KEY POPULATIONS, TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HIV RESPONSE IN MEDIUM-INCOME COUNTRIES FROM LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

SALUD POR DERECHO

We are a non-profit foundation that defends human rights so that all people, wherever they live, can exercise their right to health. We work independently of institutions, religious beliefs, and political ideologies. We are supported by partners, private donors and foundations.

In 2003, a group of activists decided to come together in order to get Spain and the rest of the world to stop looking the other way in the fight against AIDS in impoverished countries, those most affected by the disease. Today, Salud por Derecho creates campaigns, develops proposals and advocates for the defense of the right to health with an approach focused on social justice and equality. We work on putting the focus on governments and addressing the causes and solutions in order to permanently deal with the infringement on the right to health.

We work on a national, European and global level, from our headquarters in Madrid, to achieve our objectives which consist of:

**HEALTH FOR ALL:**
Promote a comprehensive system of social health protection that ensures that all people have access to quality public services.

**ENDING AIDS:**
Ensure universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and care by protecting the rights of the most vulnerable populations.

**UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO MEDICINE:**
Reform the pharmaceutical R&D model to ensure the development of, and access to, the drugs that people need at an affordable price.

**CONTEXTUALIZING THE PROBLEM**

The AIDS pandemic will continue to be a public health problem by 2030 if men who have sex with men, drug users, sex workers, the prison population, and transgender people are left behind. Unfortunately,
key populations are ignored in many parts of the world and even the Political Declaration adopted by Member States at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS lacks ambitious, clear and well-articulated language on key populations and the role that Member States must play in the response to HIV. In addition, services and interventions targeting these groups receive less investment than the general population due to criminalization and stigma.

The funding gap between needs and available resources is a global challenge, but in middle-income countries, like those in Latin America and the Caribbean (the second most affected region by HIV), it will be especially difficult to bridge the gap in funding because donors are poorly investing or are leaving the region. Moreover, it is expected that the gap will widen when the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is withdrawn from the region as countries become ineligible due to classification by income criteria. The full consequences of this are still unknown, yet it can be predicted that this would have devastating effects given that most of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have HIV epidemics concentrated in key populations. The main risks would be the loss of community services, lack of support for civil society advocating to promote political and legal changes that protect human rights, especially for the most vulnerable population, the decrease of national investments and the negative impact on pharmaceutical policy and the purchase of medicines.

Just as the exclusion of key populations in the response to HIV and its criminalization reflects a political problem, the reluctance of the main donors and countries of the Global Fund Board to support middle-income countries without addressing the public health and human rights criteria, is also of a political nature. However, our approach as part of civil society, has mainly tackled this issue from a technical point of view, keeping it away from public opinion spaces and without establishing an environment of political responsibility among stakeholders, including: local governments, donor countries and the Global Fund. The context is very challenging, but together we can transform it into an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a better response to HIV in Latin America and the Caribbean that is more inclusive, sustainable, effective, and institutionalized, and which catalyzes the promotion of human rights and strengthens community organizations.

From Salud por Derecho, we want to be at the service of organizations in the region to work together with the objective of turning this challenge into opportunity.

THE PROPOSAL

Salud por Derecho wants to allocate a small portion of our resources, with the support of the Elton John AIDS Foundation, to develop a global campaign focusing on key populations and the sustainability of the HIV response in Latin America and the Caribbean with the aim of influencing local governments, donor countries and the Global Fund.

We believe that a campaign strategy that reaches public opinion and incorporates politically relevant narratives should generate a dynamic of political pressure on three fronts simultaneously: the governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, the "donor" countries and The Global Fund (Board and Secretariat). The challenge faced by key populations and the future of the AIDS response is a shared responsibility of this triangle, which is why we believe it is fundamental. It is also imperative that the campaign mobilize the communities of the region and international organizations in Europe and North America.
Donor countries and the Global Fund are in a position to change policies related to resource allocation that are putting the fight against AIDS at risk, leaving behind key populations and supporting the institutionalization of the response to the pandemic. On the other hand, governments in the region must reinforce strategic elements in managing the HIV epidemic by ensuring the right to health and leaving no one behind; increasing their investments in key populations; supporting community services and civil society, and promoting policies and legislation that uphold human rights.

The overall objective of the campaign is to contribute to civil society processes in the region, addressing the challenge of transition and sustainability of the HIV response by supporting the political work of organizations at the national level and amplifying it internationally in order to influence bilateral and multilateral donors such as the Global Fund.

