



# PITCH

## Annual report

### 2018



**PITCH** Partnership to Inspire, Transform  
and Connect the HIV response

 **aidsfonds**

**FRONTLINE  
AIDS** 



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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# Acronyms

ART	Antiretroviral therapy
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CND	UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs
COP	PEPFAR Country Operational Plans
FSP	Free Space Process
GUSO	Get Up Speak Out
HRI	Harm Reduction International
ICASO	International Council of AIDS Service Organizations
IDPC	International Drug Policy Consortium
ICJR	Institute for Criminal Just Reform
ICWEA	International Committee of Women Living with HIV in East Africa
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
MFF	EU Multiannual Financial Framework
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NAFOPHANU	National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda
NGLHRC	National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
REAct	Rights-Evidence-Action
SCDI	Supporting Community Development Initiatives
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGIE	Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UNYPA	Uganda Network of People Living with HIV & AIDS
UHC	Universal health coverage
UKPC	Uganda Key Population Consortium
UPR	Universal Periodic Review



# We have reached a crossroads in the global HIV response

After two decades of remarkable progress, we risk grinding to a halt or, worse, slipping backwards. New HIV infections remain stubbornly high at almost two million per year, and close to one million people lost their lives to AIDS-related illnesses in 2017.

Global funding for the HIV response is in decline and political will to end AIDS is receding as governments deal with multiple challenges including nationalism populism, conflict and instability, which contribute to the increasingly polarised societies we see today.

That's why long-term investment in communities is critical at this stage of the HIV response. And it is why PITCH has a critical role to play in ending AIDS.

Over the past three years, we have built a vibrant global movement that spells out the realities faced by people and communities affected by HIV. PITCH partners drive local and national action to secure sufficient funding for the HIV response, and they challenge and change discriminatory laws and policies that marginalise people and increase their risk of acquiring HIV. Through their effective advocacy, PITCH partners are making a difference in Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

The global community has set itself some challenging health targets. We are now just a little over a decade away from the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – including a target to end AIDS by 2030 – and governments around the world are wrestling with how universal health coverage (UHC) will be implemented in their countries. PITCH is

contributing to these global discussions, most recently through research with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda and Ukraine, which set out some of the stark challenges that need to be addressed for communities to benefit from UHC.

Advocacy has always played a critical role in the HIV epidemic – from securing access to treatment for millions of people to changing public perceptions of HIV. PITCH offers a unique opportunity to support HIV advocacy at community and national level. This opportunity is all the more remarkable when one considers that less than 1% of global funding for HIV is directed to advocacy.

We must continue to fully seize the opportunities and resources that PITCH provides to build new coalitions that advocate for better health and rights. We believe that our strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be a shining example to governments and donors that it is possible to make serious investments in communities and that those investments lead to results.

As UN Secretary General Guterres remarked on World AIDS Day 2018: "The direction taken now may determine whether the [HIV] epidemic can be ended by 2030, or if future generations will have to continue the battle."

We have reached the crossroads. We must choose our direction. There is no time to waste.

**Christine Stegling**  
Executive Director  
Frontline AIDS

**Mark Vermeulen**  
Director  
Aidsfonds



# 1. 2018: PITCH becomes a force for change

Through increasingly effective evidence collection, movement building and influencing, in 2018 the Partnership to Inspire, Transform and Connect the HIV Response (PITCH) became a force to be reckoned with in the drive to end the HIV epidemic.

The third year of PITCH has resulted in some significant achievements. National laws and policies have been changed, upheld or blocked, providing better protection for the rights of the people supported by PITCH. International commitments have been made that support PITCH's advocacy goals at country-level. More key populations, adolescent girls and young women have access to friendly health services, and PITCH partners representing these groups have successfully claimed a seat at the table in important national decision-making spaces.

Throughout the programme, PITCH partners and advocates have embraced every opportunity to influence key decision-makers in their respective contexts. Thanks to the flexibility of the programme, it has been possible to respond to emerging needs and opportunities along the way.

In addition, AIDS2018 opened many doors for country partners to connect with global- and country-level policy makers. The conference also provided opportunities to develop a range of strategic partnerships, and for closer collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and between country- and global-level partners.

PITCH's mid-term review also took place in 2018, which provided important insights into strengthening the programme.

Through increasingly effective evidence collection, movement building and influencing, in 2018 PITCH became a force to be reckoned with in the drive to end the HIV epidemic

## 2. The year in context

The growing international commitment to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) had a significant influence on the global HIV response in 2018. As countries move towards implementing their versions of UHC, and as middle-income countries see decreases in donor support, there is increasing pressure on health budgets. The successes achieved through the HIV response, and especially the community-led approach, are at a risk of being lost. In some countries, HIV and the response to it are being deprioritised. This may lead to marginalised people being left behind once again. When it comes to HIV, important decisions will have to be made in each country regarding which services will be continued and financed. For this reason, ensuring at-risk communities' meaningful and effective engagement in national UHC debates has been a priority for PITCH during 2018. The research done by PITCH in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is an important part of this, as we try to understand what is at risk and how to support community engagement.

