KEY MESSAGES:

WHY COMMUNITIES MATTER

1. (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 for 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. COMMUNITIES 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.

 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.

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 contracting² mechanisms to fund communities are needed everywhere.
- Community organizations that lead advocacy efforts are critical for change and must be funded.



- 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:

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. COMMUNITIES 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

- See definition of community-led organizations at https://www.unaids.org/en/ resources/documents/2019/what-is-a-community-led-organization.
- 2. 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.