

About ICASO

ICASO is a Canadian organization that acts as a global policy voice on HIV issues that impact diverse communities around the world. We understand that technology alone will not solve the AIDS epidemic, but that people and communities will continue to be central to this fight, particularly as we combat stigma, discrimination, and legal barriers to health and rights. Further, we believe that communities are best equipped to articulate their own needs, priorities, and solutions. Thus our advocacy work champions the leadership of civil society and key populations in the effort to end AIDS. We do this through collaborative partnerships with people and organizations in all regions and various sectors, always with a view to serving and empowering communities.

Our **vision** is an end to the AIDS epidemic through universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support within a human rights framework.

Our **mission** is to mobilize and support diverse communities for an effective response to end the AIDS pandemic.



Community leadership and
ADVOCACY
for a *comprehensive*
HIV response

Advocacy for Accountability – Building Blocks – Convene and Connect

ICASO's work, while varied and responsive to circumstances, generally falls into three categories, with frequent overlap:

- **Advocacy for Accountability.** ICASO collects input, articulates priorities, and amplifies community voices on a range of issues. We also provide guidance for communities on advocacy opportunities and strategies.
- **Building Blocks.** In addition to conducting our own analysis of policies, programs, and processes, ICASO works with civil society partners at the global, regional, and country level to assess progress and develop recommendations. Also central to our work is the provision of technical and political support to regional and local organizations to strengthen their own

capacity to collect data, monitor policies and programs, and advocate on their own behalf.

- **Convene and Connect.** ICASO has historically been recognized for its role as an 'honest broker' that brings together diverse stakeholders to take action around common objectives. We aim to create space for civil society, key populations networks, and other community actors to engage, skill-share, and collaborate.

Paramount to our approach is the principle of greater involvement and meaningful engagement of people living with HIV. As described by UNAIDS, "It is a principle that aims to realize the rights and responsibilities of people living with HIV, including their right to self-determination and participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives." We believe it enhances the quality and effectiveness of the AIDS response and as such, ICASO endeavors to apply this principle in our work and to advance and sustain the greater involvement of people living with HIV in all aspects of the response.

ICASO is guided by the perspectives of key populations in the HIV epidemic, including people living with HIV, people who use drugs, sex workers, transgender people, men who have sex with men, indigenous people, prisoners, migrants, as well as women and young people. We recognize that these communities must be at the center of the global AIDS response. Because of the marginalization and criminalization faced by key populations, it is vital to support communities to speak out for their human rights and to advocate for policy reform and effective programming at all levels.