



From a whisper to a ROAR!

As International Youth Day approaches (12 August), Youth Voices Count calls for a new generation of gay and transgender activists to come forward, to raise our voices from a whisper to a ROAR!



As other parts of the world sees incredible progress on the rights of gay and transgender people – most notably marriage equality in the USA and much of Europe – across Asia and the Pacific, gay men and transgender people continue to face discrimination and violence. It is illegal for two men to have consensual sex in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the Aceh Province and South Sumatra parts of Indonesia, as well as many of the Pacific Islands, including Samoa and Tonga. And even where homosexual acts are not criminalised, higher age of consent limits gay and transgender youth's access to vital health services and puts them at greater risk of HIV.

Legal recognition of transgender people is gaining across the region but often with significant restrictions or conditions, such as where legal gender can only be changed after sex-reassignment surgery, regardless of their overall appearance or how they may identify.

Social stigma remains high and embedded in culture and religion. Discrimination continues to limit gay and transgender people's opportunities in many vital areas of their lives, including work and education.

New video launch

In the new video 'From a whisper to a ROAR!', activists from Youth Voices Count recognise that we can't do it alone – that we need a new generation of activists to come forward, to further advocate for the rights of gay and transgender people across Asia and the Pacific, to raise our voices from a



whisper to a ROAR! They can do this by joining Youth Voices Count – membership is free and YVC will then let them know about any future opportunities to get involved.

“Considering half the world’s population is in Asia-Pacific, it’s a global travesty that tens of millions of gay and transgender people still live in fear.” Says Niluka Perera, Project Officer at Youth Voices Count “But change will only come from within and we need activists in every country, city, town and community.”

These 16 activists came together as part of Youth Voices Count’s IGNITE! Mentoring program where young gay and transgender activists were matched with more experienced activists in their countries. Pairs from India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam took part in the inaugural 5 day program, 15-19 June 2015, with topics covered including human rights, gender and sexuality, effective interventions, media and communications and programme development. This and other opportunities are regularly available to YVC members.

Watch the video on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#), follow #YVCROAR and [become a member](#) of Youth Voices Count. YouTube video includes option for subtitles.



“Being gay in Asia and the Pacific is a difficult thing to face.”
Qui, Viet Nam

“I know there’s a need for us to speak up for our rights as young gays and transgender.”
Brian, Philippines

“I’ve seen so many of my friends, my relatives, and I mean my community relatives, pass away due to HIV over the last 15 years. The only thing that drives me is I don’t want to lose more people.”
Ernest, India



“I would advise the young gay and transgender people in the region to raise their voices. I would advise them not to stop raising their voices.”

Rani, Pakistan

About Youth Voices Count

Youth Voices Count (YVC) is a youth initiative led by young men who have sex with men and transgender women. We bring together the most vibrant, diverse, and young community leaders in Asia and the Pacific, supported by Hivos and APCOM.

Find out more about Youth Voices Count at www.youthvoicescount.org and on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Suggested tweets

- .@YVC_Official calls for a new generation of activists to raise our voices from a whisper to a ROAR! <https://youtu.be/R0i-ppYAGJo> #YVCROAR
- 12 Aug is Intl #Youth Day. New video calls for young gay & transgender activists to come forward <https://youtu.be/R0i-ppYAGJo> #YVCROAR
- Across #AsiaPac, gay & transgender people continue to face discrimination & violence. Watch YVC's new video <https://youtu.be/R0i-ppYAGJo> #YVCROAR
- Many countries in #AsiaPac still criminalise same-sex sexual activity. We need a new generation of activists <https://youtu.be/R0i-ppYAGJo> #YVCROAR
- Young people are not a box to be ticked but a voice to be heard. We need a new generation of activists <https://youtu.be/R0i-ppYAGJo> #YVCROAR

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