

# (OMMUNITY-LED ORGANIZATIONS

are led by the people who they serve and are primarily accountable to them. In the AIDS response, this includes organizations by and for people living with HIV or tuberculosis and organizations by and for people affected by HIV, including gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers, transgender people, women and young people.

#### World AIDS Day 2019

# **COMMUNITIES** make the difference

Communities make an invaluable contribution to the AIDS response. Communities of people living with HIV, of key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, sex workers, prisoners, transgender people and prisoners—and of women and young people lead and support the delivery of HIV services, defend human rights, support their peers. Communities are the lifeblood of an effective AIDS response and an important pillar of support.

Communities of people living with and affected by HIV, along with peer educators, counsellors, community health workers, door-to-door service providers, civil society organizations and grass-roots activists, are leading and campaigning to ensure that the AIDS response remains relevant. They are fighting to keep people at the centre of decision-making and programme implementation and help to ensure that no one is left behind.

Communities are making the difference and are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but far too often are lacking the resources and recognition they deserve and need.

To recognize the role played by communities and community-led organizations, UNAIDS and its partners are highlighting the role of communities this World AIDS Day.

At a time when reduced funding is putting the sustainability of HIV services in jeopardy, community activism is vital. A greater mobilization of communities is urgently needed and the barriers that stop communities from delivering services need to be overcome.

Today more than ever communities are needed to ensure that HIV remains on the political agenda, that human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, and that decision-makers and implementers are held accountable.



# (OMMUNITIES NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Communities are delivering incredibly important services and support to contribute to the response to HIV. Providing access to treatment, ensuring that confidential HIV testing services are available, making sure that people have the prevention services they need, community organizations are often the sole means of support in some of the most hostile environments.

Whether helping sex workers access condoms, gay men receive pre-exposure prophylaxis or people who inject drugs take HIV tests safely and confidentially, life-saving services are often only available from peers, joining together to help themselves and the wider community keep HIV-free or stay healthy while living with HIV.

But communities need support financial, legal and political support—to carry on and scale up the vital work they do to keep people safe.

#### COUNTRIES SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

As funders and enablers, governments are hugely important for investing in and creating the right enabling environment for communities to work in. Governments are urged to:

#### INVEST IN COMMUNITIES

With United Nations Member States committing to ensure that at least 30% of all service delivery is led by communities by 2030, governments need to invest now in order to meet their pledges. Currently, communities are not being funded adequately, with international resources for community-led organizations shrinking and domestic funding mechanisms often inadequate.



**PAY VOLUNTEERS** Ensuing that people who work as community workers are compensated is a valuable investment, helping to keep volunteers engaged and continuing with their valuable work.

#### 🄈 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

From the highest levels of government, politicians must lead efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with and affected by HIV. Through leading by example, political leaders should engage communities and demonstrate to the public the value of their contribution. And politicians should work with the leaders selected by the communities themselves as their representatives, rather than selecting representatives without meaningfully and transparently consulting with the communities in question.



people living with and affected by HIV in health decision-making bodies—for example for HIV planning, budgeting and implementation and universal health coverage—countries can include communities in decision-making. Helping to make decisions on the issues that affect them, communities are better able to reflect the real needs of the people they represent, lead programmes and ensure that the call of "Nothing about us without us" is heard.

**REMOVE BAD LAWS** Communities need to be able to communicate unhindered, to be vocal advocates and contribute to shaping public policy. In many countries, regulations still stop community-led organizations of people living with or affected by HIV, such as gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and transgender people, registering and receiving funding or providing services legally. Governments must actively remove laws that hinder the rights of organizations of people living with or affected by HIV.

#### 6 MAKE COMMUNITY DATA COUNT

Communities are often best placed to report on the realities of service delivery and use. Community-led monitoring of the delivery of health programmes, services and systems, and ensuring that communitygenerated data are included in national data systems and are used in planning and implementation, makes community data count.



#### 7 PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES

From reporting discrimination to bringing attention to stock-outs and the quality of service delivery, communities can ensure that resources are utilized properly and that people have timely access to quality health and social services.

#### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES



By using their political influence and financial resources, international partners and civil society organizations can support communities in many ways. They can:

#### GIVE COMMUNITIES A VOICE

Partners and civil society organizations can organize parliamentary briefings, facilitate the representation of communities in meetings and increase the profile of communities through organizing visits of high-level officials to community sites and programmes.



Partners and civil society organizations can support the



engagement of communities by ensuring that communities are represented in planning, decisionmaking and implementation bodies, for example by vacating their seats in favour of representation by communities.

#### **3** FUND COMMUNITY-LED WORK

Communities need funding. Internationally supported development projects and programmes must make provision for the funding of community-led organizations. Investments must also be made for enabling communities to monitor, evaluate and generate community-led data for action.

#### PUSH FOR POLICY REFORM

Civil society organizations and partners should push for policy reforms and changes in laws and regulations that make it easy for community-led organizations to exist and operate.

#### 5 STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES

Communities need support in strengthening their capacity in order to function as effective advocates and implementors.

6 RECOGNIZE COMMUNITY WORK Community workers and community-led work must be

community-led work must be supported, and their work recognized.



# SHOW YOU CARE FOR COMMUNITIES ON WORLD AIDS DAY

To show your support for communities on World AIDS Day:



### SHOW SOLIDARITY

Attend a World AIDS Day event led by your community-led organization or networks of people living with or affected by HIV, such as gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, sex workers, prisoners and/or transgender people.



### LEARN

Find out about your local community, learn from them and show your support.



### DONATE

Organize a fundraiser for World AIDS Day, donate time, money or goods such as books or food to support a community-led network of people living with or affected by HIV near you.



### TELL YOUR STORY

Write a letter or short opinion piece for your local newspaper on how community organizations are transforming societies. Call your local radio station and tell your story of community work.



### BE (OVNTED

If you belong to an organized community-led network providing HIV and other health and social services locally, send a short description of your work to communications@unaids.org so that others can find and support your work.



### SPREAD THE WORD

Write to your local and national leaders asking them to commit to supporting community organizations for the AIDS response.



### A(KNOWLEDGE LO(AL HEROES

Recognize community work publicly with your peers and, for example, in social media.



### (ONNECT

If you are living with or affected by HIV, create or join a local network.



### BE THERE FOR OTHERS

Support other community members with your capacity to love and show compassion.



### (OMMEMORATE WORLD AIDS DAY

Wear a red ribbon and support your community.

### SPREAD THE WORD: WHY COMMUNITIES MATTER

### I. (OMMUNITIES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

All over the world, organizations led by people living with or affected by HIV are defending human rights and delivering HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for their peers.

#### Community-led organizations helped to ensure that more than 23 million people accessed HIV treatment in 2018.

- Communities are helping people to claim their rights and access stigma-free health and social services.
- Communities deliver for and with people, often taking HIV and health services directly to marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Networks of people living with and affected by HIV offer social protection, safety, solidarity and support to one another in every part of the world.

### Communities are the best way to reach people living with and affected by HIV.

- Communities have the trust of the people they serve, and community-led organizations are the most effective way of reaching people living with HIV and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners.
- Community-led organizations make a difference because they treat their peers with respect and dignity.
- Communities allow for diversity of service delivery and well-defined roles for individuals to participate in their communities' development.

#### Communities are acting to change laws that discriminate.

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, young people and women are demanding their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Communities are standing up for the rights of people living with HIV and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners—to access HIV and tuberculosis health services and to be fully included in universal health coverage.
- Communities are campaigning to change laws that discriminate. They have successfully campaigned to decriminalize HIV transmission, exposure and non-disclosure, same-sex sexual relationships, sex work, drug use and gender non-conformity in many countries worldwide, including through strategic litigation.

### 2. (OMMUNITIES NEED RESOURCES AND MUST BE RECOGNIZED

Communities of people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners need sustainable funding and recognition of their work.

## Nothing about us without us. Communities are demanding to lead the programmes that are for them.<sup>1</sup>

• When communities participate in the HIV response as equal partners, they are included in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes, policies and interventions that affect their health.



