



Driving Transformative Change and Community Resilience

THE 2019/2020
ICASO ANNUAL
REPORT

Together We Are

Juntos Somos

Ensemble Nous Sommes

Мы Вместе

About ICASO

The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO), founded in 1990, is guided by the following vision and mission:

ICASO's vision

is an end to the HIV epidemic with strong contributions by communities in all their diversity to achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and to defending and promoting human rights.

ICASO's mission

is to mobilize and support diverse community organizations and networks to create and sustain effective responses to HIV.

ICASO brings community perspectives into all levels of strategic decision-making in the global response to HIV and related health issues, facilitating networking between diverse sectors. ICASO draws upon and takes direction from a worldwide network of community experts, particularly people living with HIV and members of key populations.

As a longtime participant on the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, ICASO provides a vehicle for community priorities to be presented to this influential decision-making body. ICASO also serves as a permanent partner on the Conference Coordinating Committee of the International AIDS Conference. ICASO facilitates diverse community engagement in United Nations General Assembly meetings relating to health and development issues, as well as participating in other global and regional health governance processes.

In addition to advancing community objectives in high-level fora, ICASO collaborates with community-based partners working on local and national initiatives in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. ICASO is well known for bringing together diverse community, academic and technical experts in strategic alliances to develop sustainable community-led solutions. ICASO also helps community-based organizations adapt their work to challenging operational environments and humanitarian crises.

ICASO is governed by an international board of directors whose members reflect gender and regional balance and strong participation by people living with HIV, women and key populations, including sex workers, people who use drugs, youth, indigenous people, and men who have sex with men. ICASO's work is carried out by a small group of core staff based in Toronto, Canada, with support from a team of skilled staff and consultants across the globe.

ICASO facilitates diverse community engagement in United Nations General Assembly meetings relating to health and development issues, as well as participating in other global and regional health governance processes.

* Source: UNAIDS. Global AIDS Update: Seizing the Moment: Tackling Entrenched Inequalities to End Pandemics. 2020. Available at: <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/global-aids-report>.

Message from the Executive Director

HIV funding decrease from 2017 to 2019 | **7%**

The global HIV community's resilience in the face of COVID-19 is extraordinary – but not surprising. This spirit of resilience has been cultivated since the earliest years of the HIV pandemic, especially by the civil society organizations and communities that have demanded an inclusive, human rights-based response to HIV.

Resilient communities are flexible, resourceful and collaborative. These qualities have sustained effective local responses to HIV in many settings worldwide even while the overall global response has faltered in recent years. HIV funding decreased by 7% from 2017 to 2019, and in 2020, UNAIDS announced that the pace of progress was insufficient to meet key HIV prevention and treatment targets.*

While many national governments have allowed HIV to slip down the agenda, civil society has sought to accomplish even more, with fewer resources. In 2019 and 2020, ICASO and its partners found innovative ways to continue advancing community-led responses to HIV in low- and middle-income countries worldwide. We also explored how our expertise in the HIV field could benefit efforts to address other health crises.

Within our networks, we were well-positioned to respond to new challenges such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to support civil society organizations as they adapted to unexpected circumstances. As a permanent member of the committee that plans the International AIDS Conference, ICASO helped turn AIDS 2020 into a successful virtual event for community participants even as COVID-19 was upending global society. This flexibility, always a hallmark of ICASO's work, embodies our readiness to continue meeting other new challenges in our rapidly changing world.

Our inspiration comes from the resilience of our community partners and allies – and also from the many successes that we have achieved together over the years. 2020 saw the close of another strategic planning cycle for ICASO, and we are proud to say that many of our targets for the four-year period were achieved. The formula for our work is simple: we strategically leverage evidence and alliances to achieve the shared advocacy goals that will drive effective community responses to HIV, malaria and other major health threats. We support community partners in using the same process to drive change at national, subnational and local levels.

Throughout 2020, the ICASO, board, staff and key stakeholders participated in the development of our next multi-year Strategy. Despite the uncertainties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we carried out this work with a great sense of purpose. It is clearer than ever that global civil society can make unique contributions to meeting some of the most important challenges of our time, including ending the HIV pandemic. ICASO remains committed to helping the most affected communities leverage their own evidence and knowledge in ways that will speed progress toward more equitable health outcomes.

