

# PITCH

## Annual Report 2020



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

 **aidsfonds**

**FRONTLINE  
AIDS** 



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# Contents

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Foreword	5
2. A year marked by COVID-19	7
3. The year in context	11
4. Investing in community advocacy	15
4.1 Movement building between and within communities	15
4.2 Building advocacy skills and knowledge	17
5. Changing laws and policies	19
6. Improving access to affordable, high-quality health products and services	22
6.1 Equitable access to services and prevention	22
6.2 The role of civil society in universal health coverage	24
7. Improving funding for community responses to HIV	27
8. Putting human rights legislation to work	30
9. Gender-transformative programming	33
10. Learning and reflection	36
10.1 Evidence is key for successful advocacy	36
10.2 Partnership and collaboration: the cornerstones of PITCH	38
11. Sustainability	41
12. After PITCH	43
List of publications	44

# Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	OPSI	Organisasi Perubahan Sosial Indonesia
ARASA	AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa	OST	Opiate substitution therapy
ART	Antiretroviral treatment	PHAU	Health Ambassadors Uganda
ARVs	Antiretrovirals	PITCH	Partnership to Inspire, Transform and Connect the HIV Response
BHESP	Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme	PrEP	Pre-exposure prophylaxis
CAT	UN Convention against Torture	REAct	Rights-Evidence-Action
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism	SAfAIDS	Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	SCDI	Supporting Community Development Initiatives
CND	UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education	SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics
CSF	Charity Services for Friends	SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
CSO	Civil society organisation	SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
EVA	Education as a Vaccine	STI	Sexually transmitted infection
FACT	Family AIDS Caring Trust Zimbabwe	TB	Tuberculosis
GALZ	An association of LGBTI people in Zimbabwe	UHC	Universal health coverage
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	UHRN	Ugandan Harm Reduction Network
HRAPF	Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum	UKPC	Uganda Key Population Consortium
ICARH	International Centre on Advocacy on Right to Health	UN	United Nations
ICJR	Institute for Criminal Justice Reform	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
ICW+	International Council of Women Living With HIV/AIDS	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
INPUD	International Network of People Who Use Drugs	VNR	Voluntary National Review
IPPI	Ikatan Perempuan Positif Indonesia	WHO	World Health Organization
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other communities of people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics	ZCLDN	Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network
MTSTM	Myittasaytaman	ZNNP+	Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV
NAFOPHANU	The National Forum of People Living with HIV/AIDS Networks		
NGO	Non-governmental organisation		
NSWA	Nigeria Sex Workers Association		
NSWP	The Global Network of Sex Work Projects		





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# Remembering Wanjiku Kamau

A shining light has been taken from us. Wanjiku was a passionate advocate who fought for sexual and reproductive rights for all, and was an inspiration to many of us in the HIV and AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) movements.

Wanjiku first worked with PITCH partner Frontline AIDS in their policy team, and then returned after 10 years as a regional business development advisor based in her beloved Kenya. A skilful networker, she could work a room like no other and wrote many successful proposals for various partnerships. She then led the early stages of the PITCH partnership before leaving Frontline AIDS in 2017 to head the AIDS Accelerator, pushing for regional policy change.

We remember and honour Wanjiku as a dear friend and colleague. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all her family and friends, and to everyone affected by this loss.

# 1. Foreword

## The final year of the PITCH programme will be remembered as a year of unprecedented adversity

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact across all nine PITCH countries, shutting down HIV and harm reduction services, in some cases overnight. Alongside the threat of COVID-19 itself, PITCH partners and their communities have grappled with secondary challenges, from human rights violations and gender-based violence to lost livelihoods and food insecurity. In most contexts, opportunities for in-person advocacy have completely disappeared, and political priorities have shifted dramatically.

In this most unexpected of years, PITCH partners have shown an extraordinary capacity for resilience and innovation, not only dealing with these challenges but seizing new opportunities that have emerged from them. They have done this while also continuing to deliver results against their original theories of change and plan for the programme's closure and their sustainability beyond it.

PITCH investments in movement building across the five years of the programme have helped to ensure that, in 2020, in-country partnerships are stronger than ever before. From a national advocacy movement on universal health coverage (UHC) in Uganda, to a new coalition for young people's sexual and reproductive health and



Peer ambassador Ruth at the launch of the #UHC4ALL campaign in Uganda.  
Photo by Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV (UNYPA)



## PITCH partners have shown an extraordinary capacity for resilience and innovation

rights in Papua, Indonesia, PITCH has been a driving force for network building, and these connections will continue to have an impact long after the programme has ended.

PITCH partners have continued to secure important changes in laws and policies this year, in some cases off the back of long-running campaigns that were established earlier in the programme. In Vietnam, after sustained advocacy PITCH partners have finally ensured that health insurance coverage will be extended to key populations and to people who have no identity documents. In Zimbabwe, there are signs of growing support for the decriminalisation of same-sex relations, and in Ukraine there are moves towards decriminalising sex work.

Despite the challenges 2020 has brought, PITCH partners have made important contributions to improving access to HIV services. We have seen increases in access to harm reduction in several countries – including the first ever harm reduction provision in Nigeria. Work supported by PITCH has helped to break down many of the barriers facing key populations and adolescent girls, including successful advocacy on the age of consent for accessing services. The investments that PITCH has made in building capacity on UHC have also begun to bear fruit.

Advocacy supported by PITCH has made significant progress in improving funding for community responses to HIV this year. In Mozambique, in particular, PITCH partners enjoyed a major breakthrough after securing increased Global Fund allocations for key populations, and there have been similar success stories in other countries. PITCH has also substantially invested in building partners' capacities to mobilise domestic resources in

2020, leading to important results in Zimbabwe.

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 pandemic and responses

to it have led to a surge in human rights violations this past year, often with a disproportionate impact on key populations. In Uganda, PITCH partners worked with incredible determination and tenacity to secure the release of 20 young LGBTQI+ people imprisoned under trumped up lockdown charges. A number of partners have engaged with international mechanisms, taking part in the universal periodic review process and in shadow reporting under conventions such as CEDAW and the UN Convention Against Torture.

With 2020 being PITCH's final year, this report also describes the efforts that have been made to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme's partners.

Building on the PITCH programme and its many achievements gives hope for HIV and health advocacy into the future. Join us in celebrating the final year of this landmark partnership.

### Christine Stegling

Executive Director, Frontline Aids

### Mark Vermeulen

Executive Director, Aidsfonds

PITCH has helped to break down many of the barriers facing key populations and adolescent girls

## 2. A year marked by COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound consequences for the global HIV response, in the short, medium, and long term. This is especially true for key populations and adolescent girls and young women, who have already been disproportionately affected by HIV. Already marginalised by public health service providers and governments, the pandemic has further entrenched and exacerbated the sense of exclusion experienced by key populations and adolescent girls and young women. Such is its impact on the health and livelihoods of communities that COVID-19 has already put the progress of past decades at risk. Governments' responses to COVID-19 have directly affected all parts of the HIV response, including surveillance, prevention, care, treatment and the protection of human rights.

Despite the challenges faced in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, PITCH partners have demonstrated incredible resilience, determination, and innovation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic this year. They have adapted their advocacy plans and strategies with speed and ingenuity, allowing them to continue to advocate and campaign for an inclusive and equitable HIV response while also responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the while learning how to become effective online advocates. This has been achieved despite unreliable internet connectivity and reduced access to colleagues and professional working space.

Just a few examples of human rights violations experienced by partners and communities are

provided here, as well as examples of the affirmative action and proactive responses taken by PITCH partners that has helped to ensure their advocacy continued, undeterred by the pandemic. From the outset of COVID-19, PITCH has worked with partner organisations to introduce greater flexibility in the way that advocacy activities were planned, given the uncertainty created by the pandemic and the need to remain adaptive and innovative wherever possible.

In **Uganda**, LGBTQI+ people have faced arbitrary arrest and detention as part of a wave of human rights abuses that came with the imposition of lockdown measures. Between March and July 2020, PITCH partner Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) recorded 32 such incidents experienced by LGBTQI+ people, and 24 incidents experienced by sex workers. In March 2020, a group of 23 LGBTQI+ youth were arrested at a shelter in Kyengera, a town on the outskirts of Kampala, on baseless allegations of flouting a ban on public gatherings. Following the initial raids, public officials subjected these young

treatment in prison. In the judgment of Justice Michael Elubu, this amounted to a violation of the rights of the 20 affected people to a fair hearing. Each was awarded damages of UGX 5,000,000 (around € 1,150) by the Uganda High Court as a result of the violence and abuse they suffered. After the damages were awarded, in a surprise move criminal summons were issued to the Chairman Local Council III of Kyengera Town Council and a Prison Officer to answer charges of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment.

In addition to the crucial work carried out by HRAPF, partners in **Uganda** have also conducted targeted advocacy focused on ensuring uninterrupted access to treatment for people living with HIV. This was carried out after it was revealed that people diagnosed with COVID-19 were being prioritised for healthcare over those seeking HIV and antiretroviral treatment (ART) services. In response to the pandemic, and as part of its ongoing revision process, the Ministry of Health updated the Government's HIV prevention and treatment guidelines. Health

**Aidsfonds and Frontline AIDS have utilised their own organisational funding beyond their PITCH budgets to provide and monitor crisis grants to partners to address communities' most urgent needs**

people to physical abuse and discriminatory language in front of members of the public, who ridiculed them due to their sexual orientation, and these acts were broadcast by sections of the media. Twenty were charged in court and remanded to prison, where they were denied access to legal counsel and proper medical care. They were finally released after 50 days due to HRAPF's tenacity in demanding access to the young people and insisting that the case be brought back to court. HRAPF reported that several of the detainees suffered torture and ill

facilities were instructed to allow people living with HIV access to multi-month dispensing of ART for up to six months from facilities located in or close to their communities during lockdown. This was made possible by the active engagement of partners and others in the guidelines revision process as well as in meetings and webinars, including a virtual exchange visit with counterparts in Ethiopia to learn more about six-monthly ART dispensing. Moreover, the Uganda Key Populations Consortium (UKPC) also successfully advocated for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS,



Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund) to provide funding to address key populations' urgent security needs during the pandemic.

