



2022–2025 STRATEGY

Communities Driving Change

icaso
until **we** end aids

Who We Are

Since 1991, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) has mobilized communities worldwide to assert leadership in the global responses to HIV and intersecting health and human rights issues. ICASO's efforts have helped to ensure that key actors such as UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria are responsive to community priorities. We have facilitated meaningful community engagement in major policy fora. Through our collaborative and inclusive approach, we have established a unique role as an effective coalition-builder and a trusted advocacy partner.

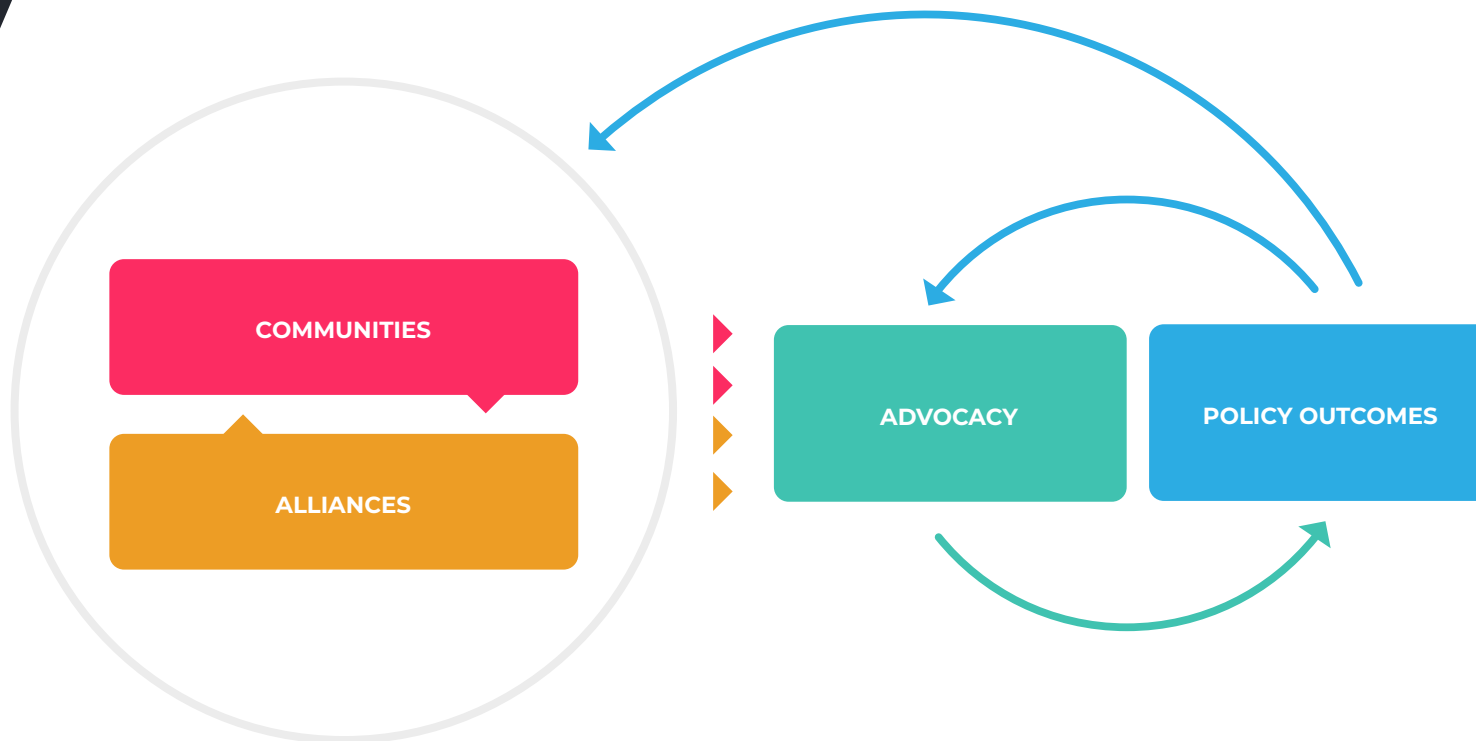
ICASO also supports communities working to influence national health policymaking and to achieve structural changes that will advance human rights and improve health outcomes. We provide technical assistance to community-based organizations in all regions of the world.

Diversity of communities remains at the center of ICASO's focus and governance. Our active board of directors embodies diversity not only in terms of gender, education, geography, and key populations, but also in terms of linkages to various communities of science, advocacy, communications, education, and affected populations.

ICASO's broad yet close-knit network of partners has evolved through three decades of shared experiences. It includes regional and national networks, academics, technical assistance providers, global and regional agencies, and funders. Over time, we have strategically expanded our network to include stakeholders who are focused on related health and structural issues. Although ICASO is legally based in Canada, our legitimacy arises from our widely recognized ability to link communities globally and serve as a networking mechanism to help them make their voices heard.

Advocacy Cycle

ICASO's three interconnected focal areas – **communities**, **alliances** and **advocacy** – together drive policy change through the strategic use of community-generated evidence. ICASO's work follows a cyclical model, with policy outcomes shaping how communities and alliances target their ongoing advocacy and other activities.