The position of governments on harm reduction for people who use drugs remains complex. On the one hand, political hostility towards people who use drugs is increasing, backed by the 'war on drugs' which continues to be pedalled by some influential governments in the global north, and national domestication of global harm reduction commitments remains slow. For example, partners in **Myanmar** reported a notable increase in arrests of people who use drugs in 2018. On the other hand, 2018 has also resulted in positive developments, with harm reduction services set to begin in 2019 in **Nigeria** and **Uganda**. In **Mozambique**, the country's Central Office of Prevention and

Combat Drugs has recognised that taking a public health approach will achieve greater gains and create less financial and social cost than a prohibitionist stance.

The push for the Nordic model of sex work (the criminalisation of the clients of sex workers) continued in 2018, and trafficking continues to be utilised to justify policies that exclude sex workers from decision-making and violate sex workers' fundamental human rights. Despite some positive recommendations to UN Member States, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has continued to make recommendations for the criminalisation of clients. At the national level there are some positive developments, such as in **Vietnam** where the government will be financing community-led programmes to provide services to sex workers.

Due to conservative politics, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and information for young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, has been under pressure in countries such as **Uganda** and **Kenya**. By contrast, in **Indonesia** the Ministry of Health has included an entry for the provision of HIV, SRHR education in schools in national 2018 – 2024 budgeting. This provision includes training of trainers sessions developed by PITCH partners Ikatan Perempuan Positif Indonesia and Fokus Muda, and the creation of education materials. Partners in **Nigeria** have also noted progress in the form of increasing support from the general public for lowering the age at which young people can access HIV testing and other services without needing parental consent.

National elections in countries such as **Zimbabwe**

and **Ukraine** had negative implications for the work of PITCH's partners. During the run up to 2019 presidential parliamentary elections in **Ukraine**, partners witnessed the emergence of radical nationalistic movements against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, which was portrayed as a threat to morality. Organisations and clinics working with LGBT people suffered attacks on their offices. In **Zimbabwe**, following the 2018 national elections, foreign currency shortages caused massive price increases and stock-outs of essential medicines, which limited access to healthcare services in poorly resourced public hospitals. Increased prices for public transport affected the ability of young people living with HIV to go to clinics to collect their antiretroviral treatment (ART).





# 3. Protecting rights

## 3.1 Movement building between and within communities

Supporting movement building within and across communities is a crucial pillar of the programme. PITCH supports and facilitates diverse groups to work together in countries and globally. In 2018 the programme established 'all-partners' meetings in each country. These meetings happen twice a year and allow groups to get to know each other's work and develop joint advocacy strategies.

PITCH supports global movement building by creating international spaces where PITCH partners from different countries can meet each other, and connect with global organisations and networks. The PITCH Policy Summit in Amsterdam in January 2018 is an example of this. More than 50 national, regional and global stakeholders came together to jointly develop an advocacy agenda for the year. The Policy Summit served as a capacity strengthening space where country partners learned about political trends and opportunities for advocacy at regional and global level, while global partners learned about opportunities at country level.

PITCH also contributes to national movement building. In **Kenya**, the Kenya Young Positive network KY+ has been established. The development of KY+'s mission, vision, goals and mandate were supported through a workshop facilitated by the former executive director of the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV. In **Uganda**, PITCH supported the establishment of the Uganda Key Population Consortium (UKPC),

a coalition of key populations, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people, sex workers and people who inject drugs. The UKPC, which brings together more than 30 key population led-organisations, was formed to provide guidance and accountability within communities. As PITCH partners and members of the UKPC, the Uganda Harm Reduction Network, Sexual Minorities Uganda, Transgender Equality Uganda and the Women's Organisation Network for Human Rights Advocacy have been actively participating in several national advocacy spaces. This includes Ministry of Health working groups where the organisations jointly pushed for the development of harm reduction treatment guidelines, and the inclusion of indicators on sex workers, transgender people and men who have sex with men (MSM) in national data tracking tools and in the country's National Prevention Action Plan.

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meetings, forums and symposiums took place where country partners engaged with country, regional and global decision-makers

In **Indonesia**, PITCH partners were a crucial part of the National Alliance for Reform of the Criminal Code. This coalition has compiled several briefs, notes and recommendation papers relating to the formulation of the Criminal Procedure Code. In August 2018, the Institute for Criminal Just Reform (ICJR), representing PITCH partners, was invited to a meeting by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (Kemenkuham) to contribute to



Nienke Trooster, the Dutch Ambassador to Vietnam, visits Aloboy, a community-based organisation in Ho Chi Minh City that engages in advocacy and provides HIV testing and counselling to gay men and transgender women, in March 2018. © SCDI

the discussion of the Bill of the Penal Code. ICJR advised that the penal code should be reformed, including a recommendation to drop articles that directly or indirectly criminalise key populations. The recommendations were accepted and the articles criminalising homosexuality and sex work were excluded.

In 2018, Trans\*Alliance, a PITCH partner in **Kenya**, was instrumental in organising the first ever national transgender convening: the Let Us Speak Conference 2018. This brought together nine Kenya-based networks of transgender people. As a result, the National Transgender Advocacy Network of Kenya was created. This network aims to identify specific opportunities to increase support and advocacy for transgender and gender nonconforming communities, and to explore ways to draw public attention to transgender public health needs and other issues facing transgender people.