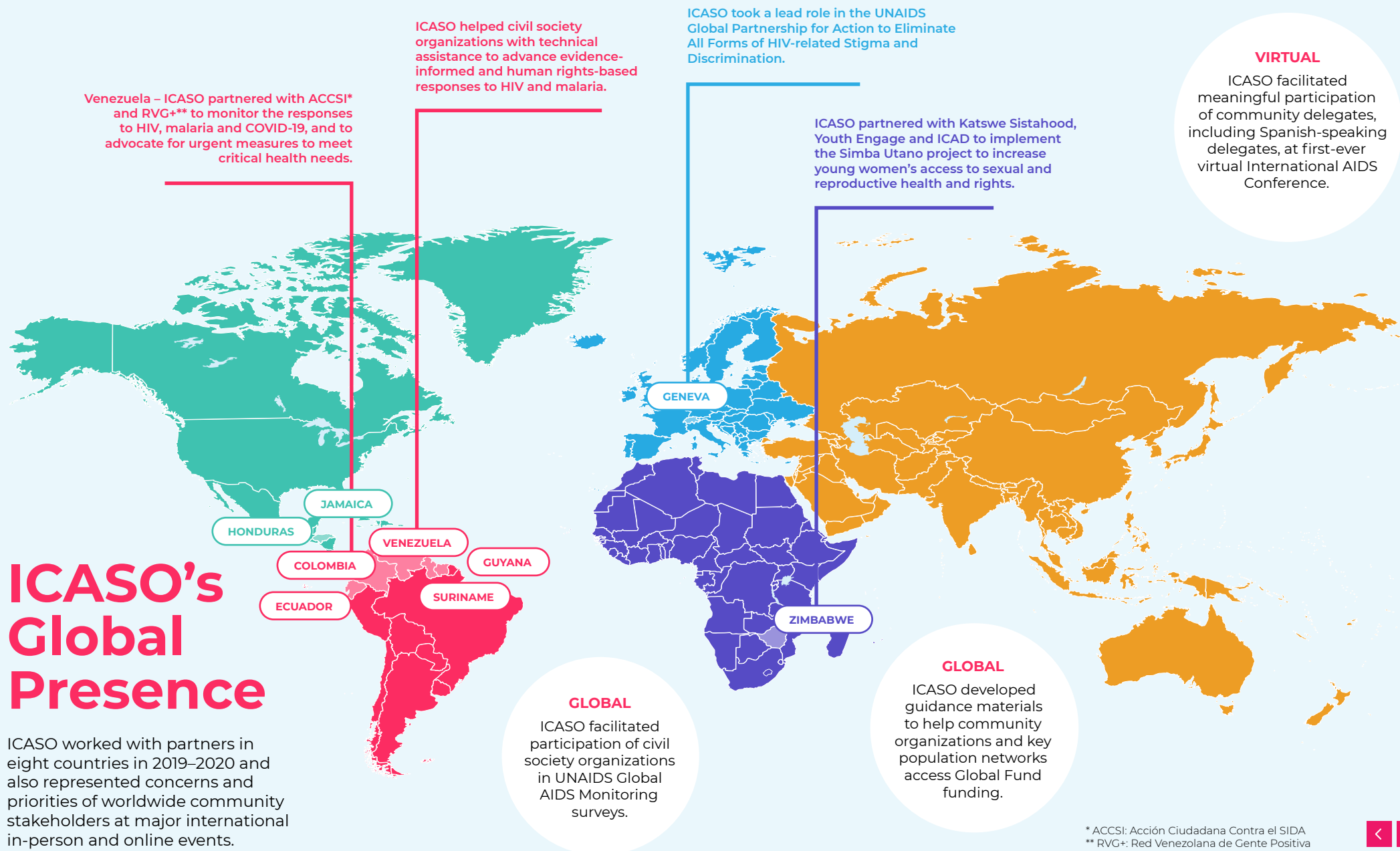


Mary Ann Torres
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

* Source: UNAIDS. Global AIDS Update: Seizing the Moment: Tackling Entrenched Inequalities to End Pandemics. 2020. Available at: <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/global-aids-report>.

ICASO's Global Presence

ICASO worked with partners in eight countries in 2019–2020 and also represented concerns and priorities of worldwide community stakeholders at major international in-person and online events.



* ACCSI: Acción Ciudadana Contra el SIDA
** RVG+: Red Venezolana de Gente Positiva

Venezuela

HOSP. PEDIATRICO
MENCA
DE LEONI
← EMERGENCIA

CASE STUDY IN CHANGE

Evidence-informed Advocacy in Humanitarian Emergency Contexts: Venezuela

40,000

people living with HIV received treatment

SITUATION

The collapse of the Venezuelan economy amid ongoing political instability and widespread human rights violations has resulted in a complex humanitarian crisis. With the health system in ruins, progress against HIV and other diseases has been rapidly reversed. Since 2017, ICASO has supported a network of Venezuelan civil society organizations that are providing services to affected communities. In the process, it has helped local organizations better document health system problems, including widespread antiretroviral stock-outs. ICASO's efforts to raise awareness about this situation have helped to mobilize international support for health services in Venezuela, providing in-country partners with much-needed resources to continue their work.

