**Submission:**

**Consultation on Human Rights in the HIV Response:**

**Regional and Subregional Strategies and Best Practices**

**12 – 13 February 2019, Geneva**

**This submission is made on behalf of the Robert Carr Fund for civil society networks. It relates to the Consultation on Human Rights in the HIV Response: Regional and Subregional Strategies and Best Practices.**

**Investing in global and regional networks – The example of the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks**

The Robert Carr Fund for civil society networks (RCF) supports international and regional networks that address the needs and human rights of inadequately served populations (ISP)[[1]](#footnote-1). These are key and other populations that face a higher HIV risk, mortality and/or morbidity when compared to the general population. At the same time they have less access to information and services. The Fund’s institutional focus recognizes networks’ critical value and contribution to ensuring access of inadequately served populations to health, justice and resources. It is networks that have unique reach and impact at community level and the ability to effect change at the regional and global level.

RCF is the first international pooled funding mechanism which specifically aims to strengthen global and regional HIV civil society and community networks around the world. It provides core funding to strengthen the institutional and advocacy capacity of regional and global inadequately served populations and civil society networks and/or their consortia.

Over the last five years of operation, RCF has pooled funds from five funding partners to support the core and strategic costs of more than 60 regional and global networks. In 2016-2018, it invested in 18 grantees, the majority of which are consortia supporting 59 organizations, demonstrating diverse geographic and population coverage. From 2019 – 2021 it will continue to support 24 grantees thanks to an increase in funding from its founding donors.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Key Results:

* 25% of networks influenced changes in legal and policy environments to better respect and protect human rights of ISPs – including gender identity laws adopted or tabled for consideration in Armenia, El Salvador and two Mexican states; and significant revisions to a potentially harmful HIV law in Malawi.
* Other grantees, while working in environments too hostile to accomplish change, worked to raise awareness and mobilize international forces to oppose rights violations – including a campaign against the drug war and extra-judicial killings in the Philippines, and continued documentation of human rights violations against sex workers and LGBTQI communities in the Caribbean.
* 33% of networks influenced changes in access to or quality of services for ISPs – including increased access to routine viral load testing in parts of Latin America, increased access to harm reduction services in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt; and reduction of stigma from service providers for transgender women in Latin America and migrants in Asia.[[3]](#footnote-3)

It is clear that as a game changer in the global Aids response strong regional and global networks are essential to respond to the many challenges ahead in the SDG era and to contribute to a conductive environment which allows for the full respect and fulfilment of the right to health for all.

1. ISPs include people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and transgender persons, but depending on the dynamic of the epidemic and the legal status of these populations may also include women and girls, youth, migrants, and people living in rural areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UKAID, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) via the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Norwegian Agency for Development Coorperation (Norad) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks Annual Report 2016 and 2017 <http://www.robertcarrfund.org/news-publications/publications/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)