In **Mozambique**, as elsewhere, many sex workers struggled to provide for their families after bars, downtown streets and barracks were closed or put under curfew. Sex workers who work on transport routes and close to border crossings have also been affected by restrictions on their movements. The impact of this has been that many sex workers have ultimately been deprived of their livelihoods as they have no longer been able to meet their clients. Many sex workers and people who use drugs have been displaced and made destitute after being unable to work and are increasingly reliant on family members for food and shelter. Despite this, progress in securing multi-month dispensing of ART has been made in Mozambique, where people living with HIV are now able to collect at least three months of ART to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the availability of their treatment.

In **Indonesia**, people who use drugs were denied access to some public health clinics, but PITCH partners were successful in advocating for take-home methadone, an innovation that has never previously been permitted in the country. After receiving recommendations from PITCH partner the Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, on 21 April 2020 the Ministry of Law and Human Rights released 38,882 prisoners, including people who use drugs, as a COVID-19 prevention measure.

In **Zimbabwe**, national lockdown measures included roadblocks to reduce the movement of people and the spread of the virus. As COVID-19 infection rates increased, HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services were de-prioritised, scaled back, or closed entirely to allow health services to treat COVID-19 patients. This limited access to safer sex commodities, family planning support, and ART services for key populations and adolescent girls and young women. This situation was exacerbated when doctors and nurses went on strike over low pay and a lack of personal protective equipment.



Photo by YouthRISE Nigeria

In **Kenya**, PITCH partner Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme (BHESP), in partnership with the UK's Leicester University, conducted and published research on the impact of COVID-19 and related government restrictions on access to SRH services for sex workers and adolescent girls and young women. The study revealed that various restrictions imposed by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 have made it difficult for sex workers to access health-care. It also found that the focus on COVID-19, coupled with supply disruptions for reproductive health commodities, has resulted in routine reproductive healthcare services for adolescent girls and young women being neglected, especially in public health centres. Economic challenges facing young people were also undermining their access to reproductive healthcare. BHESP has used its experience of using online platforms and phone technology to reach out to mobile and transient sex workers, and has developed an intervention tool to increase access to antiretrovirals and other medications. Like many other PITCH partners globally, BHESP has used its own funds, and also received support from external emergency funds, to distribute food packs and emergency bedding to sex workers in response to the pandemic, and has come up with innovative ideas such as purchasing a motorcycle to deliver essential medications to sex workers.

In response to the pandemic, Aidsfonds and Frontline AIDS have utilised their own organisational funding beyond their PITCH budgets to provide and monitor crisis grants to PITCH partners to address communities' most urgent needs. Aidsfonds allocated grants to 65 organisations in 35 countries. Some grants were used to directly address human rights violations (such as responding to 177 cases of gender-based violence), while others indirectly supported wider rights and wellbeing (for example, psychosocial support was provided to 4,100 people and ART was delivered to the homes of 8,776 people living with HIV). Meanwhile, Frontline AIDS expanded its Rapid Response Fund (RRF), previously focused on supporting LGBTQI+ people in crises, to distribute funding to meet the needs of all

people living with and affected by HIV during the COVID-19 crisis in 41 countries. This has supported the adaptation of essential HIV services for remote and home-based delivery, provided food and shelter for those who lost their means of income due to the pandemic, and provided protection for people targeted by stigma, discrimination and violence, especially those blamed for COVID-19 transmission.

### 3. The year in context



PITCH close-out meeting in Ukraine. UNAIDS senior advisor and former Vice-Prime Minister Pavlo Rozenko. Photo by Alliance for Public Health.

While COVID-19 took centre stage worldwide, 2020 also saw shifts in context and policy that were independent of the pandemic and will affect marginalised communities.

Some opportunities for civil society engagement were reduced when strategic multilateral processes, such as the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, moved online. Due to poor internet connectivity and a lack of internet access, civil society organisations and activists found themselves excluded from these important advocacy platforms.

At the same time, others have experienced an increase in their access to global spaces since proceedings have gone virtual. This includes the HIV 2020 Conference, where there was broad

and inspiring representation from PITCH partners, and key meetings to discuss UNAIDS' new strategy, which were conducted entirely online. At a December meeting on the UNAIDS' strategy, for example, PITCH partners from **Nigeria** and **Uganda** were able to join online and make interventions on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the decriminalisation of sex work, helping to position these issues as critical to the new global AIDS strategy.

The importance of including civil society in public decision-making processes has been a key advocacy theme across the PITCH programme, and in some contexts this agenda faced new challenges in 2020. In **Kenya**, there was an increase in engagement of key populations during the review



and development of the new Kenya AIDS Strategic Framework (KASF-II) as compared to its predecessor (KASF-I). Through sustained campaigning by the National Transgender Advocacy Network (NTAN), transgender populations are now included in the KASF, and national standardised guidelines for the implementation of comprehensive sexually transmitted infections (STI) programmes for transgender people were validated in May 2020. In contrast, in **Nigeria** the recently signed Companies and Allied Matters Act of 2020 (CAMA 2020) contains contentious sections that place limits on the rights of freedom of association, assembly and expression, which significantly impacts organisations working with key populations.

In some PITCH countries, the legislative process has become less transparent. For instance, in **Indonesia** discussions around a bill on modifying the country's penal code were held in private and were inaccessible to the public. The last draft of the bill was not publicly available. But after lobbying from partners, the discussions have now been tabled to take place when the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.

After months of tireless advocacy efforts by civil society, including PITCH partner the Nigeria Sex Workers Association and its legal team, Abuja's Federal Court passed a landmark judgment that sex work is not a criminal offence in Nigeria

Punitive laws around the criminalisation of LGBTQI+ people, sex workers, and people who use drugs also continue to make it difficult for civil society

organisations to register, support key populations, and advocate for budgets towards key populations' programming.

For the first time in Ukraine, an openly gay man living with HIV ran for office in the country's local elections, alongside ten other candidates from key populations

In **Nigeria**, sex workers were being arbitrarily arrested and subjected to extortion, assault and rape by the police. After months of tireless advocacy efforts by civil society, including PITCH partner the Nigeria Sex Workers Association (NSWA) and its legal team, on 19 December 2019 Abuja's Federal Court passed a landmark judgment that sex work is not a criminal offence in Nigeria. The court also ordered that every sex worker who had been arrested should be paid compensation. On 6 February 2020, Nigeria's Inspector General of Police stated that police officers should not harass or arrest women in the street. The judgement has led to a tremendous reduction in both police brutality and arrests of sex workers. Through the advocacy carried out by NSWA and others, sex workers in Nigeria became increasingly aware of their fundamental rights and how to report rights violations.

In other parts of the world, punitive laws are gaining public attention. For example, the prosecution of a well-known singer in **Myanmar**, who was charged under sodomy laws for heterosexual sex – laws that were previously reserved to prosecute homosexual sex – received widespread attention.

For the first time in **Ukraine**, an openly gay man living with HIV ran for office in the country's local



elections, alongside ten other candidates from key populations. In August 2020, I.Y. Tereshchuk, a member of PITCH partner LIGA, ran for election to the Odessa City Council after the Odessa chapter of the European Solidarity party held open primaries. Although none of the candidates were elected, one has since been appointed Advising Assistant to the Deputy at Odessa City Council, a role that provides opportunities to influence policy. In Ivano-Frankivsk in Western Ukraine, another activist – a board member from PITCH partner VOLNA – has been appointed to the same position. This is an important and positive development in the country's political landscape.

Although there have been advances on the introduction and scale up of harm reduction programmes over the last five years (e.g. in PITCH countries **Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria** and **Uganda**), ongoing criminalisation, stigma and discrimination, and a severe lack of funding for harm reduction and drug user-led responses, persists. In **Vietnam**, draft laws on drug treatment have not reflected all of the recommendations coming from NGOs and UN agencies, although as of July 2020 the drafts have prioritised voluntary drug treatment over compulsory detention. Worryingly, a new law passed in **Ukraine** in July 2020 has increased the penalty for drug possession by 20-30 times, creating stronger corruption opportunities and doubling down on the criminalisation of people who use drugs. A ray of hope for harm reduction programmes can be seen in increasing levels of understanding from media, police, and inter-faith religious leaders, such as is happening in **Nigeria**.



Leaflets for election candidate Alexander Gryn. Photo by Alexander Gryn

Among adolescent girls, young women, and young key populations we are seeing increased knowledge of gender norms, and a greater power to challenge these norms and to negotiate consent and safety. The amendment of the **Zimbabwe** Education Act has now ensured that adolescent girls who become pregnant can continue with their schooling, a decision that was celebrated by young and old. In **Kenya**, female members of parliament openly rallied behind a bill on reproductive health and advocated that, instead of shelving the bill, it be taken to the public for review and inputs. This also led to agreement from the majority of the senate to discuss issues affecting girls and women, including safe abortion, as outlined by the bill. But in **Russia**, rights for women faced an unprecedented setback when domestic and gender-based violence was decriminalised, meaning women are no longer legally protected from violence in the home.

A ray of hope for harm reduction programmes can be seen in increasing levels of understanding from media, police, and inter-faith religious leaders

In terms of universal health coverage (UHC), progress to meet commitments of the 2019 UHC High Level Meeting's Political Declaration has been weak, although there are some positive stories from PITCH partners. In early 2021, **Vietnam's** amended health insurance law will be changed to cover all people, including key populations and those without identification, following sustained advocacy supported by PITCH. For countries transitioning away from Global Fund financing by 2025, the move towards domestic funding is challenging. **Uganda**, on the other hand, is showcasing its commitment towards providing access to HIV and SRHR services for all of its citizens by committing US\$2 million to the Global Fund replenishment.

Political instability has also caused significant challenges for advocacy work in 2020. Following parliamentary elections in **Kyrgyz Republic** in October 2020, the fact that no candidates from opposition parties were elected prompted calls to investigate election fraud, followed by protests and chaos. In **Uganda**, the build-up to elections saw severe crackdowns on civil society organisations. In **Zimbabwe**, the Health Minister was dismissed for corruption. The government then arrested the investigative journalist who broke the story, who

In early 2021, Vietnam's amended health insurance law will be changed to cover all people, including key populations and those without identification, following sustained advocacy supported by PITCH

spent more than a month in prison without bail along with other human rights defenders.