For PITCH, global movements are key in ensuring that the needs and rights of key populations are addressed in global dialogues. PITCH supports the work of the Free Space Process (FSP), an initiative of global key population networks. In 2018, FSP and the PITCH policy team developed and implemented a joint advocacy strategy in three fundamental areas: human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and financing. Facilitating global networks from different population groups can be challenging as they have different capacities and priorities and come from different parts of the world. Providing FSP with the flexibility and support it needed has allowed the organisation to further develop and strengthen its collaborative working. PITCH has also supported global networks to connect with PITCH country partners to advocate for national implementation of global agreements relating to

these three areas. For example, FSP partner MPact developed advocacy tools and training materials for PITCH and FSP country partners to help them engage with the Voluntary National Reviews process, which tracks countries' progress on the implementation of the SDGs.

## 3.2 Building advocacy skills and knowledge

In 2018, the capacity of PITCH partners and country focal points to engage with international advocacy processes was developed through attendance at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the Global HIV Prevention Coalition

and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). At the CND, this advocacy work included presenting oral evidence at the Ministerial Civil Society Hearings. At AIDS2018 the Youth Pre-Conference was co-financed by PITCH, and was an important capacity strengthening event for adolescent girls and young

women and young people living with HIV. In total, 200 young people participated in 56 knowledge- and skills-building workshops and 4 plenary sessions, covering themes such as advocacy, peer education and activism. In September, an advocacy meeting was organised for PITCH partners from all nine programme countries working on sex workers' rights. The participants learned about human rights, the SDGs, the Universal Periodic Review (see Section 3.5.1), international treaties, treaty monitoring bodies and UN Special Procedures. They also learned about different models of sex work decriminalisation and the main components of advocacy.

**A PITCH partner in Kenya was instrumental in organising the first ever national transgender convening: the Let Us Speak Conference 2018**



A collaborative photography and advocacy training initiative started with PhotoVoice in **Myanmar**, **Nigeria** and **Uganda** in 2018. The PhotoVoice-led training has helped PITCH partners in all three countries produce creative and compelling images that communicate the impact of the HIV epidemic on marginalised people, and the importance of guaranteeing equal access to HIV services. On World AIDS Day, **Myanmar** Youth Star's PhotoVoice exhibition won the best exhibition award from the National AIDS Programme.

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country partners have improved  
they way they capture evidence aligned  
to their advocacy work

Peer-to-peer learning developed across the programme. The **Kenya** Sex Workers Alliance organised a two-day advocacy workshop for sex worker organisations to enable them to engage with the SDGs and the human rights agenda. A learning exchange also occurred between **Indonesia** and **Myanmar**, whereby the Indonesian country focal point took the Myanmar delegation for a tour of all PITCH partners in the country.

During the PITCH mid-term review process, partners in all PITCH countries had the opportunity to reflect on and adapt their advocacy strategies and better understand what capacity gaps remain. In response to a key recommendation that emerged from the review, the decision was taken to initiate a new Capacity Strengthening Task Force to develop a more strategic approach to enabling PITCH partners to pursue their advocacy goals and activities beyond the programme.

### 3.3 Changing laws and policies

In 2018, PITCH's efforts contributed to significant changes to laws and policies that mean the rights of key populations and adolescent girls and young women are now better protected.

As **Vietnam** revises its drug control law, which is due for completion in 2019, Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI) secured the inclusion of a chapter on prevention and treatment of addiction, plus harm reduction interventions in medical settings.

In **Mozambique**, PITCH advocacy efforts resulted in the repeal of a decree that mandated the transfer of pregnant girls from day to night classes. The decree was discriminatory and increased stigma and discrimination against adolescent girls, while denying them access to education. Also in **Mozambique**, PITCH collaborated with the Early Marriage Elimination Coalition. This resulted in the submission to parliament of a draft law that enables authorities to monitor and punish those involved in promoting early marriages.

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policies impacting the lives of key  
populations were influenced by the work  
of PITCH partners in 2018

In **Indonesia**, PITCH partners Focus Muda, ICJR and Independent Youth Alliance brought the marriage law to the constitutional court. This led to increasing the legal age of marriage for women from 16 to 18 years, aligning it to men's legal age of marriage.



The first PITCH Policy Summit focused on strengthening synergies between countries, regional and global streams of work. The summit was held in January 2018 in Amsterdam. © Aidsfonds

In **Vietnam**, for the first time, domestic funding has been made available for community-led services for sex workers in 15 provinces across the country. Sex workers will now implement government health programmes and are moving away from dependency on international donors. While the Bridging the Gaps programme was the motor behind piloting and implementing the sex worker-led model, the PITCH programme was the fuel that made intense lobbying and advocacy for up-scaling the model possible.

In **Ukraine**, PITCH partners Hope and Trust and Convictus ensured the removal of a section of the family code relating to the termination of parental rights in cases when parents are "chronic alcoholics or drug addicts". As a result, parents who use drugs are better protected from having their children taken away by authorities.

In **Kenya**, the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) challenged, and eventually won, a court case against the practice of forced anal examinations on men accused of same-sex relations. NGLHRC has also used the ruling to challenge the constitutionality of the country's sexual offences laws, which criminalise homosexuality. This hearing could be a watershed moment for Kenya's LGBT people and is set for May 2019.

In February 2018, a new national drug policy was developed and disseminated in **Myanmar** by the government's Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control. PITCH partners contributed to the development of this policy, which focuses on support instead of punishment. Despite the change in policy and its dissemination, partners have noticed an increase in arrests of people who use drugs, and questions on how effectively the

new policy will be implemented remain.

