

DESTINATION ELIMINATION

Virtual photo exhibition on
community-based mobilization
against hepatitis C



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<https://destinationelimination.coalitionplus.org/>

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Press release

Virtual exhibition on community-based mobilization against the hepatitis C pandemic

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With the support of local partners in the Maghreb, South America and Asia, Coalition PLUS, an international network of organizations involved in the AIDS and viral hepatitis response, presents the virtual photo exhibition "Destination Elimination". 61 photos by 6 photographers recount the personal and political experience of women and men mobilized against a little-known pandemic, hepatitis C.

HEPATITIS C: A SILENT KILLER TO BE ELIMINATED BY 2030

Hepatitis C (HCV) is an insidious, blood-borne viral infection. When undiagnosed and untreated, it often progresses without symptoms in the initial phases. In a minority of cases the infection is resolved by the immune system. In the majority of cases, HCV infection develops into chronic disease, a form that carries the risk of progressing to cirrhosis and even liver cancer.

According to [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) data, out of 71 million people with the hepatitis C virus worldwide, 81% have not been tested and 90% of diagnosed patients have no access to direct-acting antivirals (DAA), a treatment that leads to cure in over 95% of cases. As a result, over 400,000 deaths from hepatitis C are recorded worldwide continue to die each year.

Given the progress made by medical science, this public health situation is unacceptable. Screening and diagnostic techniques are simpler and medicines are now remarkably effective. Today it is possible to eliminate the pandemic. [The WHO confirmed this](#) in its first global strategy and made eliminating hepatitis C a public health goal to be achieved by 2030.

MOBILIZING THE PEOPLE MOST CONCERNED

The hepatitis C virus has a disproportionate impact on marginalized populations, especially people who inject drugs. Often stigmatized and sometimes criminalized, these individuals account for 23% of new infections and 33% of deaths linked to the hepatitis C virus, according to the [WHO](#). Coalition PLUS and its partner associations work closely with these communities by supporting and mobilizing people infected or affected by hepatitis C. Since 2015, thanks to the support of Unitaid through the "HIV/HCV Drug Affordability Project" we have supported fellow organizations working actively in 7 middle income countries where hepatitis C poses a major problem for public health: Brazil, Colombia, Malaysia, Morocco, India, Indonesia and Thailand.

Each partner association has developed specific services to provide the most vulnerable populations greater access to testing and help in getting treatment. As well as support through the continuum of care, the associations aim, with the help of Coalition PLUS, to bring about changes to public policy in the fight against hepatitis C. The goal of this work is to assure that the needs of those concerned are better taken into account and universal access to treatment be guaranteed.

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RECOUNTING THEIR COMBAT

After six years of community-based mobilization in these 7 countries, thousands of lives have been saved and major victories have been achieved on the path toward the ultimate goal of eliminating the pandemic by 2030. The achievements include significant reductions in the price of treatment, improvement in access to testing and treatment, better collaboration between the main actors in the global hepatitis C response, and decentralization of essential services. And we owe these gains to the commitment of the people concerned, to the women and men who have taken responsibility not only for their own health but also for the future of their communities.

The "Destination Elimination" exhibition pays homage to these courageous activists. It celebrates their courage and determination. It recounts their personal struggle for saving lives and their political commitment to fairer and more open access to health.

Hakima Himmich, President of Coalition PLUS: "This photo exhibition pays tribute to all the activists involved in the fight against hepatitis C, a fight that is still too often overlooked. Working alongside them, we have been able to initiate a dialogue with the authorities, have the needs of communities recognized, and obtained substantial advances that have made it possible to improve not only the health but also the lives of many people."

HEPATITIS C IN FIGURES

71 million
people were living with HIV
globally in 2017

13.1 million
of the people living with the virus
knew their diagnosis in 2017

66 million
of people living with HCV had no
access to treatment in 2017

1.75 million
new HCV infections were recorded in
the world in 2015

23%
of new infections are attributable to
injecting drug use

400,000
people die each year from illnesses
linked to HCV worldwide

Source: [WHO](#) (these are the latest official
global figures available)

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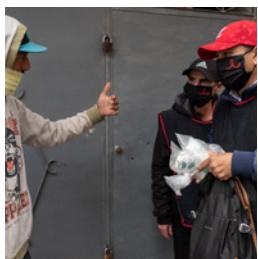
Exhibition visit

From a first meeting to mobilization

"Destination Elimination" is a virtual exhibition based on the lived experience of people affected by the hepatitis C epidemic in Brazil, Colombia, India (Delhi and Manipur), Malaysia and Morocco. It is organized into four key stages, recounting their experience in our partner associations and showing the driving forces behind community mobilization.