ICASO's Vision

ICASO's vision is an end to the HIV epidemic for all.



ICASO's Mission

ICASO's mission is to mobilize communities to provide transformative leadership in the response to HIV and intersecting challenges.



ICASO's Principles

- » We champion human rights and equity across all communities.
- » We are guided by the self-identified priorities of communities in all of their diversity.
- » We promote community resilience by engaging in initiatives that are initiated and sustained by communities.
- » We influence health policy through collaborative and inclusive processes.
- » We are flexible, adaptable and innovative.
- » We operate in accordance with the highest standards for ethical conduct, transparency and accountability.

Why ICASO is needed more than ever

Around the world, HIV funding has declined and efforts to achieve key HIV prevention and treatment targets continue to falter. In some countries and communities, progress has been reversed, and HIV infections and HIV-related deaths are increasing. The human rights principles that provide the bedrock for an effective HIV response have come under attack with the rise of nationalist and anti-science movements.

Stigmatized groups at high risk of HIV and other health threats are living in a more hostile environment. Civil society actors have seen their work undermined by various forms of social polarization, fueled by misinformation and lack of trust in conventional sources of evidence.

However, global civil society is responding to new threats by growing in new directions. In the HIV field, there is increasing recognition that communities have a key role to play in bringing HIV out of its “silo” and developing more integrated responses to the health needs of diverse populations. The intersectionality underpinning this work has taken on even greater urgency in humanitarian crises and challenging operating environments.

Adverse circumstances have compelled community-based HIV organizations to become master innovators and to forge new alliances across other sectors. Community-led efforts to maintain access to HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic have achieved impressive results. Lessons learned about the value of putting communities at the center of the HIV response have been leveraged in the COVID-19 response and across the public health field more broadly. Furthermore, recognition of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations is fueling greater demand for health equity worldwide.

Despite ongoing threats to human rights and social progress, this is a time when many new possibilities are emerging for global civil society. ICASO's 2022–2025 strategy speaks to our readiness to contribute to lasting social transformation by supporting communities in articulating their own needs, priorities and solutions.

The ICASO Theory of Change

INPUTS

Board, staff, consultants, collaborators, partners and allies with broad expertise representing diverse communities globally.

ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITIES

- » Greater community capacity to gather and use evidence to drive policy change.
- » Community-led monitoring of health system activities.

ALLIANCES

- » Focused action by community-based alliances across health and development sectors.
- » Sharing of tools and best practices.

ADVOCACY

- » Meaningful community engagement in health policy-making.
- » Emerging leaders proficient in influencing health policy.

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES

- Health policies reflective of community needs and priorities.
- Reduced inequalities in structural determinants of health and in health service access.
- Communities recognized as integral health system partners.
- Communities prepared to respond flexibly to new health threats.
- Well-resourced community responses to HIV and related issues.
- Accountability from donors, governments and communities.

IMPACT

Strong community leadership in responses to HIV and intersecting challenges drives more equitable health outcomes and saves lives.

CONTEXT

Mistrust of experts / science

Social polarization

Humanitarian crises

Pandemic preparedness

HIV resource constraints

HIV integration with broader health agenda

Strategic Objectives

ICASO's 2022–2025 strategic objectives will guide the organization across multiple domains of work, including in the fields of HIV, malaria, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Objective 1

Support communities in developing the skills and acquiring the resources to influence health policymaking

Advocacy must be based on evidence, and a broad skill-set is required to gather reliable evidence and use it to achieve policy aims. ICASO has long worked with communities to build their capacity for evidence-based advocacy. These efforts will continue, with an emphasis on community-level monitoring of health system performance as a tool to foster government accountability.

ICASO will facilitate community efforts to strengthen risk management practices, social mobilization activities and strategic messaging, and will contribute to increasing the sustainability of community engagement in health policymaking. ICASO will emphasize the importance of organizational flexibility and new leadership development as strategies for community actors to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances, including in challenging operating environments.

Objective 2

Foster results-oriented alliances among diverse stakeholders

ICASO will create opportunities for networking and partnership-building among community-based stakeholders. ICASO will support community-based stakeholders in developing and leading results-oriented alliances that address key policy aims. Knowledge-sharing among community-based stakeholders globally will be emphasized, as will collaboration with stakeholders from other sectors such as government, academia and private industry.

Objective 3

Advocate for more effective and equitable health policies

ICASO will maintain its longstanding engagement in health advocacy through two interconnected activities. ICASO will advocate directly in global health fora for community priorities to be addressed. At the same time, ICASO will create opportunities for communities to participate in events that shape global health policy, including United Nations High-Level Meetings and international conferences. ICASO will encourage communities to strategically use locally-produced evidence in these efforts. Advocacy will encompass specific policy aims as well as activities intended to hold governments and global institutions accountable for their obligations to communities. ICASO also will help emerging leaders learn to effectively navigate global policy spaces.

ICASO's Governance

ICASO is governed by a Board of Directors that represents diverse communities and regions of the world.

2022 ICASO Board of Directors



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