At an international-level, PITCH was instrumental in ensuring that the Human Rights Council Resolution on Human Rights in the context of HIV and AIDS included language demanding the UHC be "anchored in respect for, and the protection and fulfilment of, the human right to health". PITCH advocacy also resulted in the resolution's ask to eliminate "restrictive and punitive legal and policy frameworks" that "continue to discourage and prevent people from having access to prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support services". This has ensured HIV remains on the agenda for 2019 global human rights consultations. Thanks to strong advocacy efforts from the leaders of drug user and sex worker communities, in December 2018 Ukraine's Country Coordinating

Mechanism (CCM) of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund) approved the creation of two CCM groups to work with the Cabinet of Ministers and Parliament on the decriminalisation of sex work and drug use. In Zimbabwe, the executive director of Zimbabwe Young Positives was elected as a new member of the CCM, representing adolescent girls and young women.

Despite concerted efforts from partners to advocate for more progressive attitudes and legislation, overall key populations continued to face criminalisation in 2018. This was largely due to the influence of cultural conservatism and religious populism. However, recent rulings decriminalising homosexuality in Angola and India offer a ray of hope for what sustained advocacy can achieve.

**In Vietnam, PITCH  
advocacy has made  
scale-up of sex worker  
led health services  
possible**



## 3.4 Services: improving access and securing funding for marginalised groups

### 3.4.1 Equitable access to services

As a result of PITCH partners' engagement with health authorities in their respective countries, many have ensured policy changes that will improve services for key populations, adolescent girls and young women.

Within the context of UHC in **Zimbabwe**, the government has included specific requirements for key populations including people who use drugs in the minimum service package, which dictates the services that will be available in the public health system. It has also launched training for health workers to promote services that are friendly to key populations. PITCH partners contributed to these changes through their consistent advocacy efforts. In surveys conducted by PITCH partners in Zimbabwe, the LGBT community reported an improvement in the quality of services delivered in 22 healthcare sites across the country.

The quality of services and service access has also improved in **Indonesia**, where PITCH partners secured 50 memorandums of cooperation with clinics to provide services to LGBT people, and 16 other clinics across the country will provide services for people who use drugs.

PITCH partners in **Nigeria** have been repeatedly arguing to lower the age of consent for accessing HIV testing services to 14, and made this a clear point of advocacy during the review of the country's

**PITCH partners in Nigeria have been repeatedly arguing to lower the age of consent for accessing HIV testing services to 14, and made this a clear point of advocacy during the review of the country's National HIV/AIDS Prevention Plan**

National HIV/AIDS Prevention Plan. Although this change has yet to be accepted, support for it has increased amongst the general public and stakeholders within the National Prevention Technical Working Group.

Despite the hostile approach to people who use drugs in many countries, in 2018 PITCH partners managed to expand harm reduction services for people who use drugs. In **Ukraine**, service coverage has increased considerably thanks to community-based organisations providing harm reduction services and ART, and due to the adoption of take-home opioid substitution therapy in some cities. Also in Ukraine, sex workers and women who use drugs can now access maternity services in some cities, where previously they could not. In order to link women who use drugs to sexual and reproductive health services, cooperation was established with Donetsk's Department of Health and gynaecologists at maternity welfare centre the Slovyansk Town Maternity Home, thereby ensuring some of the most marginalised women in Ukraine have access to friendly consultations.

In **Myanmar**, PITCH advocates formed a strategic coalition that secured the commitment of Mon State parliament, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Social Welfare to build a drug rehabilitation centre in Mon State.

In **Uganda**, the International Committee of Women Living with HIV in East Africa (ICWEA) led a joined PITCH advocacy initiative with the National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU) and

the Uganda Network of People Living with HIV & AIDS (UNYPA). Their advocacy has resulted in the revision of Uganda's consolidated treatment guidelines, which now allow for women living with HIV of any age to make an informed choice to access DTG. ICWEA spoke out at meetings with the Ministry of Health, on the need for girls and women of reproductive age to be able to make an informed decision on their ART regimen and contraceptive choices.

### 3.4.2 Addressing the HIV prevention gap

HIV prevention remains a challenge in all PITCH countries, as it is rarely a priority in national plans. In 2018, concerted efforts were made to address this gap by convening 25 PITCH partners and country focal points in a workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to build capacity on using evidence to hold governments to account for commitments made under the Global HIV Prevention Coalition. Back in their countries, partners continued to press governments and CCMs to make condoms, lubricants, pre-exposure prophylaxis, HIV testing and ART more accessible to key populations, and for more community-based services.

Despite increasing political pressure in many countries to remove sex education from schools, PITCH partners have continued to engage with ministries of health and education to lower the age of consent for access to SRHR services and to provide sex education in schools. In parallel, where sex education and SRHR services are not available or accepted as part of the public school and health systems, partners are using alternative means to reach young people with information and behaviour change interventions, for example, through youth clubs in **Mozambique** and through football tournaments in **Uganda** with Tackle Africa. In **Zimbabwe**, due to PITCH's efforts, religious leaders are now providing SRHR information in churches.

### 3.4.3 The debate on universal health coverage: a key priority

Equipping PITCH partners to engage in debates on UHC, and ensuring that both HIV services and access to services by key populations are included in country UHC schemes, was a priority in 2018.