RESPONSE

Venezuelan partners assisted by ICASO prioritized two objectives in 2019–2020. The first was to monitor the distribution of antiretroviral medicines purchased with emergency funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Monitoring was carried out by people living with HIV under the guidance of two Venezuelan civil society organizations that ICASO assisted in developing rigorous reporting protocols. The second objective was to build on this expertise to strengthen civil society infrastructures for monitoring the response to Venezuela's resurgent malaria epidemic and advocating for better use of unofficial data. Throughout 2019 and 2020, ICASO also advocated in international fora to bring greater attention to the continuing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

RESULTS

ICASO's efforts helped to keep Venezuela's health needs in the international spotlight and to ensure that more than forty thousand people living with HIV received treatment. The project has evolved to include monitoring of the overall environment for the HIV response in Venezuela. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck Venezuela in early 2020, ICASO's Venezuelan partners drew on their technical expertise to quickly begin monitoring the health system response to this new emergency. ICASO is building on these successes to help ensure the sustainability of a Venezuelan HIV response that is based on evidence and human rights principles.

CONCLUSION

As the global HIV response is becoming more integrated into the broader health and development landscape, ICASO's work with its Venezuelan partners demonstrates that HIV civil society has much to contribute to integration as well as to maintaining essential HIV services. Helping communities develop their capacities relating to evidence generation and analysis in their own local contexts is a valuable strategy for enabling communities to more effectively shape health infrastructure, policy decision-making and partnerships.



Zimbabwe

CASE STUDY IN CHANGE

Simba Utano: empowering adolescent girls in Zimbabwe

SITUATION

Zimbabwe's HIV prevalence level of 13% is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. The country has a fragile health system, a struggling economy, and pervasive HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Adolescent girls and young women, who are at high risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, have limited access to information and services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

RESPONSE

Building on its long experience in supporting community responses to HIV, ICASO teamed up with the Canadian Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development to submit a proposal to Global Affairs Canada. After a rigorous process, the two organizations were selected to implement a four-year project with two partners in Zimbabwe: Katswe Sistahood and Youth Engage.

The Simba Utano (Health is Power) project addresses structural barriers to equitable access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services. It seeks to strengthen health and governance systems at the national and subnational levels to support the delivery of high-quality services that are responsive to the needs of adolescent girls and young women. The project also addresses demand-side issues by working in four priority districts to reduce systemic barriers to accessing health services. These barriers include socio-cultural norms and traditional community beliefs that particularly affect adolescent girls, young women, and other vulnerable populations.

ICASO's contributions to the project include technical support on the gender equity strategy and sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, as well as expertise in financial management and reporting. With ICASO's assistance, in-country partners have developed high-quality financial systems, policies and reporting processes.

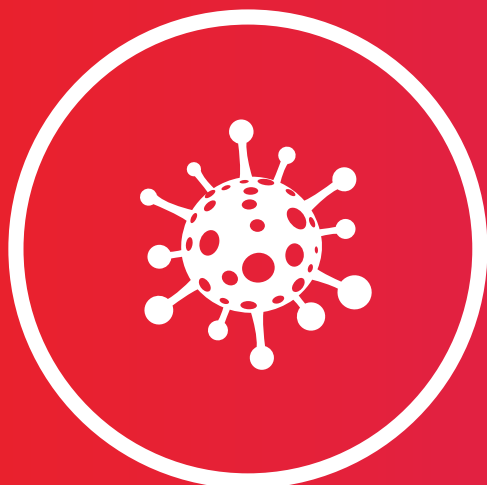
RESULTS

The Zimbabwean partners launched on-the-ground work in four districts in 2020. The robust financial management structure that they had established with ICASO's help facilitated the implementation of project activities and provided the basis for meeting the funder's rigorous reporting requirements.

CONCLUSION

ICASO and its project partners established a successful model for technical support and knowledge transfer to ensure the smooth operation of a complex locally led intervention. ICASO's flexibility and capacity to provide "on-demand" support are highly valued by partners and contribute to effective implementation, even in the context of new challenges associated with COVID-19.

Zimbabwe's HIV
prevalence level | **13%**



Technical Assistance

CASE STUDY IN CHANGE

Strengthening Civil Society through Technical Assistance

SITUATION

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria strongly encourages civil society actors to engage in the country-level processes that shape the design, implementation and monitoring of Global Fund grants. However, civil society actors have found it challenging to use these processes to advance community priorities.

