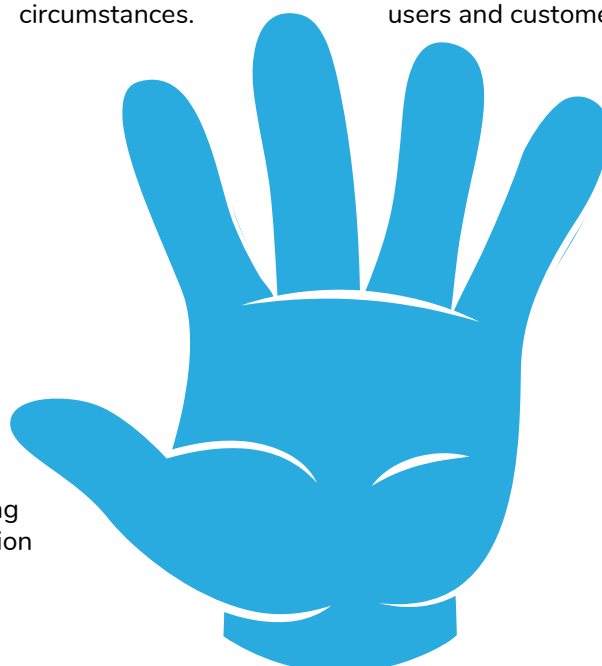
Respecting and ensuring the privacy of individuals unwilling to disclose personal information during screening and counseling events.

### AGILE

Speed and ability to respond to sensitive or unexpected circumstances.

### AFFORDABLE

Meeting the purchasing power of users and customers.





# Addressing the needs of at-risk and marginalized populations

This guide was drafted following a consultative process with community based organizations (CBOs) delivering HIV and other STI related health services in Thailand. There is extensive evidence on the benefits of CBOs to reach and recruit at-risk individuals. Some of these point to higher rates of early diagnosis of new infections.

## Engaging and Educating Adolescents & Youth

Despite longer risks of infection, awareness and knowledge levels among youth are a function of varied access to sexual health education. Many youth turn to peers and digital sources for information and counseling.



## Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination Against Sex Workers

Stigma, legal barriers, and marginalization of the sex industry often hinder sex worker access to adequate healthcare. In Thailand, a significant number of sex workers are also economic migrants from neighboring countries, who face multiple access barriers and layers of discrimination.

## Mainstreaming Sexual Health Among Men

Thailand's Ministry of Public Health reports that whereas nearly 60% of PLHIV in 2020 are men, approximately 80% of new HIV cases are among men. Risk groups include Gay men or other men who have sex with men (MSM) and male sex workers (MSW). More recently, the prevalence of Hepatitis C has been observed to increase, especially among MSM groups and particularly those infected with syphilis, engaging in chemsex, having multiple sex partners, and prisoners.

## Ensuring Friendly and Judgment Free Services for People Who Use Drugs

People who inject drugs (PWID) are at high risk of HIV and Hepatitis C and yet some report experiencing discrimination including health workers denying access to health care facilities and services. Other forms of risk behavior while under the influence of drug and substance abuse, also referred to as chemsex, increase risk of transmission. Location-based test services are often preferred by PWID given the direct availability of counseling, care, and treatment. According to estimates by UNAIDS, there are approximately 57 600 adults who inject drugs in Thailand.

## Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Women and Girls

Whereas this guide focuses less on mother-to-child HIV and STI transmissions, it is important to note ongoing efforts to enhance access to sexual and reproductive health services and education to reduce teen pregnancies in Thailand and ensure safe and accessible support for family planning among women and girls while also engaging men and boys.

## Enabling Access to Health Services for Migrants

Whereas HIV infection rates may be relatively low overall, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Tuberculosis have high prevalence among economic migrants in Thailand, particularly from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR. Many of these migrants are undocumented, do not speak the local language, and are not aware of existing support mechanisms for health.

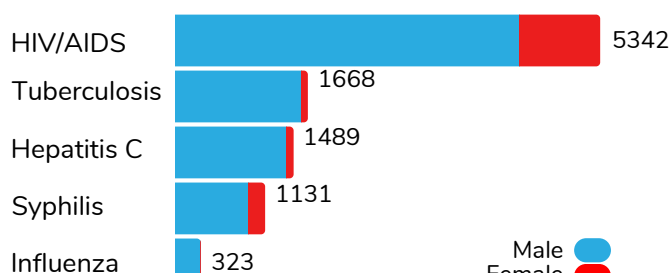
## Transforming Health Services for Transgender Inclusion

Transgender women and men in Thailand report a range of issues linked to stigma and discrimination. These affect their experience in accessing and navigating healthcare, including for sexual health, gender-affirming care, and counseling. The trans-oriented Tangerine Clinic in Bangkok reports that approximately 15% of visitors are unemployed and a third show symptoms of depression. Beyond external access barriers, internal factors affecting the health and wellbeing of trans individuals include internalized stigma, low levels of awareness, and misconceptions drug interactions.

## Unlocking Regular Screening and Counseling for Prisoners

In Thailand, inmate volunteer health workers help disseminate knowledge and advice to fellow inmates.