While 2020 brought significant challenges to communities worldwide, it also proved to be a year of innovation and resilience. PITCH partners continued to find opportunities to push forward their advocacy and strengthen their movements and voices, both for 2020 and beyond.

I.Y. Tereshchuk, a member of PITCH partner LIGA





**4. Investing in community**

PITCH banner used throughout 2020. Design by Diego Lopez

# advocacy

Over the past five years, PITCH partners have continuously strengthened their in-country partnerships and consolidated movements with like-minded organisations. In many countries, PITCH partners refer to one another as family, demonstrating the close-knit connections and substitute family ties between activists, many of whom have been estranged from or disowned by their families due to their sexuality, occupation or drug use. PITCH has become an influential and recognised movement, which an increasing number of organisations have joined recognising the amplified voice it provides and resulting in a win-win situation for all involved.

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In **Indonesia**, PITCH partners have shown their inventiveness by launching a competitive application process for participating in a training of trainers course. Applicants to become trainers of trainers for domestic resource mobilisation were requested to submit an abstract that was assessed against diverse criteria, including experience, passion, and advocacy network. Seventy-three participants applied, of which 14 were selected, representing PITCH partners as well as other movements, including women's rights, family planning, people living with HIV, the national LGBTQI+ network and university students. The competitive application process resulted in high-calibre applications, while the course itself has ensured a commitment to continue budget advocacy efforts beyond the lifespan of the PITCH programme. This process also resulted in highly capable and qualified organisations joining with existing PITCH partners, laying the foundations for an advocacy drive to increase domestic resources for HIV and health.

Gathering data and evidence has become harder in the time of COVID-19. As national networks of people living with HIV rely more and more on social media and other online platforms to check in and support their members, the Global Network of People living with HIV (GNP+) launched VOICE+, an app that supports communities of people living with HIV to connect with each other, get information and report on healthcare issues and human rights situations from their countries, such as treatment stockouts and forced sterilisations. This app has been piloted in **Nigeria** and **Uganda**, and will soon be rolled out globally.

PITCH co-funded the HIV2020 online conference, which aimed to reaffirm the leading role

communities play in the **global** HIV response. The conference put key population communities at the centre of a re-imagined peer exchange on new research and its implications for policy and practice, solidifying the role of communities in leading and influencing global health responses. This virtual conference included 35 sessions and ran from June to December 2020. The number of session participants ranged from 23 to 450. Another 22,390 people watched sessions live on Facebook.

In October 2020, the PITCH consortium in **Uganda** launched the successful UHC4ALL campaign, which reached more than 4.5 million people. The campaign's objectives were to create awareness of UHC, and to lobby for key and vulnerable populations to be included in Uganda's UHC agenda and national health insurance scheme. The campaign was developed in partnership with the Ugandan Ministry of Health, and both the head of the AIDS control programme and a senior medical officer who oversees SRHR/HIV-integration took part in the campaign's launch. During the launch ceremony, partners demanded that the government expand UHC to include the most vulnerable and underserved populations in Uganda, securing a commitment to do this from Ministry

In October 2020, the PITCH consortium in Uganda launched the successful UHC4ALL campaign, which reached more than 4.5 million people



of Health representatives. The campaign targeted key ministries and ministers, including the Minister of Health, the Uganda AIDS Commission, plus legislators, development partners, UNAIDS, and the communities themselves.

PITCH partners in Papua, **Indonesia** were approached by a Christian faith-based organisation, which sought to collaborate. This new relationship has led to the SRHR Papua Movement being formed, which consists of local government officials, religious leaders, healthcare workers, teachers, local communities and the media, all of which signed an agreement to support the sustainability of SRHR and HIV programmes for young people in Papua. As a result, SRHR topics have now been included in school curriculums, Christian religious education, and in the training of healthcare workers, teachers and media partners.

## 4.2 Building advocacy skills and knowledge

In 2020, Aidsfonds and Frontline AIDS worked closely with a range of partner organisations to design and implement participatory training initiatives on key themes.

PITCH launched the **Communications for Advocacy**<sup>1</sup> training programme at the start of 2020. The course helps participants to develop a deeper understanding of their target audiences, reach audiences on social media and harness the power of storytelling. The training programme was delivered in person in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine in February and March. In the remaining PITCH countries it was provided as online training over the course of the year. For PITCH partners the Key Population Consortium in **Kenya** and NSWA in **Nigeria**, the storytelling component of the training proved to be particularly important for their work. Developing their storytelling skills enabled them to use humour to map journeys of change, highlight the individual, and create connections with advocacy targets. In **Ukraine**, PITCH partner Hope and Trust found value in learning about how to communicate in a crisis, and how to anticipate, strategise, and respond to

damaging and harmful comments or positions taken publicly by government and society in relation to key populations. Communications for Advocacy has since been made available as a free, interactive online training course, available to community advocates seeking to strengthen their communications for advocacy skills.

The **PITCH Gender Working Group** carried out training on gender-transformative approaches for PITCH partners in **Zimbabwe**. This North-South collaboration between PITCH and two local consultants represented a new way of working, and included a component of young women's mentorship.

Opportunities to enhance knowledge and build advocacy skills through synergy and engagement between the country and **global** policy levels were capitalised on in 2020. The **International Drug Policy Consortium** (IDPC) facilitated webinars that explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the HIV response in an effort to strengthen the confidence of PITCH partners to continue their advocacy despite the current challenges. Webinar topics included drug policy in Africa, decriminalisation of drug use in Africa and women who use drugs, which involved the participation of representatives from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, WHO, the International Network of People Who Use Drugs, and the Women and Harm Reduction International Network, among others. At the health-focused Commission of Narcotic Drugs' 'thematic intersessional' in October 2020, a three-day hybrid event involving in-person and virtual participants, IDPC encouraged and coordinated submissions from civil society organisations

Opportunities to enhance knowledge and build advocacy skills through synergy and engagement between the country and global policy levels were capitalised on in 2020

<sup>1</sup> Access the Communications for Advocacy course here: [course.sogicampaigns.org/comms4advocacy/](https://course.sogicampaigns.org/comms4advocacy/)

(CSOs). This helped to increase the CSOs' skills and confidence in conducting virtual advocacy and enabled them to reach an audience of policymakers from around the world.

PITCH also contributed to the development of new advocacy skills and knowledge among community members. In **Zimbabwe**, PITCH

coverage in **Nigeria**, the poor quality of data, and the impact of police brutality and harassment on sex workers' ability to access services, while a young woman from **Uganda** talked about the need for CSE and the lifting of age restrictions for accessing HIV services. This represented an important opportunity for community members to bring the key issues they face in their home

## In Zimbabwe, the Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service and Bekezela built the skills of 70 adolescent girls and young women to become advocacy champions

partners the Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS) and Bekezela built the skills of 70 adolescent girls and young women to become advocacy champions. This included Youth Advocacy Committee members from the Inyathi Adolescent clinic in Bubi District. The committee is made of young people (below 24 years) who identify advocacy issues affecting young people who engage with the clinic. As a result of their capacity building, these advocacy champions advocated with the Inyathi district hospital executive on the need to operationalise youth-friendly services in local communities. Through these engagements, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and community leaders collaborated to identify young people to become village health workers. Several of the young people identified have been able to help their peers better understand the importance of taking action to prevent HIV.

During the UNAIDS' Programme Coordinating Board pre-meetings in November 2020, PITCH supported two civil society partners that had engaged in the shadow report writing process to make interventions and shape decision-points for the main meeting in December. At a pre-meeting on the new UNAIDS' strategy, a representative from NSWA spoke about poor levels of service

contexts into a highly-relevant global process, building their skills and confidence along the way.

In 2020, PITCH was also successful in enabling more key population representatives to secure decision-making roles on steering committees and other influential bodies. In **Ukraine**, a representative from PITCH partner Meridian became a member of the Commission of the National Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Response Council, supervising the development of funding applications, negotiations and the implementation of programmes funded by the Global Fund. This has enabled them to participate in national-level monitoring and evaluation of Global Fund programmes and to support advocacy submissions and key advocacy asks on behalf of people who use drugs in Ukraine.

## In 2020 PITCH was successful in enabling more key population representatives to secure decision-making roles on steering committees and other influential bodies



Khuất Thị Hải Oanh, Executive Director of PITCH partner SCDI at a police sensitisation workshop. Photo by SCDI

## 5. Changing laws and policies

PITCH partners and their allies have engaged in assertive advocacy campaigns to challenge the stigma experienced by transgender people and to secure acknowledgment of their specific needs.

In **Kenya**, building on the WHO declassifying being transgender as a mental health disorder in 2019, the National Transgender Advocacy Network, hosted by Trans\*Alliance, brought together 11 trans organisations to develop national standardised guidelines for the implementation of HIV/STI programmes. The guidelines were finalised in May 2020 and were disseminated among health practitioners and policymakers. Following the publication of these guidelines, the National AIDS/STI Control Programme has developed technical tools to disaggregate health programme data across five key population groups, including transgender people.

## PITCH partners and their allies engaged in assertive advocacy campaigns to challenge the stigma experienced by transgender people, and to secure acknowledgement of their specific needs within national strategic plans

In **Mozambique**, Lambda targeted specific decision-makers with research findings that highlighted the barriers that stop transgender people from accessing healthcare. As a result of continued advocacy, in 2020 the National HIV/STI focal point at the Mozambique Ministry of Health publicly committed to include transgender people as a key population in the country's upcoming National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2020-2024). This document was approved in December 2020 and reflected the needs of transgender people. This achievement has also informed the Global Fund grant, which proposes to reach transgender people with specific interventions. Partners in **Uganda** worked towards the recognition of transgender people as a high-risk population in the National Multi-sectoral Key Population Programming Framework and the National Key Population Priority Action Plan. The Uganda AIDS Commission not only endorsed these documents, it also invited key population representatives to join technical working groups that lead the planning of the national HIV and AIDS response. In **Vietnam**, PITCH partner SCDI has acted as technical partner to the Ministry of Health's legal department to finalise a draft law on gender affirmation, which protects transgender people from violence and discrimination related to their perceived gender identity or gender expression. Members of the transgender community contributed to drafting the law, which was due to be completed by December 2020.