PITCH conducted a key piece of research on integrating HIV into UHC in **Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda** and **Ukraine**, in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. In addition to desk research, PITCH partners, government officials, donors, UN agencies and a wide range of civil society and community representatives were interviewed.

The research was carried out in recognition of the lack of evidence concerning the risks to, and opportunities for, the HIV and AIDS response inherent in the rollout of UHC in these countries. It identified a number of significant risks in relation to integrating HIV into UHC, including the potential loss of the HIV response's human rights focus should civil society be defunded and disengaged, and that key populations and marginalised groups are likely to be left out. Furthermore, when there are competing health priorities, and resources and budgets are insufficient, it may affect the continuity, quality and scale-up of ART services.

The research was shared with key policy makers and civil society partners across the world. It was presented at the European Commission (EC) on UHC Day, at the European Union (EU) Global Health Policy Forum, and will be presented in several other policy spaces in 2019. It was particularly welcomed by the EC, World Health Organization (WHO), UNAIDS, the Global Fund, and the Civil Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC as a critical source of country evidence to inform the UHC debate – evidence that had previously been lacking.



"Like many drug users, the police found me and took me to the police station. I was then arrested with a different charge of theft and sent to prison. In prison, I met many others addicted to drugs like me – some had spent time in prison again and again. We bribed the police to bring drugs into the prison. We could get drugs in but we only had one needle to share. There were 20 people in my cell and we would share the needle between us and when we were done, we would pass it on to the next cell, and the next and the next, sharpening it as it became blunt. Of course there's no HIV testing in prison, it was only when I came out that I took a blood test and found out I was HIV+."

Imprisoning drug users does not stop drug use. Those who are incarcerated are at risk of needle sharing and have no access to HIV related services or harm reduction support. Despite the fact that legislation has been reformed to rehabilitate instead of incarcerate people who use drugs, drug users continue to be arrested and imprisoned. Drug addiction is a disease not a crime – support don't punish.

© EMK, Lal Pu, Myo, Mang & Ye 2018 | PhotoVoice | Frontline AIDS | PITCH | Myanmar

The research demonstrated a gap in engagement with the UHC debate from civil society, particularly those working in the HIV sector and key population-led organisations. This engagement is critical to ensuring marginalised groups are included in UHC schemes. To address this gap, PITCH organised a UHC capacity building workshop for PITCH country and regional partners, in collaboration with SCDI, which the Dutch Ambassador to Vietnam officially opened. More than 40 participants from 22 different countries participated. The workshop was timely, given that most PITCH countries were engaged in health reform processes and developing UHC plans. Important questions about what implementing UHC would mean for HIV funding, services and key populations were discussed.

For many partners, the workshop served as a call to action to start engaging with the UHC agenda, and concrete results can already be seen.

In **Vietnam**, PITCH advocacy led to the adoption of Decree 146/2018/ND-CP. This stipulates that people without identity cards, or anyone who does not want to divulge their identity, can still access social health insurance. In addition, the government has adopted guidelines (Circular 27/2018/TT-BYT) ensuring that people living with HIV are supported with health insurance and can access health services, testing and HIV treatment. In **Nigeria**, PITCH sponsored members of youth advocate groups to participate in a youth leadership course on UHC. The purpose of this course was to build participants' capacity to advocate for the prioritisation of adolescents and young people in the implementation of UHC in their country.

**The research demonstrated a gap in engagement with the UHC debate from civil society, particularly those working in the HIV sector and key population-led organisations. This engagement is critical to ensuring marginalised groups are included in UHC schemes**

Across the programme, country partners have indicated they need more capacity-building support in order to mobilise communities and engage more meaningfully with UHC processes, something that will be addressed in 2019.

### **3.4.4 Improving funding for community responses to HIV**

At global level, PITCH developed a discussion paper called Community responses for health: issues and ideas for collaborative action, together with UNAIDS, the Global Fund, Stop TB, WHO and FSP. This paper highlights the importance of financially investing in community responses to HIV, particularly in relation to the UHC agenda.

It has been used to prepare statements and inform Member States at the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, the WHO Executive Board and the Human Rights Council, amongst others.

In 2018, PITCH advocated at the EU for increased contributions to global health through active engagement in the ongoing negotiations over the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (MFF), with a focus on ensuring an increased EU pledge to the Global Fund's sixth replenishment conference. In addition, PITCH advocated for continued financial support from the EU in PITCH countries for 2021-2027, focussing on global health, HIV and human rights as key priority areas. Through strategic advocacy, PITCH has been able to put global health, HIV and human rights firmly on the EU agenda, generating political support from the EC and the European Parliament. It is too early to assess the success of PITCH's advocacy, as MFF negotiations will continue until the last quarter of 2019.



In Washington D.C. in the USA, PITCH successfully advocated with others for Congress to commit to sustained funding for the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund in response to President Trump's proposals to significantly cut this support. In addition, PEPFAR advocacy resulted in President Trump signing legislation to 'reauthorise' PEPFAR. This guarantees PEPFAR funding for the next five years, thus supporting key populations, adolescent girls and young women.