### Diagnosed Infections Among Inmates in Thai Correctional Facilities (May 2023; n=268,621)



Data Source: Department of Corrections

# Innovation Opportunities for Social business

Adapted from the twelve principles for bottom of the pyramid (BoP) innovation by C. K. Prahalad.



## Price and Value

Delivering quality solutions while minimizing the price of products and services.



## Scalable Solutions

Designing solutions and offerings to facilitate scaling up.



## Redesign for Functionality

Redesigning the functions of existing solutions to work better for users.



## Task Shifting

Designing staff roles for optimization including by reducing skill requirements.



## Difficulty Proofing

Delivering products and services in places with difficult conditions and limited infrastructure.



## Distribution and Reach

Distributing products and services, including for both rural and urban markets.



## Technology Innovation

Integrating features from existing and emerging technologies into solutions.



## Resource Efficiency

Avoiding wasting resources into the production and delivery of products, services, and operations.



## Streamline Operations

Streamlining processes, logistics, manufacturing, sourcing, and other aspects of product and service delivery.

## Collaboration and Centralization to Reach a Scale of Economy

Collaborative approaches can catalyze the scaling of impact-driven operations to reach economies of scale via a sharing economy approach. Task-shifting and centralizing certain roles and functions can amplify the benefits of collaboration by eliminating cost-inefficiencies and leveraging existing resources.



Information and data



Technology, equipment, and procedures



Group Procurement and logistics



Facilities and infrastructure



Risk mitigation strategies and expenses



Knowledge and expertise



Finance and expenses



## Educate Consumers

Raising awareness and knowledge to stimulate demand among key populations.



## Simple Interface

How can the customer experience be intuitive and easy to use? This may be online and offline.



## Challenge Assumptions

Inverting existing beliefs in your organization and the sector to innovate value.

## Balancing Cash Inflows and Outflows

When designing social business models and considering different options for financial sustainability, it is imperative to estimate required expenses and consider these in relation to the time when revenues will be received. Establishing a monthly operating cost profile for location-based screening and counseling can also help identify opportunities to design lean operations. Below are five questions to consider.

### Capital Expenses (CAPEX)

How much money is needed at first to establish what I want to do?

### Operational Expenses (OPEX)

How much money is needed to cover the costs of doing what I want to do?

### Cash Inflows

How many units of my products and services do I project to sell on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis?

### Break Even Point

When do I expect to make enough money to cover my operational expenses and, if needed, recover the capital expenses?

### Investment Amount

How much money do I need until I can be self-sufficient?



# Leveraging Partnerships and Other Support to Scale Social Business Approaches

## Public Partnerships

Public entities may provide financial and non-financial support for social business innovation and operations. In some cases, public-private partnership (PPP) models can facilitate collaboration, private investment, and risk-sharing. In others, integrating approaches with public programs can provide social businesses with competitive advantages to manage interventions efficiently.

## Private Partnerships

Private sector support for HIV and STI screening can help reduce costs of operation while enabling new revenue streams. Collaboration with insurance companies and employers to include HIV and STI screening and counseling support yield revenue while contributing to workforce wellbeing. In other cases, leveraging corporate social responsibility finance to bridge investment needs, purchase of equipment, and optimize operations can deliver mutual benefits. In-kind contributions of equipment, access to facilities, marketing and communication support, digital support, or favorable rates for products and services can contribute to lean operation expenses.

## Educational Partnerships

Building partnerships with academic institutions can be pivotal to ensure access to adolescents and youth. They can ensure comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education campaigns, leverage student apprenticeships, and integrate sexual health programs to student life on campus. Though specific avenues may vary depending on institutional needs and contexts, these initiatives can help encourage safe practices, promote open dialogue about sensitive topics, and increase rates of HIV and STIs screening, treatment, and prevention uptake.

## Sample Financial Support Opportunities

Thailand's National Health and Security Office (NHSO)  
Medical Reimbursements

Trial Services for In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices for Approval by Thailand's Food and Drug Administration

## Sample Non-financial Support Opportunities

### Business Support

Incubators, accelerators, and other forms of business development guidance.

### Pro-Bono or Discounted Services

Marketing, accounting, and legal support (i.e., TrustLaw by Thompson Reuters Foundation).

### Technology resources and tools

Examples include TechSoup for nonprofits, Monday.com project management, Free Google Suite and Google Ads.

## Recommendations to harness social business contributions to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic and control other STIs.

### Research and Knowledge exchange

Conduct analysis of the economic case and financial savings on public spending derived from social business initiatives.

Conduct market research on new products and services.

Conduct multi stakeholder dialogues to build collaborative action plans among stakeholder organizations and including community and key population actors.

### Business Development & Investment

Seek technical assistance to develop and refine new social business models.

Mobilize private finance to deliver activities under social business models.

Explore and pilot avenues to leverage public funds for additional outcome-driven finance for social entrepreneurs.

### Policy and Governance

Develop an enabling environment to support and integrate social business approaches into policies and action plans.

Streamline procedures for self testing technology review and approval.

Conduct training and capacity development activities among health service providers on social business approaches.