Partners have also worked relentlessly on decriminalising sex work and drug use and improving rights for LGBTQI+ people, with some promising results. PITCH partners in **Zimbabwe** gathered support from senators and parliamentarians to decriminalise HIV transmission, which currently carries a prison sentence of up to

20 years. This work has contributed to the country's 2019 Marriage Bill being reviewed, and in 2020, senators made a verbal commitment during national policy debates to support the removal of an HIV clause, which would lead to the decriminalisation of HIV transmission. The President will now review the bill before enactment. Also in Zimbabwe, in line with

Partners in Zimbabwe gathered support from senators and parliamentarians to decriminalise HIV transmission, which currently carries a prison sentence of up to 20 years

commitments made in the 2020 PITCH Annual Plan, continued advocacy efforts from Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (ZCLDN) have resulted in the Ministry of Health endorsing a new Drug Masterplan. This national strategy addresses the control of licit and illicit drugs in the country and, thanks to PITCH advocacy, it now provides for the delivery of harm reduction activities at a national level.

In August 2020 in **Vietnam**, a new, more inclusive 2020-2025 national action plan on sexual and reproductive healthcare for young people was issued. Compared to its predecessor, the new action plan has broadened its scope and now explicitly includes and prioritises disadvantaged adolescents, those aged between 10-14 years old,



ethnic minorities, young people with disabilities and young migrants. In June, SCDI participated in a workshop held by the Department of Mother and Children's Health to provide recommendations for the new action plan.

PITCH finished on a high note in **Vietnam** with the news that the Ministry of Health has authorised a pilot to allow take-home methadone in three provinces over the next two years. This is a milestone for people with opiate dependence, who have been obliged to commute to their nearest methadone centre for their daily dose for

PITCH finished on a high note in Vietnam with the news that the Ministry of Health has authorised a pilot to allow take-home methadone in three provinces over the next two years

the last 12 years. SCDI served as a member of the working group that was responsible for developing the plan to support the pilot. This achievement is the result of SCDI's hard work throughout the PITCH programme, which involved the organisation contributing to nine versions of the plan and numerous meetings with government ministries prior to the approval.

As committed to in the 2020 PITCH Annual Plan, drafting of legislation to decriminalise sex work started in **Ukraine** and is partly the result of advocacy carried out by PITCH partner Legalife-Ukraine, alongside other civil society organisations. Members of the Interagency Working Group on Decriminalization at the National Council on HIV/ AIDS and Tuberculosis Prevention have agreed priority objectives and a work plan. Legalife-Ukraine was trusted with preparing a concept note on the regulation of sex work. Sex workers' participation in this process has allowed for the accurate representation of their needs and interests being considered.



## 6. Improving access to affordable, high-quality health products and services

### 6.1 Equitable access to services and prevention

In 2020, PITCH continued to make progress in securing access to key population-friendly services and community-based HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. Key population groups and adolescent girls and young women successfully influenced decision-making in these areas.

PITCH partners representing people who use drugs contributed to some significant successes. As anticipated in the 2020 PITCH Annual Plan, in **Nigeria** a planned needle and syringe pilot was rolled out. Trainings on public health and rights-based approaches to drug interventions, which drug control committees participated in, created a foundation for introducing harm

reduction services. In **Uganda**, the participation of people who use drugs in technical working groups and national taskforces, with support from the Ugandan Harm Reduction Network (UHRN), contributed to the Ministry of Health's decision to approve guidelines for drop-in centres and standard operating procedures on opiate substitution therapy (OST) for people who inject drugs. A protocol for law enforcement agents to ensure they treat people who use drugs with respect has also been developed.

In **Ukraine**, thanks to advocacy activities conducted by PITCH partner Our Help at the regional level, OST sites have become more friendly and accessible. Waiting lists for OST have finally shortened, and the number of people at OST sites in Donetsk oblast has increased by 17%,

In Ukraine, thanks to advocacy activities conducted by PITCH partner Our Help at the regional level, OST sites have become more friendly and accessible. Waiting lists for OST have finally shortened, and the number of people at OST sites in Donetsk oblast has increased by 17%, while the number of people using take-away drugs has grown by 60%

while the number of people using take-away drugs<sup>2</sup> has grown by 60%. As a result of successful cooperation between PITCH, OST-organisations and local coordination councils, two new sites were opened and integrated care is being provided. Ongoing cooperation with the High Commissioner on Human Rights improved access to state-guaranteed qualified legal assistance for people who use drugs, people living with HIV, and sex workers. In 2020, eight visiting consultation sessions have been held, in relation to property rights, the right to access quality-assured medical aid, and support in drafting complaints in response to cases of the police abusing their power. In **Myanmar**, new methadone centres were opened in two townships serving more than 100 people who use drugs.

Partners further improved awareness, policies and access to services for adolescent girls and young women. In **Southern Africa**, adolescent girls and young women engaged in technical working groups and steering committees, which amplifies their voices on issues of access, affordability and availability of SRHR and HIV services. For example, in **Botswana** young advocacy champions attended a national dialogue with the First Lady that aimed to raise awareness on the challenges young people face in accessing services for SRHR, HIV prevention, gender-based violence, and alcohol and substance use. Elsewhere, PITCH partners in **Zimbabwe** have started conversations with the Ministry of Health and National AIDS Council at subnational level on the expansion of key population-friendly services and

rollout of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) through provincial key population forums. In **Mozambique**, the significant involvement of adolescents and young people in planning and decision-making processes has always been a major challenge at all levels. After PITCH partner COALIZÃO participated in the Technical Group of Adolescents and Youth of the National Council to Combat AIDS (CNCS), in which the organisation demanded that adolescents and young people become more meaningfully involved in the country's HIV response, the National AIDS Council invited COALIZÃO to join the Steering Committee for the design of the PEN-V (National Strategic Plan for responses to HIV and AIDS). COALIZÃO now has the remit to ensure the concerns of adolescents and young people living with HIV are considered in the new strategy.

In **Nigeria**, a commitment was made to lower the age of consent to access services at the national level. The Benue State Commissioner of Health issued a memo to all health facilities in the state to provide unhindered and non-discriminatory services to all, regardless of age.

Partners worked intensively to address stigma and discrimination. In **Mozambique**, police officers were trained and a booklet was produced on human rights and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics relating to LGBTQI+ people. This strengthened the relationship between the police and marginalised communities and increased the police's knowledge on key populations, human rights and gender-based violence. This contributed to the police setting up separate cells for trans women in three Maputo

<sup>2</sup> Take-home or take-away OST involves doses of methadone or buprenorphine which people are allowed to take home to ingest without supervision. Where available, it is generally offered to those who have been adhering to OST for a number of months. Source: AVERT.org

precincts to protect them from discrimination, physical and sexual violence. In **Zimbabwe**, partners organised a discussion on equal rights for LGBTQI+ people with the government, religious leaders, pastors and lawyers to reinforce the need to review religious doctrines to include all marginalised groups. Partners in Zimbabwe also coordinated the National Key Population Stigma Index. This generated evidence on the needs of key populations, which was used as a source document in the development of the country's Global Fund Concept Note and the National AIDS Strategy for 2021-2025.

In **Uganda**, health workers showed changed attitudes after being trained on the rights of LGBTQI+ people and sex workers and the stigma and discrimination they face. In 2020, the LGBTQI+ community was more involved in contributing to government policies, such as Uganda's new National Strategic Plan for HIV.

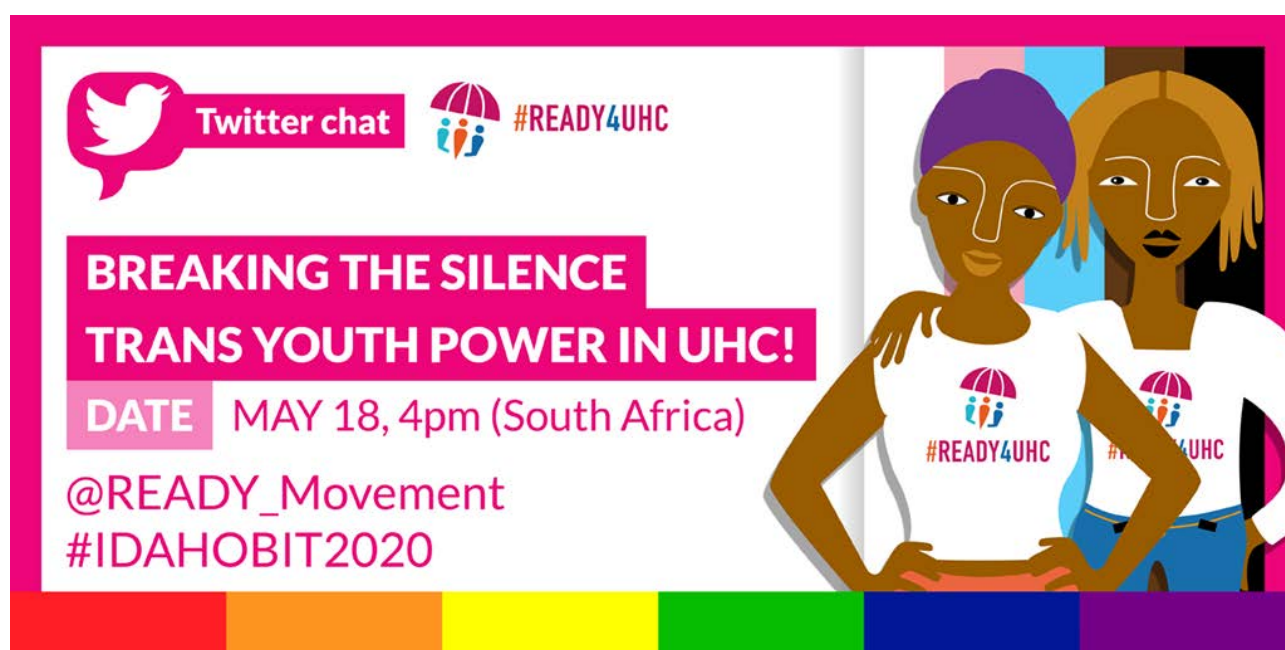
## 6.2 The role of civil society in universal health coverage

In recent years, the international community's health focus has shifted from achieving disease-specific targets towards reaching the goal of UHC, which is prominently featured in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted

PITCH made a significant financial and programmatic commitment to strengthen the capacities of key and vulnerable populations (including adolescent girls and young women) on UHC in Sub Saharan Africa and Ukraine

in 2015. Many countries are now going through health systems reforms and some are also transitioning from external donor support to domestic funding for health. The ambition is to see HIV services increasingly integrated into domestically-funded UHC packages, while the success of the AIDS response and UHC depends on eliminating key barriers to HIV and health services.

