

PRESS RELEASE

Networks of people living with HIV plug the gap in essential services as weak health systems struggle to cope with COVID-19

As health systems the world over are buckling under the pressure of COVID-19, volunteers and activists from the HIV movement have stepped in to ensure that essential services continue. A survey by GNP+, ICW and Y+ Global has found that networks of people living with HIV are using innovative ways to ensure their peers and their communities continue to have access to the critical services that they need.

The results of the survey, released today in our report *Living with HIV in the time of COVID-19*, show how governments are focusing their efforts on COVID-19 at the expense of other essential services and leaving marginalised people more vulnerable than ever. Services including HIV testing and prevention, sexual and reproductive health services and rights, harm reduction and psycho-social support have all been cut back leading to a real risk that the gains made over recent years to reduce new HIV infections and increase access to treatment will be erased.

Networks of people living with HIV with four decades of experience of responding to a global pandemic are using their organising skills to respond to the new challenges of COVID-19. They are adapting their programmes to provide online counselling and using social media to provide accurate information to their communities. Staff and volunteers have sewn and donned masks and found ways to travel through lockdown to deliver ARVs, food packages and hygiene supplies directly to the homes of people in need. Many are working with law enforcers and policy makers to address gender-based violence, stigma and human rights violations.

Now more than ever, the world needs the movement of people living with HIV and the creativity, expertise and passion that it brings. We call on governments, donors and UN agencies to give their political and financial support to networks and communities of people living with HIV to ensure the health and wellbeing of all people living with HIV in the time of COVID-19 and beyond.

Notes to editors

The report *Living with HIV in the time of COVID-19* can be found [here](#).

59 networks of people living with HIV and community organisations from 37 countries took part in the survey throughout April and May 2020 and shared the challenges they are facing and the strategies they have put in place to support their communities.

For more information, please contact

GNP+ is the Global Network of People Living with HIV (www.gnpplus.net)

ICW is the International Community of Women Living with HIV (www.wlhiv.org)

Y+ Global is the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (www.yplusnetwork.org)



GLOBAL NETWORK OF
YOUNG PEOPLE
LIVING WITH HIV