- Community engagement and leadership can increase efficiencies and maximize impact.
- Investing in communities is value for money.

#### Communities are not being funded adequately. International resources for community-led organizations are shrinking and domestic funding mechanisms are often inadequate.

• Countries and donors should commit to supporting community-led organizations. In the 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS, Member States committed to:

Ensure that at least 30% of all service delivery is community-led by 2030.

Ensure that at least 6% of HIV resources are allocated for social enabling activities, including advocacy, community and political mobilization, community-led monitoring, public communication and outreach programmes for rapid HIV tests and diagnosis, as well as for human rights programmes such as law and policy reform and stigma and discrimination reduction.

- Social contracting<sup>2</sup> mechanisms to fund communities are needed everywhere.
- Community organizations that lead advocacy efforts are critical for change and must be funded.



#### Community-led organizations need legal status and recognition for their work.

- Harmful regulations against registration and functioning of community-led organizations must be lifted wherever they exist.
- Laws should protect the rights of community-led advocacy organizations of people living with HIV and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners—to organize, register and receive funds from donors, without criminalization or undue surveillance and control.

• The role of community-led groups in the health system must be formally recognized so that they can receive funding and work as equal partners.

#### 3. (OMMUNITIES ARE KEY TO ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In a world of growing inequalities, fragility and discrimination, communities are ensuring that no one is left behind. Whether it is to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 (gender equality), Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) or Sustainable Development Goal 10 (reduced inequalities), the role of community-led organizations is more important than ever.

#### Communities are an essential part of a modern health system.

- Communities need to be recognized as designers, planners, decision-makers, key partners, providers and beneficiaries of universal health coverage.
- In every part of the world, community-led organizations of people living with HIV and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners—play a unique role in providing services for the people who need them the most.
- Community-level accountability and oversight mechanisms help realize the right of people to health and ensure that breaches of rights are remedied.

#### Communities are torchbearers of human rights.

- Communities can detect, alert and prevent a human rights crisis.
- Communities are at the forefront of responding to human rights abuses globally.
- Communities are the watchdogs of the AIDS response.

### Community-led organizations innovate to reach the people left behind.

- Strong communities are the key to building resilience to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies.
- Communities are using technology and online platforms to serve the needs of the people most in need.
- Community-led organizations are leading the way and innovating to better respond to the needs of the people left behind.

#### Notes

- 1. See definition of community-led organizations at https://www.unaids.org/en/ resources/documents/2019/what-is-a-community-led-organization.
- Social contracting is a legal mechanism whereby a country can commission communities or civil society organizations to deliver certain health services, for example HIV testing and counselling or support for treatment adherence. Countries do not always have these legal mechanisms in place to support community service delivery.

# UNAIDS AND COMMUNITIES

Meaningful partnerships with communities are at the centre of UNAIDS' work. The United Nations General Assembly recognizes the role of communities, including in the 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS, through commitments to:

• Ensuring that at least 30% of all service delivery is community-led by 2030.

• Ensuring that at least 6% of HIV resources are allocated for social enabling activities, including advocacy, community and political mobilization, community-led monitoring, public communication and outreach programmes for rapid HIV tests and diagnosis, as well as for human rights programmes such as law and policy reform and stigma and discrimination reduction.

UNAIDS engages with communities to improve policies and programmes. It supports civil society to be partners of national AIDS responses and to hold governments to account and in providing services to people living with and affected by HIV on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

UNAIDS engages with civil society, especially people living with HIV, and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, transgender people and prisoners—and women's groups, in advocacy to promote and protect human rights and gender equality.

UNAIDS is inspired and guided by the passion and experience of communities to generate a new, integrated movement that situates the AIDS response within the broader context of health, development, human rights and gender equality.

# (OMMUNITY-LED RESPONSES MATTER

because it is communities who face adversities and know how to overcome them. People want to be part of the change. And when they lead the change, it is more effective and sustainable.

> Rico Gustav, Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)



20 Avenue Appia 1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland

+41 22 791 3666

unaids.org