In 2020, PITCH made a significant financial and programmatic commitment to strengthen the capacities of key and vulnerable populations (including adolescent girls and young women) on UHC in **sub-Saharan Africa** and **Ukraine**. The



Twitter banner to promote #READY4UHC campaign and the Twitter chat, organised by PITCH partners.



aspiration of this work has been to ensure inclusive, rights-based implementation of UHC national plans that work for these communities. The project aimed to ensure that UHC builds on the lessons learnt within the HIV response, works for key and vulnerable populations and moves towards comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care services, while focusing on the sustainability of the community response.

In **Uganda**, an increase in capacity strengthening for Public Health Ambassadors Uganda (PHAU) contributed to its evidence-based advocacy work to increase health sector financing to achieve UHC in the country. Advocacy by UHRN has contributed to people who inject drugs being included in the new national key populations definition and guidance documents (the National HIV Priority Action Plan for Key and Priority Populations 2020/2021 – 2022/2023 and the National Strategic Plan), and has resulted in government agreement to include people who use drugs in the roll out of UHC as one of the key populations in Uganda. In **Kenya**, all 16 PITCH partners were part of a pilot UHC project whose results informed recommendations to the government and technical agencies on ways to meaningfully engage key populations and vulnerable groups in national UHC programmes.

Engaging broader civil society is key for paving the way towards truly universal health coverage. In **Zimbabwe**, the Provincial UHC Movement Building Campaign trained 86 CSOs on meaningful civil society engagement in UHC, tracking UHC implementation, and budget advocacy. These organisations then went on to develop provincial- and community-level UHC action plans, which included asks for increased resources for procurement of SRH commodities, key population interventions, PrEP for HIV prevention, expansion

to public hospitals, drug availability at public centres, inclusive data generation and sharing of real-time data.

Ukrainian PITCH partners analysed to what extent the regulatory framework in **Ukraine** complies with the objectives and principles of the Political Declaration on UHC and, together with other civil society actors, developed strong recommendations for changes. These recommendations emphasised the urgent need to approve the government's 2030 action plan for HIV, TB and viral hepatitis (the State Strategy for Combating HIV/TB and Viral Hepatitis by 2030),

On the global stage, the READY4UHC Twitter chat, held during the virtual World Health Assembly, created space for young trans community advocates to raise concerns on barriers to trans inclusion in UHC

which has passed public hearings and is being finalised. On 18 November 2020, the recommendations resulted in the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approving the State Strategy for the Development of the TB Health Care System for 2020-2023. Advocacy work to remind the Parliamentary Platform Against TB of its commitments also resulted in a multisectoral accountability mechanism being established.

A survey in **Vietnam** showed persistent gaps in social policies that limited the access of health insurance for poor households, key populations and their children. SCDI brought this to the forefront of discussions with the Department of Social Assistance, and has, recently secured a major win, with the country's health insurance law now extended to cover all people in (as detailed above).

On the **global** stage, the READY4UHC Twitter chat, held during the virtual World Health Assembly, created space for young trans community advocates to raise concerns on barriers to trans inclusion in UHC, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PITCH also published a toolkit for partners on developing advocacy strategies that integrate rights-based, community-led and inclusive approaches into the UHC agenda. This toolkit is available in seven languages.

PITCH submitted strong case studies and evidence to a global consultation held by UHC2030, a multi-stakeholder platform that promotes collaborative working at global and country levels on health systems strengthening, on the State of UHC Commitment report. PITCH also added its priorities on key populations and community-led responses to the UHC2030 Handbook on Social Participation in UHC, which was released on UHC Day (12 December 2020).<sup>3</sup> In late 2020,



Bac Giang volleyball activity. Photo by SCDI

<sup>3</sup> See UHC2030, 'Civil society consultation on Handbook on Social Participation for UHC'. Available from [www.uhc2030.org/what-we-do/voices/accountability/civil-society-consultation-on-handbook-on-social-participation-for-uhc](http://www.uhc2030.org/what-we-do/voices/accountability/civil-society-consultation-on-handbook-on-social-participation-for-uhc) (accessed February 2020).



# 7. Improving funding for community responses to HIV



Promotional graphic for the launch of 2020 research: Fast-Track or Off Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030

Following the successful replenishment of the Global Fund in 2019, PITCH partners have effectively manoeuvred themselves into spaces and positions where they have been able to influence Global Fund proposal development and the allocation of funding to key populations and adolescent girls and young women.

In **Mozambique**, PITCH partners secured a massive budget increase from the Global Fund to support services for people who use drugs and men who have sex with men. The allocation for men who have sex with men increased from US\$1.2 million for 2020-2022, to US\$5.4 million

for 2021-23. The allocation for people who use drugs increased from just US\$ 31,222 for 2020-2022 to US\$4.7 million for 2021-23. The approved

In Mozambique, PITCH partners secured a massive budget increase from the Global Fund to support services for people who use drugs and men who have sex with men



proposal includes US\$12.5 million to address human rights and covers separate transgender priorities, advances that are partly the result of community-led engagement with the Global Fund's policy and programme development process supported by PITCH.

In **Indonesia**, PITCH funding allowed partners to participate in the development of 2021-2023 funding requests to the Global Fund to support harm reduction, sex workers and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission services for adolescent girls and young women. This involved partners, including Puzzle, Gaya Nusantara, Yakeba, OPSI, and Rumah Cemara, attending the technical working group and sub-working group meetings as part of the Global Fund's proposal development process in relation to HIV and AIDS. In **Uganda**, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) for the Global Fund opened its door to young people by involving them in committee meetings and in grant making and writing processes. As a result, the district political leadership has committed to increase its health budget to include provisions for youth-friendly health services as well as the procurement of SRHR commodities and the appointment of a health worker to handle SRHR service delivery for adolescent girls and young women. It is anticipated that this will increase demand for SRHR services among young people at the district-level in Uganda. PITCH partners working with all key populations, as well as adolescent girls and young women, benefited from capacity building in proposal writing as part of the Global Fund funding request process.

The Global Fund increased funding to respond to HIV and AIDS in **Zimbabwe**, and there is clear recognition of key populations and adolescent girls and young women in the country proposal. For key populations, the grant increased from US\$9.5 million to US\$12.2 million, and for adolescent girls and young women funding increased from US\$12.2 million to US\$20 million. PITCH partners, including Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), Family AIDS Caring Trust Zimbabwe (FACT), SFAIDS, Sexual Rights

Centre, Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) and Zimbabwe Young Positives, were fully recognised and participated in the proposal writing process. It is anticipated that this will enable PITCH partners to continue some advocacy work with each key population and with adolescent girls and young women. PITCH partners are also utilising their strong relationships with government stakeholders to improve domestic resource mobilisation and increase support to national and community-based HIV organisations.

In 2020, PITCH supported capacity strengthening and advocacy activities to increase domestic resource allocation to the HIV response in **Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe**. PITCH partners, with the help of expert consultants, produced situational analysis reports on healthcare financing and policy briefs. They also developed comprehensive training curriculums and implemented advocacy activities.

In **Indonesia**, several new alliances were created to monitor the budget development processes at local and provincial levels. When presenting their research to the Director of Infectious Disease Prevention at the Ministry of Health in November 2020, PITCH partners were able to secure an opportunity to participate in the 2021 budget development process. The Director's response was very positive, making a commitment to invite civil society organisations to participate early in this process at the city level, and to support their involvement from the national level.

In **Zimbabwe**, with support from regional PITCH partner the AIDS and Rights Alliance for

In Ukraine, for the very first time, HIV-service organisations received state funding for HIV prevention programmes for men who have sex with men

## In October 2020, PITCH published 'Fast-Track or Off Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030', a damning assessment of the resource gaps in HIV programming for key population communities

Southern Africa (ARASA), partners mobilised parliamentarians, Zimbabwe's Ministries of Finance and Health, and civil society to participate in a national dialogue on resource mobilisation for HIV and health. During the dialogue, partners made a submission to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Budget and Finance calling for increased investment in health, in line with the 2001 Abuja Declaration and the WHO recommendation for provision at 5% of GDP. The committee acknowledged this submission and indicated that its members and other policymakers would vote for an increased health budget, equating to 15% of the national budget. The final outcome was close to this; the 2021 national budget included a 13% budget allocation to healthcare, up from 10% in 2020. In **Ukraine**, for the very first time, HIV-service organisations received state funding for HIV prevention programmes for men who have sex with men.

On a **global level**, in October 2020, PITCH published 'Fast-Track or Off Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030', a damning assessment of the resource gaps in HIV programming for key population communities.<sup>4</sup> The report includes an analysis of spending on HIV programming for key populations in low- and middle-income countries between 2016 and 2018. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, regions where the HIV epidemic is expanding, key populations accounted for more than 95% of new infections during this period. Despite this, the analysis found only 2% of global HIV funding goes towards programmes for key populations. The report highlights how, now more than ever, HIV resources must be targeted

where they are most needed. UNAIDS' Executive Director Winnie Byanyima participated in and spoke at the launch of the report. Since the launch, partly as a result of PITCH advocacy, UNAIDS has reaffirmed its commitment to funding key populations.

Budget advocacy is a work in progress. Equipped with increased understanding of national budgeting processes, PITCH partners have expressed their commitment to continue their advocacy for increased budget allocations beyond PITCH.

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<sup>4</sup> Available from <https://aidsfonds.org/work/pitch/news/new-study-funding-for-key-populations-affected-by-hiv-and-aids-way-off-track>



## 8. Putting human rights legislation to work

In 2020, PITCH focused on five main areas of work to promote and protect the human rights of key and vulnerable populations: litigation, sensitisation and training of law enforcement agencies, documentation of human rights violations, engagement with human rights and accountability mechanisms, and contributing to the broadening of space for civil society.