STAGE 1 OUTREACH

To raise awareness among those most vulnerable to hepatitis C and provide them with the preventive measures they need, members of the community-based organizations reach out to them in their homes, workplaces and gathering spots. They are able to carry out rapid testing, distribute treatment, and provide personalized support.



Morocco (©Seif Kousmate)



India – Delhi (©Nitin Rai)



Colombia (©Nicolás Corredor)



Malaysia (©Syaiful Redzuan MD Noor)



India – Manipur (©Rone Kongkham)

STAGE 2 ENTERING THE CARE CONTINUUM

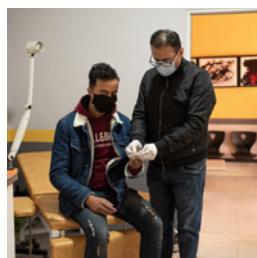
Community-based health services are a precious link in the fight against hepatitis C. They provide vulnerable and marginalized people with a benevolent and non-judgmental medical setting, where confidentiality and the quality of treatment are guaranteed.



India – Delhi (©Nitin Rai)



Brazil (©Ana Caroline de Lima)



Morocco (©Seif Kousmate)



Malaysia (©Syaiful Redzuan MD Noor)

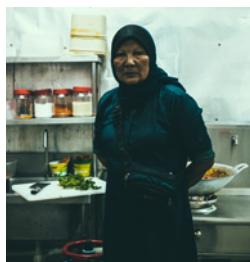
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STAGE 3 HELPING ONE ANOTHER

Group activities, such as awareness-raising workshops, support groups or even preparing meals together are essential for forging relationships with other people facing the same health issues. These moments of interaction are important to awareness raising about prevention and treatments and also boost self-esteem. These exchanges also help people stay within the care system and adopt methods to reduce the risks of infection.



Malaysia (©Syaiful Redzuan
MD Noor)

Colombia (©Nicolás Corredor)

India – Delhi (©Nitin Rai)

India – Manipur (©Ronel
Kongkham)

Morocco (©Seif Kousmate)

Brazil (©Ana Caroline de Lima)

STAGE 4 TAKING ACTION

Through communication within their communities and through contact with decision-makers, health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry, activists organize to develop advocacy on a national and international level to make their voices heard, to assert their basic rights and to change public policy towards hepatitis C.



Brazil (©Ana Caroline de Lima)

Malaysia (©Syaiful Redzuan
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India – Manipur (©Ronel
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Colombia (©Nicolás Corredor)

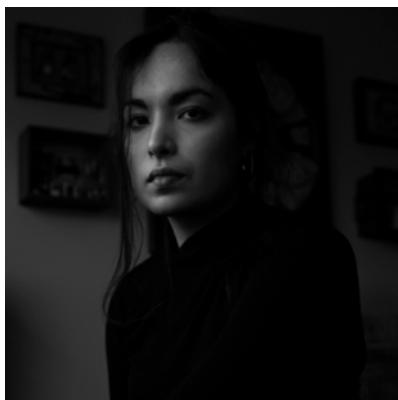
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The photographers



ANA CAROLINE DE LIMA
(BRAZIL)

Ana Caroline de Lima is a Brazilian photographer, journalist and anthropologist. Her work focuses on documenting cultural, social and environmental questions from a personal perspective. Ana believes that empathy, photography, journalism and anthropology should work together, since only understanding and respect can produce sensitive documentary results.

Her work has won recognition nationally and internationally, and has been exhibited at the NUMA, the Getty Museum and the Oxo Tower. She is a member of Diversify Photo, Authority Collective and Women Photograph. Her most recent project, funded by the National Geographic Society, looks at the impact of COVID-19 on Brazilians dependent on the public health system.



