



# TRUSTED TO LEAD

A Story of Change for Health and Rights  
for Young LGBTIQ+ People in Indonesia

Three years of impact from the  
Healthy Cities with Pride project

Told by Bella Aubree  
Illustrations by Ajib Abdul Jabar



# Intro

## Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride

The Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride project aims to strengthen capacity for movements of young LGBTIQ+ people across Indonesia. It promotes increased access to HIV services, reduction of stigma, discrimination, criminalisation and violence against young LGBTIQ+ people, including young people living with HIV.

The capacity of over 130 LGBTIQ+ youth-led organisations across 11 cities in Indonesia was strengthened in 3 years (2023-2025).

## Participatory grantmaking

Healthy Cities with Pride is Aidsfonds' first 100% community-led decision-making programme where communities decide where, who, and what to fund. In this project, its aim is to build the next generation of indigenous grantmakers, raising the capacity of youth-led organisations to rightfully take their place as decision makers in their own programs.

Aidsfonds prioritises leadership and decision making by communities. It does this using various participatory approaches: from community leaders deciding on funding proposals and resource allocation, to advisory panels that guide strategies and approaches.

## Project takeaways

- > Youth-led organisations thrive when given trust and flexibility from donors
- > Young LGBTIQ+ communities are ready to make a difference
- > Communities know what is needed and what works, hence a community-led approach is vital to the success
- > Trust in these leaders of tomorrow, backed up with capacity strengthening and technical assistance, is imperative for this approach and to build resilience





**My name is Bella Aubree.** I'm a young LGBTIQ+ activist working on HIV, sexual and reproductive health, TB and human rights. As a young person living with HIV, I face many challenges in my life, along with my peers. I'm the national coordinator of Inti Muda since 2022. Inti Muda Indonesia is a national network of young key population people, and young people living with HIV in Indonesia. We are grantmaker in the Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride project.

As LGBTIQ+ young people we live in fear. We face so much stigma and discrimination and lack of basic rights. It's difficult for us to access health services as well as jobs, education and housing. It's a struggle for us.

We believe that as a community, we need to take action because, who else will? We need to have resilience and work together. We're a youth-led organisation and believe youth leadership is really important.

This is our change story.



# Our Challenges

## Discriminatory laws

We still face discriminatory laws, at national and local level, including the new Criminal Code. Often local bylaws on "public order" and "morality" limit young LGBTIQ+ people's access to affordable health care, jobs, housing, and education. That's why we push for anti-discrimination laws to protect us.

## Donor-driven interventions

Donors don't really trust youth-led organisations, and the issues we work on – LGBTIQ+ rights and HIV – are very sensitive here. Our work used to be donor driven. When they wanted an intervention at national level we had to replicate it at city level. But that's not effective, because it's not based on the community's needs.

## Lack of capacity

Sometimes we lack capability and capacity. That's totally fine because we're still young and most of us do not have a good education. Donors want accountability and transparency, so they need to invest in us as a youth-led organisation. We tell donors we're open to technical assistance and training.