In **Indonesia**, PITCH partners (ICJR, IPPI, OPSI and Rumah Cemara) submitted a judicial review to the country's Supreme Court in which Presidential Regulation No. 64 of 2020 (regarding rights to health insurance) was contested on the

grounds that it excludes people living with HIV and sex workers from accessing key health services. Sex workers in Indonesia, even those who have health insurance, are often denied access to healthcare. Meanwhile, people living with HIV more generally are reluctant to disclose their HIV status due to fear they will be denied access to treatment services.

In June 2020, ICJR also filed a submission to the UN Human Rights Committee to review the fulfilment of Indonesia's obligation under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), with a focus on drug policy reform



and implementation. The submission highlighted Indonesia's violation of several articles of the ICCPR. These violations included the imposition of the death penalty for drug offences, extrajudicial killings in the context of anti-drug operations and lack of accountability, torture and ill-treatment in drug-related cases disproportionate punishment for drug offences, and conditions of detention in prison, compulsory drug detention and treatment, and ill-treatment in private drug detention centres.

LGBTQI+ people in **Nigeria** continued to face numerous human rights violations. PITCH partners visited the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in March 2020 to submit a report evidencing rights violations documented in 2019 and to discuss training on sexual orientation, gender Identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) for NHRC staff. PITCH partners also discussed how NHRC could join the litigation against the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act, something it has since done. NHRC also participated in a SOGIESC workshop, facilitated by The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERS), and has agreed to include cases of violence against LGBTQI+ people in its national report.

PITCH partners were involved in the development and presentation of numerous country shadow reports. The **Zimbabwe** Sex Workers Alliance, the mother body of the country's sex workers' movement, participated in the development of the civil society shadow report to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The shadow reporting process then culminated in two women sex workers also participating in the 75th session of CEDAW Universal Periodic Shadow Reporting, held in Geneva in February 2020, where they highlighted issues of criminalisation, stigma, discrimination and sexual violence. Overall, the fact that the shadow reporting was a consultative process facilitated the greater inclusion of sex workers in all their diversity into the wider human rights civil society, enabling them to forge new alliances. This has helped to strengthen the sex worker community's commitment to engage in other policy development and implementation processes. GALZ, in collaboration with Transgender Research and Advocacy Taskforce, also led the LGBTQI+ sector on the development of a shadow report that will feed into the **Zimbabwe** universal periodic review (UPR) in 2021. The report documents illegal and discriminatory arrests of



Nika Gorbova, Myroslava Andruschenko and Anton Basenko at the PITCH close-out meeting in Ukraine. Photo by Alliance for Public Health.

LGBTQI+ people and discriminatory policies, such as the criminalisation of same sex acts.

In 2021, **Kenya's** progress in protecting its citizens from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment will be reviewed by other member states as part of the UN Convention against Torture (CAT). PITCH partners have contributed evidence to the CAT shadow report in relation to the forced anal testing of gay men, police brutality towards LGBTQI+ people and the coercion of transgender people to suppress their identity, including the lack of separate prison cells for intersex and transgender people.

In **Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, a coalition of women who use drugs, sex workers and women living with HIV prioritised intersectional movement building between key populations and women living with HIV, and secured promising language in CEDAW outcome documents. This was of relevance for **Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.**

In 2020, a coalition of women who use drugs, sex workers and women living with HIV submitted a civil society shadow report to the 76th CEDAW session for the **Kyrgyz Republic**, which documented rights violations amongst people who use drugs. The report highlighted violations to the rights of people who use drugs to the highest attainable standard of health, including SRHR, the right to non-discrimination and the right to freedom from violence. NSWP, ICW+ and INPUD worked together to provide funding and technical assistance to their partner networks in Kyrgyzstan, and this shadow report was submitted to CEDAW in June 2020.

In **Ukraine**, for the first time, the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) gave recommendations to the Ukrainian government in relation to the need for the country to liberalise its national policy on drug use. In the lead up to the CESCR publishing its concluding observations in April 2020, PITCH partner VOLNA worked with the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal

Network to present a report to the CESCR on the disproportional sentencing of people who use drugs and their access to health and social services in Ukraine. On 6 March 2020, CESCR published its concluding observations, in which it noted that '...the Committee is concerned at the criminalization of possession of very small amounts of drugs, which prevents drug users from gaining access to the necessary treatment or harm reduction programmes for fear of criminalization'. CESCR recommended that the Ukrainian government applies a human rights-based approach in this context, and that the decriminalisation of drug possession for personal consumption should be considered. Moreover, it was recommended that Ukraine take the necessary measures to tackle social stigma against people who use drugs by training the police, social workers and others, while also sensitising the public.

From the perspective of the documentation of human rights legislation, Frontline AIDS moved all of its REAct<sup>5</sup> training online, providing webinars, an online training manual and a set of virtual tools, including guidance on identifying rights violations during an emergency. The REAct training now has a supplementary module on sexual and gender-based violence, which was added after partners reported a rise in cases as the pandemic unfolded.

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<sup>5</sup> [frontlineaids.org/our-work-includes/react/](https://frontlineaids.org/our-work-includes/react/)



## 9. Gender-transformative programming

In 2020, partners in all PITCH countries continued to build on their commitment to incorporate gender-transformative approaches in their work. Memos and guides developed by the Gender Working Group during the year gave recommendations on how to achieve a gender-transformative HIV response, and how to keep gender in focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The PITCH policy summit in January 2020 also provided guidance by incorporating a strong gender lens into its programme.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges that disproportionately affected women and girls and

sexual and gender minorities. Partners in **Nigeria** advocated for a COVID-19 response that addressed the specific needs of adolescent girls and young women, particularly the increased rates of gender-based violence during lockdowns.

Partners in Nigeria advocated for a COVID-19 response that addressed the specific needs of adolescent girls and young women, and particularly increased rates of gender-based violence during lockdowns

Partners in **Myanmar** were featured on BBC, talking about the lack of government support for sex workers during the pandemic, a situation



compounded by arbitrary arrests. Many of these sex workers are facing pressure and violence from their partners to continue working, and PITCH provided legal support to help them in cases of coerced working and gender-based violence.

PITCH partners have been particularly focused on ending gender-based violence and making policies stronger and more inclusive. In **Zimbabwe**, community culture dialogues with community leaders, community members and police saw an improvement in the reporting of gender-based violence to police, especially among the Xhosa community who, in the past, would not report such incidents. In **Nigeria**, NSWA launched a toll-free helpline for sex workers who had experienced rights violations from law enforcement agencies and clients, and the International Centre on Advocacy on Right to Health (ICARH) established another helpline to enable survivors of gender-based violence to report it and seek help or professional advice. NSWA's helpline is helping to reduce stigma and discrimination against sex workers. In **Kenya's** Kisii county, the Kenya Ethical and Legal Issues Network (KELIN) developed a draft policy and bill against gender-based violence to prevent and mitigate violence against key populations, which was then supported for enactment by the county's Assembly Members and the Executive. The police in **Mozambique** signed an agreement with PITCH partner Muleide, reiterating its commitment to support victims of gender-based violence, while the Ministry of Interior indicated it is willing to sign an agreement to provide legal and psychological support to adolescent girls and young women who experience gender-based violence.

Harm reduction programmes often focus on men, with little or no consideration to the specific needs of women and people of other genders who use drugs, while women who use drugs also face multi-layered forms of discrimination and violence. Hope and Trust in **Ukraine** and the **Uganda** Harm Reduction Network are mobilising communities of women who use drugs by supporting regional female leaders, educating activists, encouraging women who use drugs to

share their experiences and ensuring their issues are visible in advocacy at all levels. SCDI in **Vietnam** organised consultations on drug use and interventions for women, adolescents and LGBTQI+ people who use drugs during community dialogues. In **Myanmar**, Myittasaytaman (MTSTM) and Charity Services for Friends (CSF) stressed the need for tailored healthcare for women who use drugs through campaigns and advocacy visits targeted at parliamentarians and 2020 general election candidates. In Abuja, **Nigeria**, YouthRISE conducted research on the SRHR needs of women

## Hope and Trust in Ukraine and the Uganda Harm Reduction Network are mobilising communities of women who use drugs

who use drugs, which they used to develop an evidence-based model of integrated HIV and SRHR services for this group.

At global level, PITCH partners also created a strong advocacy and communications moment on this theme during an event at the 63rd Session of the CND in March 2020 when they launched an SRHR guide for women who use drugs and a short film on the activism led by women who use drugs in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

In 2020, PITCH partners continued to fight against harmful gender norms and achieved significant societal change. Adolescent girls and young women involved in PITCH programming in **Eastern** and **Southern Africa** are now confident enough to engage with community leaders on issues like child marriage, and openly talk about

<sup>6</sup> Frontline AIDS (2020) Advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women who use drugs: a guide for programmes. Available from [frontlineaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guide-for-harm-reduction-programmes-Updated-July24-2020-web-ready.pdf](https://frontlineaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guide-for-harm-reduction-programmes-Updated-July24-2020-web-ready.pdf)

the importance of accessing SRHR services. Training for young people on masculinity in **Malawi** and on HIV, SRHR and gender equality in **Uganda** and **Zimbabwe** resulted in 87%, 85% and 92% of participants, respectively, expressing equitable gender norms on decision making around sex and relationships. In **Vietnam**, policy consultation workshops now involve diverse representatives to ensure that policymakers are exposed, not only to the issues affecting female sex workers, but to issues affecting sex workers of other genders as well. In a first for **Mozambique**, a major milestone in 2020 was the establishment of Mozambique's first trans-led national organisation, MovTransDeMoz, even though Mozambique does not legally recognise transgender people.

Adolescent girls and young women involved in PITCH programming in Eastern and Southern Africa are now confident enough to engage with community leaders on issues like child marriage, and openly talk about the importance of accessing SRHR services

On a broader level, PITCH partners utilised community knowledge and experiences to influence policy throughout 2020. The National Forum of People Living with HIV/AIDS Networks (NAFOPHANU) in **Uganda** participated in the development of a gender dashboard, coordinated by the Uganda AIDS Commission, to mainstream gender in HIV programmes. In **Ukraine**, PITCH partner Legalife-Ukraine organised a roundtable in October 2020 to discuss the influence of gender norms and stereotypes on the legislation and regulation of sex work, which also included

an examination of the negative impacts of the Swedish Model, which perceives sex work as a form of violence against women in and of itself. In **Zimbabwe**, efforts to review the age of consent for accessing SRHR services and HIV criminalisation laws both addressed gender barriers. Age of consent restrictions particularly affect adolescent girls, who struggle to access SRHR services. Similarly, HIV criminalisation laws are often applied disproportionately against women living with HIV. In **Kenya**, Ambassador for Youth and Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme (AYARHEP) is contributing evidence on the needs of adolescent girls and young women, including sex workers, to the current draft of the 2019 Reproductive Health bill.