The specific objectives are:
1. Place the situation of key populations in Latin America and the Caribbean, the risks of transition processes and the consequences of the withdrawal of donor support in the region, at the center of public opinion and in the political debate on both sides of the Atlantic.
2. Incorporate a transition and sustainability agenda articulated by civil society in the region and countries where the campaign is focused, as well as by organizations in donor countries, that is purposeful and contains political demands to local governments, donor countries and the Global Fund.
3. Lay the foundations to continue joint advocacy efforts and thus obtain the commitment from local governments, donor countries and the Global Fund regarding the campaign's requests.

The political objectives of the campaign and the particularities of each country in which it is implemented, will be defined together with the civil society sector in the region. The campaign strategy and action plan will also be designed in conjunction with organizations and communities.

We believe that a strategy based on a campaigning approach that incorporates a powerful narrative and addresses "the political" aspect, can make the difference. Other aspects of the campaign strategy that could be key are: having audiovisual elements that can “go viral” and significantly reach public opinion; setting triangular responsibilities and proposing a politically relevant agenda; supporting the mobilization and processes of communities that are taking place in the region; and achieving a multiplier effect in donor countries in North America and Europe. We believe that this strategy has not yet been used and if so, it would support the efforts that different actors are promoting both in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and globally.

How:
This proposal is based on the fact that the campaign has in responding to the national and regional agenda of civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean and to be successful it has to be built together with leading organizations. That is why the process of crafting the message and the content of it has to include key organizations from the beginning.

Several months ago, Salud por Derecho initiated the dialogue with different actors in Latin America and the Caribbean to validate the pertinence of this campaign and to know more about the context and the processes taking place in the region, some of them specifically focused on sustainability and transition. We have also consulted the reports generated from regional meetings such as the one held in Panama in 2016 and the national dialogue processes in Paraguay, Belize and Panama promoted by Plataforma LAC and CRAT-Vía Libre, to analyze the risks and opportunities of Transition of the Global Fund and define
civil society action plans. This campaign will necessarily have to be aligned and create synergies with these community processes and the political agendas that are articulated.

In addition to civil society actors we are working with and those we would like to collaborate with in the region, we are also in communication with the Global Fund’s transition and sustainability team, Open Society Foundations and the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN). In addition, Salud por Derecho is part of the newly created "Civil Society Sustainability Network". The political demands of the campaign will also be directed at the donor countries, therefore, we will work with colleagues from civil society of these countries to help them articulate the agenda. In other words, this campaign is part of the different strategies that global civil society is pushing to respond to the challenges of sustaining the HIV response in middle-income countries.

Who:
We want to work with all the networks in the region and with all organizations in the countries the campaign focuses on. In addition, as local civil society has identified, we believe it is important to involve civil society that transcends the realm of HIV and works in the areas of health, social justice, human rights, etc.

As a starting point, we have identified the following networks and organizations working on HIV in the region, but this list should be completed with stakeholders in each of the individual countries: Campaign LAC, CRATVIA LIBRE, RedTraSex and CVC Coalition Caribbean Vulnerable Coalition International, Redlactrans, Key Correspondents and the International HIV Alliance.

Looking ahead at the dissemination phase and at putting pressure to donor governments, we will work with allied organizations in Europe and the USA.

Geographical scope:
In order to have a greater impact, the campaign will focus on three countries already in the process of transitioning away from the support received by the Global Fund - since the sense of "urgency" is important for effective communication and advocacy campaigns. It will also focus in areas where processes are being carried out by civil society to address this challenge, and where the campaign can support the political work of organizations and amplify it on an international scale to influence bilateral and multilateral donors such as the Global Fund. These countries are Panama, Belize and Paraguay. Still, we believe that the campaign can also have an impact on countries in the region

Calendar:
The campaign would be developed in 2017. The calendar is tentative but the phases and the general lines of action of the campaign would be as follows:
1- Contact organizations in the region to carry out a general analysis of the situation, pooling of work on sustainability and transition, and identify stakeholder. (January - March)
2- Phone and face-to-face meetings with organizations in LAC to present the campaign initiative, identify partners and conduct a consultation process. (March - May)
3- Design of the concept, messages, political agenda and actions of the campaign together with the civil society in the region (May).
4- Development the elements and communication materials o / policy and advocacy of the campaign (May / June)
5- Effectively launch the communication actions of the campaign (at the end of June coinciding with World Pride)
6- Mass dissemination of the campaign will take place in the second half of the year.
7- Evaluation.