## Partnership with Aidsfonds

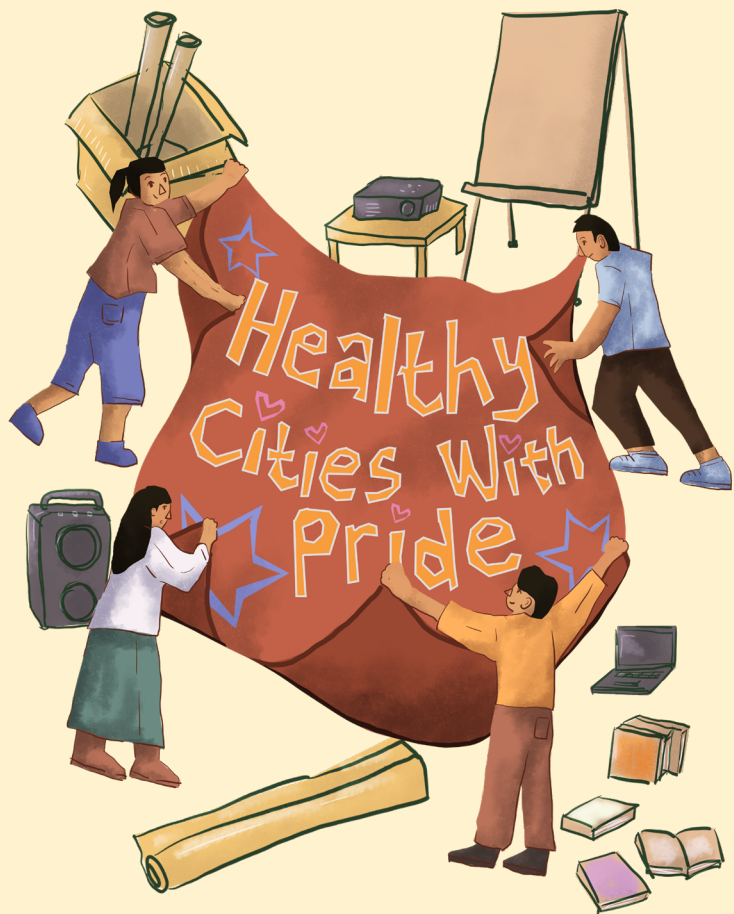
The role of Aidsfonds has been so transformative. They not only gave us funding but also trusted us as a grantmaker. Starting out with that trust really encouraged us. We are more confident to lead and make decisions ourselves. It helped us be more visible with the government and helped us network. This is honestly our first time hearing from donors: you need to lead this project. That's a great thing.



**LGBTIQ+ community members are now brave enough to speak up. They speak out about inequality and injustice when accessing healthcare services. They also advocate for more inclusive public services.**

Rere Ansori, North Sumatra Trans Women Association

# Taking a Community-Led Approach



“ I believe an activity is community-led when the community defines the problem, designs solutions and leads decision-making processes. Because we know what works for us.

## **We bring personal experiences**

We bring the value of our personal experiences to community-led interventions. We do it with our heart and because we're angry. We want to make it happen and that drives us. The results are real and they're sustainable. Because, if you invest in people, it will be sustainable. In Healthy Cities with Pride, we are a decision maker. At first the city authorities were confused about us making decisions, but then excited because it's something new for them. That changes our work, we can be more creative with our solutions and interventions.

## **We act as a bridge**

We map the problems at city level, see what the community needs, and find out the gaps. We act as a bridge, supporting young people to feel safe using the services, and advocating for the services to be youth friendly. ▶

“ I am the type of leader who truly encourages the community to move forward. I saw that community members became more confident in speaking up, showing they deserve respect. Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride has brought them many personal impacts. It's not only me who feels a shift in mindset, but the people affected by the project feel the same way.”

Riki Jakaria,  
Coordinator of Inti Muda West Java



For example, our city-level advocacy is really effective. We bring community evidence, needs and cases to the local government and local health offices, pushing for programmes and policies that support LGBTIQ+ people and young people living with HIV. This creates visibility and legitimacy for the youth organisation in their city. Then we can push for national policy changes, unlock more resources, and ensure national programmes actually respond to what young people face on the ground.

#### **We pass on ownership to partners**

We pass on the ownership of the project to local partners. They have their own decision-making process for mapping the problems they face and then getting to the best solution. When you trust local partners, they can be more creative, have flexibility and the right to decide.

#### **Growing recognition for Healthy Cities with Pride**

At national level, I first noticed the impact of our work when I joined a meeting with the Minister of Health, with representatives from the provincial and city level. They said Healthy Cities with Pride helped us reach more young people and support them in accessing HIV and sexual health services. So, I heard that from the government itself. That's when I realised, ok, this is a great thing.