PITCH partners across **Southern Africa** are holding leaders accountable for implementing already-existing frameworks, including those that aim to reduce unsafe and illegal abortions and gender-based stigma and discrimination and to increase access to education and social services. Similarly, in **Indonesia** a coalition of PITCH partners and other feminist groups is pushing the government to stop deliberating a harmful draft law on 'family resilience', which contains provisions on bringing back patriarchal gender norms and obligatory reporting LGBTQI+ people to the authorities by their families for 'rehabilitation', and to immediately pass the bill on the Elimination of Sexual Violence.



Partners do a role play during the three-day PITCH Communications for Advocacy training in Nigeria. Photo by Nina Hoeve

## 10. Learning and reflection

### 10.1 Evidence is key for successful advocacy

PITCH partners have continued to demonstrate expertise in documenting and applying evidence to support their advocacy planning and campaigns. Partners have effectively used surveys and polls to gather crucial insight from key populations and adolescent girls and young women. In **Nigeria**, Education as a Vaccine (EVA) surveyed a diverse range of adolescents and young people to identify

their concerns on accessing services. EVA used these findings to influence priority areas for reform of the 2014 National Health Act. It submitted a position paper, highlighting the poll's recommendations and the process, to the National Assembly. This evidence then informed the first and second readings of the act's Amendment Bill at the end of 2020. The public hearing of the Amendment Bill was due to be held in February 2021.

PITCH partners have continued to demonstrate expertise in documenting and applying evidence to support their advocacy planning and campaigns

PITCH partners' expertise has also informed the development of several key publications. In 2020,

HIV prevention shadow reports were published in **Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine** and **Zimbabwe**. The reports aimed to complement and challenge the official annual progress reports and scorecards developed by national governments, UNAIDS and the civil society organisations. They also provided an important space for civil society organisations to articulate their views and concerns. In 2020, the data collection methodology was adapted to allow for more targeted information to be included and analysed. This change allowed advocates to provide more detailed information on national HIV prevention budgets, leadership changes and policy changes, and required a deeper analysis of the national policy landscape. PITCH partners were asked to reflect on the civil society organisations impact between 2017 and 2020, while also considering the impact of COVID-19 on national prevention services and their advocacy work. The shadow reports were launched, globally, on World AIDS Day (1 December 2020) and were presented at meetings of both the civil society organisations and the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, providing a strong evidence base for inputs into the UNAIDS strategy development process.

In **Kenya**, PITCH partner Y+ Kenya carried out a survey targeted at adolescents and young people living with HIV, to more accurately gauge their level of knowledge and experiences of HIV treatment services. The survey results provided a valuable insight into the level of treatment literacy among adolescents and young people living with HIV, while documenting evidence of gaps in treatment provision. This has generated the evidence needed to advocate for the inclusion of the Positive Health Dignity and Prevention (PHDP) training module and curriculum into the Kenyan government's own approach to HIV prevention and treatment for young people living with HIV. This curriculum, first developed in 2017, presents comprehensive information on treatment and prevention for people living with HIV. Y+ Kenya has also targeted the Global Fund in the hope of influencing its adolescent and young people module. Despite arguments from the Kenyan government that it has already provided budget

for treatment literacy for adolescents and young people living with HIV, and thanks to the compelling nature of the survey results and the PHDP curriculum, Y+ Kenya was able to successfully advocate for the Global Fund to integrate its findings in the final country grant.

In **Mozambique**, the National Sex Work Platform released a position paper in July 2020 that highlighted the increased abuse of human rights and violence against sex workers brought on by the country's state of emergency, which was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The position paper shed light on how sex workers are being disproportionately affected by the measures imposed by the Presidential decree, specifically when these measures relate to their health, economic status, and businesses. As a member of the platform, PITCH partner Muleide – alongside other civil society organisations – used this position paper to advocate for the design of a health strategy that includes HIV and AIDS services as well as sexual and reproductive rights, including at a meeting with the Ministry of Health in July 2020. Using the evidence and recommendations presented in this position paper, a telephone information line designed to provide legal and psychological support has since been created and promoted. Information, education, and communication materials (e.g. videos and posters) have also been produced with information on gender-based violence and HIV prevention measures in the context of COVID-19.

Other significant PITCH publications released in 2020 that have supported the use of evidence for successful advocacy include 'Activism and AIDS: Protect Civil Society Space to End the Epidemic'.<sup>7</sup> This was launched **globally** in July 2020 at the 23rd International AIDS conference. At the launch, speakers from communities, CIVICUS, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Global Fund discussed the risks and restrictions facing those in civil society who are fighting to end the HIV epidemic. Speakers highlighted the new risks arising from COVID-related restrictions, which threaten to undermine efforts on HIV and AIDS.

<sup>7</sup> Available from [aidsfonds.org/resource/activism-and-aids-protect-civil-societys-space-to-end-the-epidemic](https://aidsfonds.org/resource/activism-and-aids-protect-civil-societys-space-to-end-the-epidemic)



In addition, the report was presented to the Development Committee of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the EU External Action Service, and to EU member states' development cooperation experts, with support from the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU. The report was also used as part of advocacy efforts at an online event for diplomats hosted by the Dutch embassy in Washington DC.

## 10.2 Partnership and collaboration: the cornerstones of PITCH

In 2020, PITCH partners continued to build relationships and partnerships in countries as well as at regional and global levels.

PITCH organised **global** consultations, with input from all PITCH partners, which resulted in the PITCH advocacy guide: 'Protect the gains, push for progress'.<sup>8</sup> The guide supports partners to develop advocacy strategies that integrate rights-based, community-led and inclusive

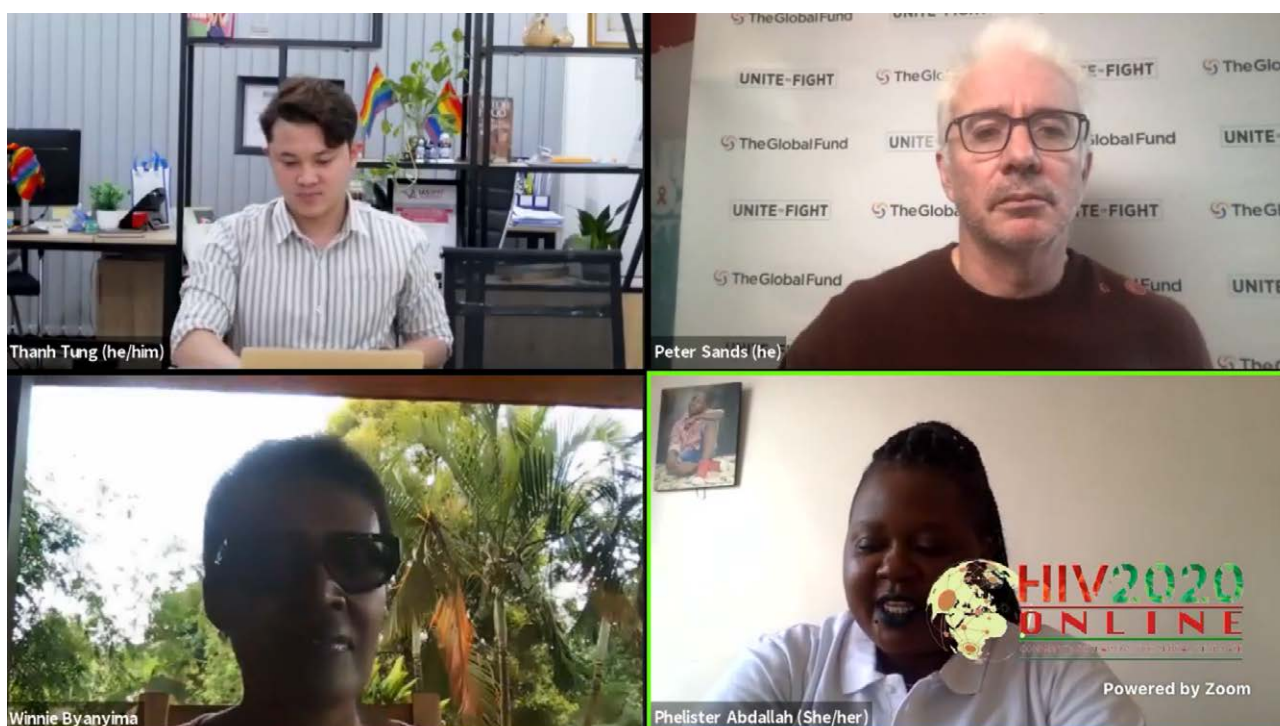
approaches into the UHC agenda in the context of COVID-19 and beyond.

At the regional level, ARASA, in partnership with Aidsfonds, Frontline AIDS, Médecins Sans Frontières Southern Africa and Pathfinder Mozambique, sent a joint statement to the **Southern African** Development Community (SADC) Secretariat. This provided recommendations for SADC member states to urgently act to sustain and protect HIV services for sex workers and people who use drugs. The statement was endorsed by 60 civil society organisations that want the SADC Secretariat to contribute more strongly to guide member states towards better coordination, information sharing and more consistent approaches in their response to COVID-19, particularly for marginalised populations.<sup>9</sup>

Partners intensified in-country efforts to build relationships that will sustain the results of their advocacy after 2020. In **Zimbabwe**, PITCH partners SAfAIDS and ZY+ jointly conducted a national dialogue with 30 parliamentarians on the reform

<sup>8</sup> The guide, is available from [aidsfonds.org/resource/protect-the-gains-push-for-progress-advocacy-guide](https://aidsfonds.org/resource/protect-the-gains-push-for-progress-advocacy-guide)

<sup>9</sup> The full statement is available at: [www.arasa.info/media/arasa/Resources/statements/civil-society-joint-statement-hiv-and-covid-19-final.pdf](https://www.arasa.info/media/arasa/Resources/statements/civil-society-joint-statement-hiv-and-covid-19-final.pdf)



Phelister Abdalla - National Coordinator of the Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA) - and Doan Thanh Tung (Tung), Executive Director at Lighthouse host the HIV2020 session 'Where is the money for key population programming'. During the session the research 'Fast-Track or Off Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030' was launched.

