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## Problems and challenges in battle against AIDS/HIV

### Current problems:

- » Limited civil society participation in the fight against AIDS/HIV;
- » Capacity building on the social science of HIV is conducted case by case and on an ad hoc basis instead of using a nationwide approach;
- » Lack of research on the effects of HIV intervention due to lack of understanding of high-risk groups, thus resulting in discord between what is done and what should be done;
- » Inability to evaluate the impact of HIV interventions due to limited relevant technical expertise such as proper baseline data, monitoring and evaluation framework;
- » Recruitment of external consultants and experts is costly;
- » Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission programme which targets pregnant women is based on ARV (antiretroviral) prophylaxis for the child and coverage appears to exclude most-at-risk populations and their partners; and
- » The government has entrusted HIV prevention programmes involving sex workers solely to the NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs).

### Major challenges and remedial actions:

- » Rise in sexual transmission, where the young people are either lacking in knowledge of sexual reproductive health or not practising what is known.
- » Involvement in policy and decision-making; MAC is currently the representative of civil society organisations working on HIV and AIDS.
- » More research and studies needed to demonstrate how and why AIDS/HIV affect women differently, and social science research necessary to understand the decisions and choices regarding vulnerabilities and risks;
- » Legislation barriers – laws, regulations and policies that present obstacles to effective HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for vulnerable sub-populations such as women, young people, sex workers, prison inmates and migrants, among others.

**Source:** *The Battle Against HIV/AIDS: Malaysia's Efforts in the Control and Prevention of the Rising Epidemic* by USM students C.K. Tan, J.J. Lee and Y.C. Tham