PITCH partners in **Kenya**, **Uganda** and **Zimbabwe** were able to meaningfully engage with the development of PEPFAR Country Operational Plans (COP) and influence priority setting. As a result, in **Kenya** PEPFAR has stated it will start directly funding some sex workers groups. In **Zimbabwe**, a coalition of civil society organisations including PITCH partners received training around PEPFAR COPs and were then able to identify and agree upon country funding priorities for the PEPFAR 2019 COP. In **Uganda**, following advocacy by PITCH partners, PEPFAR committed US\$10 million to support key population organisations.

In **Venezuela**, advocacy from the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) and others led the Global Fund to grant US\$5 million to ameliorate the health crisis in the country by purchasing and providing ART for a year. From the grant, US\$100,000 was directly provided to Venezuelan civil society for continued oversight and monitoring of the delivery of ART to people living with HIV. This work was supported by a PITCH flexible investment, which exists to support unexpected and promising initiatives that contribute to PITCH's programme outcomes.

It was a particularly significant outcome because it has helped to change the Global Fund's long-standing policy of not considering funding requests from non-eligible countries.

In **Zimbabwe**, thanks to joint budget submissions from all PITCH partners, the Minister of Finance acknowledged the need for the government to take concrete steps to implement the recommended

15% budgetary allocation to health spending. The government also scrapped VAT and import duty on sanitary hygiene products, which will increase their accessibility and affordability for adolescent girls and young women.

**In Mozambique, PITCH partners now hold monthly meetings between the police and a sex workers' platform to discuss issues and specific claims relating to violence committed by the police towards sex workers**

## 3.5 Putting human rights legislation to work

### 3.5.1 Using the Universal Periodic Review

PITCH and Bridging the Gaps joined efforts to undertake research into the level of attention being paid to HIV in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).<sup>1</sup> This research has been a key tool in increasing knowledge and capacity among civil society to use the UPR mechanism. During **Nigeria's** third UPR cycle, PITCH mobilised civil society partners around focused advocacy asks and advocated with like-minded diplomatic missions in Geneva. This resulted in strong recommendations about ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which, though unlikely to be accepted by the government, can be used by country partners for advocacy purposes.

<sup>1</sup> The Universal Periodic Review is a human rights monitoring mechanism wherein UN Member States review each other's human rights situation.

### 3.5.2 Bringing law enforcement on board

Country partners achieved positive results engaging with law enforcement to improve the treatment of sex workers, LGBT people and people who use drugs. PITCH's strategy is two-fold; it focuses on collaborating with the police, for example through training, while also holding police to account for their actions, for example by challenging police brutality through the courts. In **Vietnam**, SCDI sensitised 3,050 police officers on HIV treatment, drug use and addiction treatment, harm reduction, and the challenges vulnerable youths face. In **Mozambique**, PITCH partners now hold monthly meetings between the police and a sex workers' platform to discuss issues and specific claims relating to violence committed by the police towards sex workers.

At the end of 2018, the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum in **Uganda** evaluated the training it has been giving to the police since 2016 on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). The study found that 60% of police officers changed their perceptions towards LGBT people as a result of the training and were now willing to handle cases involving LGBT people. There has also been a reduction in SOGIE-related human rights violations by police officers. The same approach was applied at international level by bringing law enforcement officials and PITCH partners together for an AIDS2018 learning event. This provided an opportunity for law enforcement officials to learn about other countries' policies and approaches towards people who use drugs, sex workers and LGBT people, and engage with key populations from their own and other countries. The event resulted in on-going positive engagement between PITCH partners and government officials. For example, two officers from **Indonesia's** national police health unit, which previously refused to discuss LGBT-related issues, participated in the PITCH event at AIDS2018 and subsequently invited Gaya

Nusantara, an LGBT organisation, to discuss how to improve the police's approach to LGBT people.

In 2019, PITCH will support similar dialogues at events such as the International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Harm Reduction International Conference and the regional AIDS conferences.

### 3.5.3 Taking human rights violations to court

Several PITCH partners provided support for victims of human rights violations to report their experiences, and in some instances pursued cases through the judicial system.

In **Zimbabwe**, the Sexual Rights Centre supports sex workers who have suffered rights violations by helping them file police reports and follow-up cases, including supporting investigations. In one recently concluded case supported by the Sexual Rights Centre, the defendant was sentenced to 15 years in prison for the rape of a sex worker.

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human rights violation cases brought  
to court with PITCH's support

In **Mozambique**, Muleide and Coalizao worked with the police and the Office of Assistance for Victims of Violence to promote better reporting of sexual abuse against adolescent girls and young women. As a result, 1,137 cases of rape have been officially recorded. This enabled adolescent girls and young women who had been abused to be provided with healthcare and have their experiences investigated by the police, leading to some of the perpetrators being prosecuted. In **Indonesia**, Organisasi Perubahan Sosial Indonesia provides case documentation and paralegal support to sex

workers who have experienced violence. While 104 cases were submitted in 2018, only 30% were followed-up with legal aid due to persistent stigma, a lack of awareness and threats. To address this, the Community Legal Service programme is continuing to educate sex workers on their rights, which should increase the number of sex workers who pursue their cases.

### 3.6 Planning and delivering gender transformative programming

The mid-term review identified a number of examples of progress made by partners in addressing gender inequality, harmful gender norms, sexual violence and gender-based violence. However, because many examples lacked a clear connection with PITCH's Theory of Change and work planning process these activities were not always documented. Action was taken to remedy this in 2018. For example, PITCH transformed its Gender Task Force to a permanent working group with its own budget to develop the capacity of partners to plan and implement gender transformative activities. In February 2018, training and discussions on gender were carried out as part of the Championing HIV Prevention: advocacy for and by communities international meeting in New Delhi. This helped PITCH partners to more confidently integrate gender transformative approaches into their programming and advocacy. This training was complemented in October 2018 by a webinar on the same subject, open to all partners.