In Zimbabwe, PITCH partners SAfAIDS and ZY+ jointly conducted a national dialogue with 30 parliamentarians on the reform of national policy on the age of consent to access SRHR, forming a coalition with other country and regional stakeholders committed to equality of access to HIV and SRHR services in the process

of national policy on the age of consent to access SRHR, forming a coalition with other country and regional stakeholders committed to equality of access to HIV and SRHR services in the process. This coalition presented evidence to parliament to support its petition to review policy on the age of consent for accessing SRH services. This

In Nigeria and Mozambique, partners saw an increased acceptance among institutional stakeholders of the need to treat drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal one

resulted in the successful mobilisation of parliamentarians, who committed to schedule national public hearings to gather public views on changing policy on the age of consent to access SRH services. The two partners also mobilised community structures to participate in public hearings in support for policy reform in Bubi, Masvingo and Mutare.

In Donetsk oblast in **Ukraine**, active collaboration with the police, probation centres and healthcare facilities has significantly reduced right violations experienced by people who use drugs at the hands of the police and medical workers. It has

also improved their access to health services and quality-assured OST.

PITCH partners also collaborated on annual advocacy events, such as the 'Support Don't Punish' Day of Action, which takes place each year in June. In **Mozambique** and **Nigeria**, partners saw an increased acceptance among institutional stakeholders of the need to treat drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal one. Collaboration in **Nigeria** led to an expansion of harm reduction services for female sex workers, including those based in brothels and those who are not.

**Mozambique** partners saw a major shift in law enforcement practices following their engagements with the police and the Central Office for the Fight against Drugs (GCPCD). The Police Academy reviewed its human rights curricula and included topics on harm reduction and key populations.

Mozambique partners saw a major shift in law enforcement practices following their engagements with the police

The police and the GCPCD now engage with Global Fund processes, something that has not happened before, and recognise the importance of a public health approach to drug use.

In **Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies created a unique regional platform involving more than 20 CSOs of people living with HIV and key populations from ten countries: **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan**. The platform initiated constructive and fruitful dialogue with the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS). In 2020, the platform's advocacy on existing challenges, gaps and proposed actions

Collaboration with the Dutch Embassies also continued to be critical for PITCH advocacy in 2020. In **Mozambique**, the Dutch Embassy supported the police to organise a workshop on the rights of key populations. In **Uganda**, the Dutch Embassy, in partnership with other development partners within and outside Uganda, played an important role in supporting HRAPF to secure the release of 20 LGBTQI+ young people from prison after they were wrongly arrested for breaching COVID-19 restrictions.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies created a unique regional platform involving more than 20 civil society organisations of people living with HIV and key populations from ten countries

resulted in the IPA CIS' Permanent Commission on Social Issues and Human Rights developing and approving a draft model law on equal access to HIV prevention and treatment services. IPA CIS postponed its meetings in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, but publication of the law is expected in 2021.

Cross-country learning has helped PITCH partners improve their advocacy strategies. Partners from **Myanmar** took away important lessons from their exchange visit to partners in **Indonesia**, benefiting from their approach to planning their ongoing advocacy work. Meanwhile, a PITCH partner in **Myanmar** invited a partner from **Vietnam** to share their experiences of advocating for health insurance and social assistance to cover ART costs as part of their work on UHC.





## 11. Sustainability

Sustainability has been at the heart of PITCH since its inception, positioning community advocates' roles and voices at the forefront of decision-making. In 2020, the partnership has taken dedicated steps to ensure the legacy of these advocates' work continues beyond the programme. Through a systematic mapping of country partners' priorities, the team focused on six key areas to support sustained community presence and advocacy beyond PITCH: communications, fundraising, foreign language support, gender, mentorship of young activists, and organisational development.

In **Indonesia**, numerous innovative approaches to sustainability are evident. Rumah Cemara built a radio studio in its office to both expand the scope

of its sensitisation activities and generate rental income. National sex worker network Organisasi Perubahan Sosial (Organisation of Social Change) Indonesia began two sex worker-led start-up businesses: a launderette and a handcraft gift shop with an online sales portal. The sex workers involved are diversifying their income, expanding their knowledge on finances and digital marketing, and continuing a movement to reduce stigma. In **Myanmar**, PITCH partners hired a consultant to further their understanding on legal reform processes and the political landscape in response to a restructured government administration and cabinets. This understanding will help PITCH partners successfully identify entry points for meaningful engagement with future legislative processes.

PITCH has enabled many partners to access new advocacy spaces, targeting different decision-makers. A large majority have invested in reframing their strategy or strengthening their fundraising skills. In **Indonesia**, fundraising skills enabled Yakeba to lobby and gather financial support from the national oil company to strengthen its youth programme. The consortium of Indonesian

Continuing discussions with these future leaders are bringing new perspectives and new ideas to the global HIV movement. PITCH's cornerstones of inclusive movement building and collaboration will continue to propel the movement towards a world without HIV where no one is left behind.

Rumah Cemara built a radio studio in its office to both expand the scope of its sensitisation activities and generate rental income

Partners in Indonesia, Myanmar, Uganda, Ukraine and Vietnam have invested in a series of trainings for young key population leaders and adolescent girls and young women champions

PITCH partners that work with key populations has developed a new Theory of Change for 2021 and beyond, which reflects their vision on the changes they would like to see in their country and how they can be achieved. This document unifies key actions and partners for the next five years and will align and guide future fundraising. In **Uganda**, UKPC followed the same steps and developed a strategic plan and leadership training. Through PITCH, UKPC has established itself as a leading key population coordinating entity in the country, which is well acknowledged by the government.

To ensure the gains made by PITCH's community advocates are not lost in the future, it is important to invest in the next generation of leaders. To this end, partners in **Indonesia, Myanmar, Uganda, Ukraine** and **Vietnam** have invested in a series of trainings for young key population leaders and adolescent girls and young women champions. In **Ukraine**, Hope and Trust trained a group of young women who use drugs on the power of storytelling to give a voice to their community.



Promotional graphic for the launch of the research "Fast-Track or Off-Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030." Design by Diego Lopez



# 12. Beyond PITCH

## PITCH Legacy

After five years of intense and brave action, PITCH has come to an end as a programme. But has its urgency and original purpose also come to an end?

PITCH has shown the value and effectiveness of movement building across populations and countries. It has confirmed that persistent, evidence-based and organised advocacy can lead to substantive legal, normative and budgetary change. PITCH has celebrated the courage of individuals and activist groups as well as the solidarity and friendship between them, across borders.

Five years of advocacy also point to the fact that, for systemic change, more time and a more sustainable investment are needed. This investment is needed to continue building the data and evidence-base to inform effective advocacy, to keep civil society and community-led organisations going and growing, to create safe environments

for activists to gather, exchange and learn, and to sustain alliances, collaborations and movements. All of us who have been part of the PITCH movement are eager to continue this work with urgency.

PITCH has taught us many of the avenues that lead to sustainable impact. It has also shown how critically important continued and well-coordinated action is, led by those most affected and thus best informed. These insights will need to inform the agenda and the approach towards 2030.



It is clear that the work is not done – on the contrary - due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conversation around the HIV response is changing. Like HIV and AIDS, the coronavirus has a greater impact on people who are already marginalised. This is deeply concerning, as the pandemic spreads to poorer countries and those with higher HIV rates. According to UNAIDS and the WHO there could be 500,000 extra AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa alone in 2020-2021 if the COVID-19 crisis leads to a six-month disruption in vital supplies of antiretroviral medication. This suggests the COVID-19 pandemic has already resulted in a substantive setback in the progress towards ending AIDS.

PITCH partners invested significant time and effort into pushing for increased domestic resource mobilisation in the final year of the programme. However, national governments are using the pandemic as an excuse to withdraw funding previously committed to support the HIV response. This undermines much of the progress achieved through PITCH and is potentially devastating.

The financial and strategic support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been crucial to drive the global HIV response forward. Financial commitments made by PEPFAR (in the context of the Key Populations Investment Fund) and the Global Fund have provided partner organisations and communities with a sense of hope for the future. However, now is the time to reflect on what more can be done by the international community as we face an increasingly perilous and uncertain future. For the 'Building Back Better' mantra to be more than a catchphrase, long-term political and financial commitments pledged by the Government of the Netherlands and others will be crucial to ensure the progress made to date has not been in vain.

# List of publications

## 2020

- Video**
- Community advocacy video
- Report**
- PITCH annual report 2019
  - Activism and AIDS: protect civil society's space to end the epidemic
  - Fast-Track or Off Track: how insufficient funding for key populations jeopardises ending AIDS by 2030
  - The future of the global health architecture
  - Prevention shadow reports
- Advocacy brief**
- COVID-19 and Gender - 4 ways to keep gender in focus
- Case study**
- Women living with HIV unite to challenge the World Health Organization in Uganda
  - From 'enemies of the state' to allies in Zimbabwe
  - Building connections for drug law reform in Nigeria
- Change story**
- Growing a movement: uniting Kenyan LGBTQI+ community
  - Gaining power: how sex workers in Mozambique made their voices heard
  - Young people challenging child marriage in Indonesia
  - Partnering with police to improve the lives of people who use drugs
- Research summary**
- Do you know how much HIV civil society engages with the Universal Periodic Review?
  - Are we using the sustainable development goals' monitoring systems enough?
  - How to engage 'non-community' stakeholders in HIV programming for key populations?
  - Does capacity development increase demand for health services and rights among key populations?
- Guide**
- What does it take to achieve a gender transformative HIV response?
  - Protect the gains, push for progress – UHC advocacy guide (English, Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Russian)
  - Advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women who use drugs

## 2021

- Report**
- PITCH end term evaluation report
  - Measuring Up: Learning from practice
- Advocacy brief**
- Crackdown in lockdown
  - Engendering universal health coverage: towards a gender transformative UHC agenda for people most affected by HIV (not yet published)
- Case study**
- Surviving global fund transition to safeguard the HIV response
  - Building alliances to advance action on ARV stock outs



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



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AIDS** 



Ministry of Foreign Affairs