**The most visible change is the shift in attitudes among young key populations who previously didn't care about their health. After our training and capacity-building activities, they became more aware of their health status and now believe that they can access health services without discrimination or stigma.**

Alvin, Inti Muda East Kalimantan

**Through Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride, the young LGBTIQ+ community realised they have the right to advocate, the right to live here, the right to exist, and the right to be healthy. That is what they truly felt.**

Riki Jakaria, Coordinator of Inti Muda West Java

# What We Have Achieved



“ There are so many achievements to share!

## **Ten new PrEP services locations for young trans sex workers**

Strong collaboration between Inti Muda East Kalimantan and the Samarinda City Health Office has led to ten new PrEP service locations for young transgender sex workers. These sites expand access to youth friendly, inclusive services across the city. It shows how community-led advocacy has transformed local healthcare systems. This incremental progress has led to reduced stigma and improved services for transgender sex workers.

## **Policy change on HIV testing under 18**

We have brought policy change on HIV testing. There is now a law that allows HIV testing for youth under 18 without parental consent, through a representative or outreach worker. But as it's not evenly implemented across regions, we've encouraged the Ministry of Health to ensure all service providers implement it properly. This is now happening as a direct result of Healthy Cities with Pride's advocacy.

### Community-led case documentation improved health services

In Bandung, the implementing partner IM Rangers worked with community outreach workers to document cases of discomfort, discrimination, and other barriers young key populations face when accessing health services. By sharing these documented cases with health facilities, they helped them identify service gaps and make their care more inclusive, responsive, and youth friendly. Health facilities reported that this initiative directly supported them in improving their services.

### Safe shelters with access to counselling and leadership training

Some young people need emergency housing when they get kicked out by their family or lose their job. We have safe shelters in Riau and Bandung, which provide a space for young people living with HIV and young key populations, and who are given access to counselling and leadership training. They feel grateful and empowered by this initiative. It has really helped people in crisis when they don't know where to go.



### Support through door-to-door services

The transgender and sex worker community felt scared to go to health services because of discrimination, and they don't always have money or transport to reach the clinics. Now, they can get support through our door-to-door services in Samarinda where we visit homes and hotspots. This way they can access PrEP, condoms, and also get tested.





### Bella's personal change

“ I was 21 when Aidsfonds first approached me, and I was really nervous. But they really trusted me as a leader and us as a youth-led organisation. That really meant a lot. I learned a lot from this project, especially collaborating with communities. It has become my life. It's kind of emotional for me because this project really developed me and enabled me to help other young people like me who have the same struggles.”



### Riki's personal change

“ Indonesia Healthy Cities with Pride gave me a mindset for solving problems, and that carried over into my family life and friendships... I can spark ideas and inspiration that have an impact.”

Riki Jakaria, Coordinator of Inti Muda West Java

# A Call to Action from Young LGBTIQ+ People

**If I am trusted to continue this project, I want to build wider collaborations with strategic partners and involve more young key populations in advocacy so the movement can grow even stronger.**

Alvin, Inti Muda East Kalimantan



**“Trust and flexibility are vital for community ownership**

Flexibility creates trust because it shows the community that we're not forcing our way. The community starts trusting us because they see that their input actually changes decisions, their realities are acknowledged, and we're not here to control them. One approach won't work for all situations. With flexibility communities feel acknowledged and trust grows, then engagement becomes stronger and more genuine.

If you as a donor are afraid of accountability, and how to build trust, then maybe you need to ask yourself why you are not trusting young people. If it's because of lack of capacity, then give us that capacity. If it's lack of education, then give us that education. ▶



“ **Build accountability through community connection**

Many of you agree with the need for communities to lead change but you also want accountability. Effective accountability is not about control, it's about connection. When you build that, transparency comes naturally.

Now is the time to invest in communities because as young people, LGBTIQ+ and other communities, we know what's best for us. You will unlock the solutions that no "expert" can get.

Imagine if you believe in us and support the next generation. We've proven through Healthy Cities with Pride that we're ready to lead.

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