RESPONSE

The Global Fund has developed a robust technical assistance program to support civil society engagement in Global Fund processes. ICASO, a pre-qualified Global Fund technical assistance provider, links experienced consultants with civil society stakeholders seeking technical assistance in the areas of human rights, sustainability, and the meaningful engagement of key populations.

RESULTS

In Colombia, ICASO supported Fundación Grupo Acción y Apoyo a Personas Trans in collecting information on human rights-related barriers to accessing services. ICASO also supported Liga Colombiana de Lucha Contra el SIDA in its efforts to increase the involvement of civil society organizations and key populations in monitoring the National AIDS Plan and Global Fund-supported processes.

In Ecuador, ICASO provided technical assistance to Fundación Matices to improve the participation of key populations in the national HIV response and in Global Fund transition and sustainability processes.

In Guyana, ICASO helped Guyana Trans United improve how it collects information on human rights-related barriers to accessing services in order to better articulate its programmatic priorities.

In Honduras and Jamaica, ICASO provided technical assistance in relation to the use of strategic evidence in the development of five-year Strategic Plans to support the scale-up of programs to address human rights-related barriers in the context of HIV. As part of this work, ICASO helped partners ensure that there were functioning oversight mechanisms to monitor implementation.

Also, in Honduras, ICASO helped malaria stakeholders create an inclusive and participatory community consultation process to review the Community Health Plan and the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey to ensure the inclusion of issues related to gender perspectives on accessing mosquito nets.

In Suriname, ICASO helped stakeholders use local evidence to develop an action plan to remove human rights-related and gender-related barriers that discourage migrants and other vulnerable populations from accessing malaria services.

In Venezuela, ICASO supported community and civil society organizations working to define the role of the community sector in the national malaria response.

CONCLUSION

ICASO is proficient at helping civil society organizations leverage their own local expertise and experience to develop stronger evidence-based community responses to HIV and other diseases. ICASO technical assistance activities both draw on and enhance community resilience. ICASO always pairs technical assistance recipients with in-country consultants to promote collective ownership and to ensure that the work is informed by a deep understanding of the geographical and cultural context. Knowledge and skills are broadly shared in order to foster autonomous civil society networks that will sustain the activities supported by technical assistance.





Until we end aids

Thanks

ICASO thanks the following funders for investing in communities



AIDSFONDS



AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION



THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION



GILEAD SCIENCE



GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA



THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA



THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS SOCIETY



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

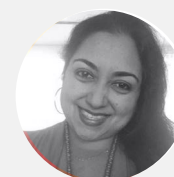
The ICASO Board of Directors 2019–2020



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Jamaica



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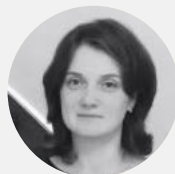
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Trinidad and Tobago

ICASO Staff 2019–2020



» **Mary Ann Torres**
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» **Galina Godovanny**
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Senior Policy Advisor

Yellowknife, Canada/
Melbourne, Australia



» **Charlie Baran**
Policy Advisor

Yucca Valley,
United States



» **Zhanna Kasperskaya**
Program Coordinator

Toronto, Canada



Financials

Statement of Financial Position As at December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$387,034	\$238,883
Short-term investments	688,465	693,956
Accounts receivable	29,375	27,316
Prepaid expenses and deposits	32,284	24,042
	1,137,158	984,197
CAPITAL ASSETS	1,123	3,204
	1,123	3,204
	\$1,138,281	\$987,401
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$62,011	\$45,280
Funds held in trust	49,417	18,436
Deferred contributions	223,057	97,489
	334,485	161,205
NET ASSETS		
UNRESTRICTED	368,910	389,229
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED	433,763	433,763
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS	1,123	3,204
	803,796	826,196
	\$1,138,281	\$987,401

Financials

Statement of Operations Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
REVENUES		
Grants and Contributions	\$1,164,400	\$838,634
Management fees and other	10,770	14,721
Interest	10,487	25,164
	1,185,657	878,519
EXPENSES		
Support to partners	531,471	165,118
Salaries and benefits	334,107	358,651
Professional fees	268,857	262,942
Occupancy	39,359	38,503
Travel for meetings held abroad	8,153	28,302
Office and general	7,484	12,473
Amortization of capital assets	3,144	3,986
Travel and accommodation	-	24,828
	1,192,575	894,803
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS		
	(6,918)	(16,284)
Foreign Exchange Loss	(15,482)	(28,724)
Deficiency of Revenues over Expenses	-\$22,400.00	-\$45,008.00

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until **we** end aids