



# ROBERT CARR FUND

for civil society  
networks

## DELIVERING RESULTS

Civil Society's Impact  
in the Global HIV  
Response and Beyond



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Communities deliver. People living with HIV and those most affected by it often know what works best and how to provide it. Investing in communities is a smart, responsible and effective strategy in responding not only to HIV, but to a host of broader health and human rights challenges, as well.

The opportunities to make a difference through communities are many. **In HIV alone, communities are:**

- Implementing successful prevention strategies that have decreased HIV transmission rates
- Increasing use of HIV testing and improving linkage to care
- Increasing access to treatment and improving treatment adherence
- Ensuring high-quality service delivery
- Decreasing stigma and discrimination and protecting human rights
- Mobilizing new and increased local resources

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## UNDER-SERVED POPULATIONS AT THE HEART OF HIV COMMUNITY NETWORKS

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The Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund supports networks representing 'inadequately served populations' (ISPs) in the HIV response.

ISPs include people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM), people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and transgender people. In some localities, ISPs also include women and girls, youth, migrants and people living in rural areas.

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HIV-related development targets cannot be met without the participation and leadership of civil society. The success of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), relies on support to communities to continue and expand their work.

## The Robert Carr Fund: Strategic and proven funding mechanism to strengthen civil society networks

The Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund (RCNF) is the primary mechanism providing funding to HIV civil society global and regional networks supporting inadequately served populations (ISPs) – vulnerable populations that face a higher HIV risk, mortality and morbidity, yet have less access to information and services.

As the voice of linked and under-served communities everywhere, **these networks are crucial to:**

- Scale up HIV prevention, treatment and support services.
- Recognize and protect human rights.
- Hold governments and other partners accountable for resource investments.

**The RCNF can best serve the needs of affected communities because of the direct role of those communities in establishing and leading the fund.**

To fulfill their crucial role, networks at all levels are needed to build organizational and institutional capacity. The RCNF is one of the few sources of core funding to strengthen them. The RCNF offers a proven and strategic approach to reaching and serving ISPs, and their ability to influence and lead the HIV response in a wide range of contexts.

Communities most vulnerable to HIV are, of course, highly vulnerable in many other areas. The RCNF's benefits extend beyond HIV in that the supported networks also focus on other health priorities (such as tuberculosis and hepatitis C) and on reforming legal, social, economic and political environments that harm and hinder them. **Investing in communities through the Fund has a wide-ranging impact on many of the world's leading development challenges.**

## Communities in action

Activities supported by the RCNF underscore the key role of communities in improving and driving HIV health and human rights responses. Below are examples of what has been achieved by networks through RCNF support.

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### STRENGTHENING NETWORKS' CAPACITY

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- Youth LEAD is a regional network led by and serving young members of key populations in the Asia Pacific region. With RCNF support, Youth LEAD hired staff, increased the number of its national focal points, implemented an evaluation system, and a communications plan, and mobilized additional resources. As a result, Youth LEAD now plays a stronger leadership role across the region. It co-chaired the Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations and is able to advocate more strategically to remove legal barriers that harm people living with and at risk for HIV.
- The Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) used RCNF resources to implement a communications strategy; recruit regional policy and communications officers; establish Regional Advisory Groups to identify good practice in sex worker-led approaches; facilitate regular communication between the Global Secretariat and regional networks in Asia Pacific, Europe and the Caribbean; develop briefing papers on key issues for sex workers; and improve its website.

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### SERVICE DELIVERY AND ADVOCACY

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- An RCNF grant enabled the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) to expand its HIV Leadership Through Accountability programme. It supported 10 country partners to measure and address HIV-related stigma, restrictive laws and policies, human rights violations, the greater involvement of people living with HIV (GIPA) and the sexual and reproductive health rights of PLHIV. Findings from this research supported advocacy leading to policy change to reduce stigma and discrimination.
- RCNF resources supported the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) to advocate to improve policies under the Global Fund's New Funding Model to better serve people who use drugs. This effort has helped increase and sustain Global Fund support for services for people who use drugs in as wide a range of countries as possible.

“In just two years, advocacy conducted by networks funded by the RCNF has contributed to shifts in policies and increased focus of programmes on inadequately served populations in many countries in the world. Networks vital to the AIDS movement have been supported through core funding. This is the way to go to make sure that no one will be left behind.”

– Michel Kazatchkine, Chair of the International Steering Committee of the RCNF

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## HUMAN RIGHTS

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- The AIDS & Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) is a regional partnership of over 80 NGOs working together promoting a human rights-based response to HIV and TB in the East and Southern Africa region. ARASA used RCNF resources for its ‘watchdog’ activities to protect the fundamental rights of PLHIV and key populations in the region, including support for the Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) in its successful High Court challenge to overturn the government’s policy of refusing to provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) to HIV-positive foreign prisoners.
- The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), a global network promoting rational and effective drug policy, used RCNF support to help organize a Global Day of Action that coincided with the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. (That day is used by governments to celebrate repressive drug laws or even publicly execute drug offenders.) The Day of Action featured grassroots activism in 41 cities around the world, thereby drawing attention to and providing a show of solidarity for the rights of people who use drugs.

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## ACCOUNTABILITY

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- The East Europe & Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (PLWH) (ECUO) used RCNF resources to support its goal of ensuring HIV treatment access for all who need it in the region by 2020. ECUO advocated to safeguard HIV treatment funding in state budgets, organizing and supporting 147 advocates in seven countries.

# Voices from the ground: the influence of RCNF-supported initiatives

“For the first time, the Penal Code now includes language on sexual diversity, and there are strong penalties against people who engage in crimes of discrimination. Through Diverse Action (an RCNF-supported programme), advocacy was implemented for a special HIV/AIDS law and changes were made to terminology so that MSM were included under ‘vulnerable populations’ in the Penal Code, following the recommendations of a periodic human rights examination.”

– From Honduras

“This training was the most important lesson for me during the last five years and taught me to fight for my rights as a woman living with HIV. Thank you...for giving me a voice, and for recognizing me and my activities as important to the overall situation of well-being of women in Serbia.”

– From Serbia

“As a person who was totally against gays and lesbians in leadership of the church, the workshop... not only helped me to accept gays, lesbians and people living with HIV, but also made me want to help create awareness and support.”

– From South Africa



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