

Left Out: The HIV Community and Societal Enablers in the HIV Response



**A Report by the NGO Representative
49th UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board Meeting
December 2021**

The HIV epidemic and 2030 goals

- The HIV epidemic is currently *not* on track to end by 2030. Existing HIV biomedical interventions are essential but inadequate.
- This report focuses on societal enablers which improve the HIV response and are endorsed by the Global AIDS Strategy and the 2021 Political Declaration (which called for US\$3.1 billion for societal enablers by 2025)
- There is an urgent need to scale up societal enablers to accelerate progress to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat



Role of Societal Enablers



- Punitive laws and policies, stigma and discrimination, gender inequality, and violence have an adverse impact on vulnerable communities
- HIV services should reach people who need it the most: People living with HIV, gay & bisexual men, people who use drugs, sex workers, transgender people, people in prison settings, and vulnerable groups such as women & girls, adolescents & young people, and migrants
- Investments in societal enablers are crucial, especially when HIV funding reductions are being compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

Crucial Societal Enablers

The four main societal enablers that this report focuses on are:

- Education
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Laws and policies



“Societal enablers help key populations gain autonomy and make better decisions. It allows these marginalized groups to get more protection from violence and stigma.” - Cecilia Chung, Transgender Law Center, USA

“Societal enablers are essential for key populations and other vulnerable groups to be able to live full and productive lives.” - Tim Sladden, Technical Advisor, UNFPA

Stigma & Discrimination and Scaling Up Societal Enablers

- Stigma and discrimination create hostile and stressful environments that discourage communities from seeking essential HIV & health services
- Without societal enablers, communities most impacted by stigma, discrimination, and HIV will remain invisible and unable to access services
- Community-led societal enablers urgently need to be brought to scale in order to achieve optimal impact



Community-Led Interventions



- Communities know what HIV services are best for them & communities are the most effective advocates for their needs
- The report showcases community-led efforts on societal enablers that contribute to an effective HIV response
- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how innovation by communities has preserved and expanded access to HIV services
- Member States should increase investments in societal enablers and support community-led organizations



Challenges

- Many community leaders have identified the lack of adequate and/or consistent funding as a major barrier to their ability to work on societal enablers.
- Structural barriers in countries include restrictions on community organizing & barriers to registering organizations & seeking funding
- These can prevent communities from articulating our needs in and beyond clinical settings



Joint Programme Roles

- Use global legitimacy and convening power to lead collaborative processes, create rights-based norms on societal enablers, engage with community-led organizations, and to gather data with communities
- Support countries in integrating indicators for societal enablers into national M&E systems, support community-led monitoring, and ensure programmes on societal enablers are delivered by communities



“For transgender people, HIV services must be integrated as part of other essential health service and provided by trans-competent healthcare workers.”

JEERANUCH RUEANNAK,
Tangerine Clinic, IHRI (Thailand)



High-Level Meeting on AIDS
END INEQUALITIES. END AIDS.



Recommendations

- Intensify advocacy for the removal of harmful laws and policies and actions to ensure unimpeded access to education, employment and healthcare opportunities for people living with HIV, key populations and other vulnerable groups.
- Eliminate stigma, prejudice, discrimination, abuse and violence against people living with HIV, key populations, and other vulnerable groups to ensure that everyone can access HIV prevention, testing and treatment services
- Use data more rigorously and strategically to guide scale-up of societal enablers.
- Increase and sustain investment and funding for community-led responses on societal enablers and service delivery.

Thank you!



NGO Delegation
TO THE **UNAIDS PCB**

*Photos of Tangerine Clinic sourced from their Facebook page with permission.