Thanks to PITCH advocacy, Uganda's consolidated treatment guidelines have been revised to allow women living with HIV of any age to make an informed choice about whether to access dolutegravir

In many PITCH countries, exciting progress has been made in improving gender sensitive approaches to harm reduction and addressing the SRHR of women who use drugs. In **Ukraine**, partly because of the advocacy carried out by PITCH partner Hope and Trust, the Ukrainian parliament and the Committee for Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities are more aware of the gender-specific stigma and discrimination experienced by women who use drugs. In **Indonesia**, PITCH partner Yakeba established a new group for women who use drugs and the female partners of people who use drugs; communities whose gender-specific needs and experiences are often overlooked.

In **Zimbabwe**, a country that is traditionally highly patriarchal, PITCH partners have successfully convinced law enforcement agencies about the need to address sexual violence against female sex workers. During coffee morning sessions held with the police, PITCH partners in Bulawayo challenged stereotypes concerning sexual violence toward sex

workers. This has led to the police adopting a more gender sensitive approach when responding to sex workers who report sexual violence.

In 2018, restricting women of reproductive age from accessing dolutegravir has been an important issue. PITCH partners in **Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda** have been advocating against this. Thanks to this advocacy, Uganda's consolidated treatment guidelines have been revised to allow women living with HIV of any age to make an informed choice about whether to access dolutegravir. Hopefully this success will be repeated in other countries.



**Annah Sango, National Coordinator of Zimbabwe Young Positives (ZYP+), speaking at the joint PITCH, Bridging the Gaps and READY satellite event at the International AIDS Conference in 2018, Amsterdam. © Frontline AIDS**



## 4. Learning and reflection

### 4.1 Building evidence is essential for successful advocacy

In 2018, PITCH focussed on enabling partners to systematically collect, analyse and share data. The programme has also facilitated south-to-south learning, such as during the UHC workshop in **Vietnam**.

Partners have participated in a range of meetings, including mid-term review country-level meetings and those on report validation and work-plan development. These events have enabled partners to compare experiences and discuss both the challenges and opportunities they have encountered when documenting evidence of progress, in line with their country-level theories of change. The successful rollout of Wanda (an online monitoring and evaluation system for advocacy) took place in the nine PITCH countries in 2018. Wanda is enabling more partners to document evidence of the most significant moments of change in their contexts. Moreover, evidence building has been used within PITCH to inform partners' advocacy strategies and policy briefs.

Documenting human rights violations has become an important strategy, which is supported by systems such as Ona and Rights-Evidence-Action (REAct). In 2018, PITCH sex work partners in **Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe** were trained on using the Ona system to document and manage human rights violations. Information documented in Ona can be linked to in-country indicators then used for advocacy purposes by partners. Partners in **Kenya, Myanmar, Uganda,**

and **Zimbabwe** have been supported to use REAct, a community-based system for monitoring and responding to human rights-related barriers in accessing HIV and health services. In **Kenya**, the Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS committed to support partner efforts to document human rights violations using the REAct programme, and refer survivors of violence to medical and psychosocial support using the same portal. The **Myanmar** MSM Network used a questionnaire tool within REAct to collect evidence in the form of case studies to support their advocacy with the Health and Development Committee of the President's Office of Myanmar. It is anticipated that by increasing the number of cases that are reported, public pressure on the perpetrators of rights violations will grow and the number of violations will decrease.

Several key pieces of research, including the research on UHC and the UPR, have been developed by PITCH this year as well as publications by PITCH global advocacy partners the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) and Harm Reduction International (HRI). In October 2018, IDPC released its flagship publication Taking Stock: A Decade of Drug Policy – A Civil Society Shadow Report. Using the UN's own data, the shadow report demonstrates that the targets of the 2009 Political Declaration on Drugs have been spectacularly missed. It illustrates the devastating impact of the 'war on drugs' on the lives of people who use drugs. At the CND, the report was cited in statements by the governments of Switzerland, Norway and Uruguay. In December 2018, HRI published The Global State of Harm Reduction 2018. This report has been used for national and regional advocacy by at least six

organisations (to date) in France, the EU, the UK, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Latin America, including translation of materials and key findings. It is also heavily cited in the upcoming UNAIDS report on people who inject drugs.

## 4.2 Partnership and collaboration: the cornerstones of PITCH

Partnership and collaboration are the cornerstones of PITCH's success. The partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a significant feature of PITCH. Collaboration happens with the Ministry, as well as with embassies and permanent missions. In 2018, embassies in **Kenya** and **Indonesia** organised learning events to help PITCH partners connect with other strategic partnerships. In **Zimbabwe**, Gay and Lesbians of Zimbabwe worked closely with the Dutch Embassy on commemorations to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. In **Kenya**, the embassy has also been providing support to partners involved in strategic litigation against the government to decriminalise same-sex relations. The embassy has been involved in all the court sessions and, together with the partners, developed a safety plan for the petitioners. In **Ukraine** and **Indonesia**, PITCH partners have played a key role in the tripartite collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNAIDS and non-governmental organisations. In **Indonesia**, the tripartite meetings are considered a safe space for key populations to meet and discuss sensitive issues and to connect with the Dutch embassy and UNAIDS on addressing the government. In **Ukraine**, the Key Population Platform, which was established within the framework of the tripartite collaboration, has become fully operational. This means it is now officially registered and has held steering committee elections, resulting in two

members from each participating community joining the committee. Logistical costs relating to participants attending the fourth forum of the Key Populations Platform were covered by PITCH.

