

Lessons from the Archive: Queer Indonesia Archive and collecting, preserving and exhibiting queer HIV histories within Indonesia

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Background/Purpose:

In Indonesia the lived experiences and narratives of queer people are being challenged, erased, and delegitimized in the national collective memory. For the last two years the Queer Indonesia Archive (QIA) - a volunteer run, Indonesia based digital archiving project - has been building a digital collection reflecting the histories of queer communities. QIA utilises a process of community consultation, material collection and exhibition as it's community archive process. Through this method the archive has built an accessible collection of digital objects to promote cross generational engagement, build community capacity and ensure a community collective memory of the HIV response.

Approach:

In 2020, QIA began to build a repository of community materials reflecting the response to HIV within Indonesia. 2,087 unique materials have now been digitised and are accessible through the QIA website. Materials were then curated into a digital exhibition - 'AIDS & Queers in Indonesia'. The online exhibition has seen over 4000 viewers and generated significant media interest. Several events were also held inviting HIV workers from multiple generations to respond to archival materials.

Outcomes/Impact:

With over 40 years of history of community responses to the HIV epidemic, it is now more important than ever to preserve community histories. Digital technologies now allow for low-cost preservation of historical materials whilst also enabling greater accessibility and engagement with the histories that these materials speak to. Through community led curatorship, archival collections promote cross generational HIV knowledge and build community capacity.

Innovation and Significance:

Community archives, especially in the Asian region are few and the material history of the response to HIV in the region is at risk at being lost if steps are not taken to ensure preservation. This project highlights the accessibility and benefits to building community archival collections and their significance in building sustainable HIV responses.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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