The embassy in **Nigeria** has been actively involved in preparing for the third cycle of the UPR. The permanent missions in Geneva also engaged in this process. In 2018, the PITCH Nigeria country focal point participated in the UPR meeting in Geneva, and bilateral meetings were held with permanent missions to inform them of the position of key populations in Nigeria. PITCH and Bridging the Gaps organised a joint workshop on the UPR in **Kenya**, which the Nigerian country focal point also attended. In Kenya this led to the creation of a national key population task force to engage with the UPR.

There are strong connections and synergies between PITCH and other strategic partnerships, namely Bridging the Gaps, READY, and Get Up Speak Out (GUSO). PITCH, Bridging the Gaps and READY organised a joint satellite symposium at AIDS2018 called What is the future of funding for key populations? The event brought together major funders of key population HIV programming and advocacy, activists from key population movements and government representatives. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken an active role in keeping funding for key populations on the agenda, including by organising this event. The Global Fund, PEPFAR, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and delegates from the government of Vietnam and the city of Kiev, Ukraine also participated in the panel. In **Mozambique**, the Police Key Population training manual and a training of trainers manual were both rolled out by Bridging the Gaps. The experience of working with the police is being taken forward in PITCH, leading to the sharing of experiences between police from **Kenya**, **Mozambique**, **Uganda** and the **Netherlands**.

In-country programmes collaborated directly via coalitions. For instance in **Uganda**, the Uganda Network of Young People living with HIV&AIDS and the National Forum of People Living with HIV are members of the GUSO SRHR Alliance, and worked together on revising the comprehensive sexuality education guidelines.

Crosscutting issues within a country and between national, regional and international levels have been addressed by enabling key populations and adolescent girls and young women to join forces. PITCH partners in **Zimbabwe** are members of the AIDS Rights Alliance for **Southern Africa**, which implements PITCH regional activities for Southern Africa. Partners have participated in regional advocacy spaces and persuaded the Zimbabwe government to honour the commitments it has made to domestic resource mobilisation. The government has since initiated some funding mechanisms, such as the airtime health levy; a 2% transactional tax to complement the AIDS levy.

Collaboration between the global and country levels has also taken shape at global events such as the CEDAW, AIDS2018 and during PITCH initiatives such as the Global Policy summit. With the support of PITCH's global policy staff, the PITCH country focal point for Ukraine shared his experiences about the critical role of communities in providing integrated HIV and tuberculosis (TB) services, participating in a panel with other panellists from WHO, UNAIDS, the Dutch Ministry of Health, the UN Special Envoy on TB, and the KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation. He gave his testimony at a side event organised by Aidsfonds and partners during the High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis. PITCH country focal point, Anton Basenko, emphasised that real progress on HIV or TB cannot be achieved unless communities are meaningfully engaged, and that domestic funding is not "the magic bullet"; international donors such as PEPFAR and the Global Fund have a

continued responsibility to ensure communities are sufficiently invested in.

PITCH also supported eight sex workers to engage with CEDAW in 2018. In addition, the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, funded by Bridging the Gaps, supported the four country teams to develop shadow reports on the human rights situation of sex workers.

Both individual attendance and the presence of key stakeholders at AIDS2018 also helped open up doors for PITCH partners in country.

## 5. LOOKING TO 2019 AND BEYOND

In 2018 PITCH truly took flight and saw many strategies come to fruition. Halfway into the programme, PITCH has achieved impressive results. The aim now is to ensure these results are embedded in government structures and that country partners are enabled to take this forward beyond PITCH.

2019 will be a decisive year with many high-level events at which PITCH will be active. For instance, the next High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs takes place in July 2019, which will focus on Goal 10 (reduced inequalities between and within countries), plus inclusion, stigma and discrimination. In addition, the very first UN High-Level Meeting on UHC is scheduled for September 2019. New insights will be forthcoming when the next UHC global monitoring report is published in 2019.

PITCH will continue to move forward on UHC and further build the capacity of partners to engage with national policymaking and budget tracking. Movement building through connecting partners nationally, regionally and globally will remain a priority, and there will be a specific focus on sustainability. This includes the development of an exit plan to prepare for 2020 when the programme ends (for example, work will be done on diversifying funds and resource mobilisation).

PITCH partners and country focal points are to play a key role at the CND in Vienna and the Harm Reduction Conference. The participation of country partners in these events will strengthen their ability to engage with international human rights mechanisms and advocacy spaces. The Global Policy summit will see its second edition in

the first quarter of 2019, bringing together PITCH partners from all levels to jointly strategise.

Challenges remain in the shape of the criminalisation of key populations, conservative politics and increasing pressure on available budgets. In 2019, PITCH is ready to face these challenges head on.





**PITCH** Partnership to Inspire, Transform  
and Connect the HIV response



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