NICOLÁS CORREDOR
(COLOMBIA)

Nicolas was born and grew up in Bogotá, Colombia. His interest in pictures began at a very early age. After high school, he set off for Madrid, Spain, to study at EFTI, the international school of photograph. Back in Colombia, he graduated in advertising from JTL University. After several years working in the advertising industry, he finally embarked on a career as a professional photographer.

He has worked in fashion, advertising, documentary projects, portraits and film photography, and has lived in Denmark, Spain, France and Argentina. These wide-ranging influences inspire his work. His clients include fashion and beauty companies, streaming platforms and NGOs.



NITIN RAI
(INDIA - DELHI)

Nitin Rai's career spans three decades. He has worked in landscape photography, documentary photography, photojournalism and portraits, and as a fashion, interior design, food, real estate and industrial photographer. His work has been featured in major international magazines including TIME Magazine, Der Spiegel, Stern, Le Figaro, Facts, Tatler, The Sunday Telegraph and The Independent.

He was awarded the Nikon International prize in 1993.

He currently combines his teaching work as director of the Raghu Rai Center for Photography with professional assignments for a wide range of clients, from businesses to book publishers.

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RONEL KONGKHAM
(INDIA – MANIPUR)

Ronel Kongkham s/o Kongkham Robindro Singh is 23 years old and based in Manipur, north-east India. Ronel graduated in the arts and has a diploma in photography from the Fototechnik school in New Delhi, India. Ronel has been working as a freelance photographer for seven years and as a full-time professional photographer for five years.



SYAIFUL REDZUAN MD NOOR
(MALAYSIA)

Syaiful is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He is a self-taught photographer whose main interests are portraits and documentary photography.

After prior experience in the music and entertainment industry, Syaiful started working as a professional photographer in 2006. His professional career began with fashion and wedding photography, before moving into photojournalism and street photography. His deep interest in questions linked to "human behavior" changed his way of thinking and his approach to narratives.

He describes himself as a "minimalist photographer". Along with his other assignments, Syaiful is currently working as a photojournalist for the Turkish press agency Anadolu.



SEIF KOUSMATE
(MOROCCO)

Seif was born and is based in Morocco. He is a self-taught photographer specialized in social issues with a visual vocabulary combining art photography and a documentary approach. In 2016, after a career in civil engineering, he decided to work as a professional photographer.

His work explores such themes as marginalization, sub-Saharan immigration between Africa and Europe, traditional slavery in Mauritania and Rwandan youth.

He has been a National Geographic explorer since 2018, and has been selected for the Talent Global 6x6 (World Press Photo) and Arab Documentary Photography programs. His work has been exhibited all over the world and has featured in publications including The New York Times, M Le Monde, Newsweek, Libération, The Guardian, El País and NZZ. Seif is the co-founder of the KOZ collective.

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Our actions to eliminate hepatitis C

As part of the "HIV/HCV Drug Affordability Project" supported by Unitaid since 2015, and alongside its partner associations, Coalition PLUS has helped to galvanize the hepatitis C response in 7 middle income countries, making treatment more accessible to the people who need it, whatever their income, lifestyle or place of residence.

PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE!

ADVANCES INCLUDE:

Brazil: creation of a parliamentary front to fight hepatitis, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, aiming to influence parliamentary debates and legislate on these issues; improvements in the treatment supply and distribution system.

Colombia: inclusion in the list of countries taking part in procurement of direct-acting antiviral medicines through the pooled Strategic Fund mechanism set up by the WHO Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); inclusion of IFARMA in the national committee on hepatitis for the development of guidelines and treatment protocols.

India: government adoption of the guidelines for hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment developed by CoNE, a Coalition PLUS partner and community leader in Manipur; hepatitis C treatment in prisons in Delhi and Manipur.

Malaysia: grant of a government-use license for provision of generic Sofosbuvir (a medicine used in treating hepatitis C) through public programs.

Morocco: inclusion of ALCS, a founding member of Coalition PLUS, in the government steering committee set up to compose the guidelines for the national plan against hepatitis. It is also a driving force in decentralization and involving new regional players in funding the response.

Multi-country: launch of the first national HCV plans in Malaysia, Thailand and India; expansion of the Indonesian hepatitis C program; increase in HCV budgets in Indonesia and Malaysia, resulting in purchase of direct-acting antiviral medicines.

BUT THE FIGHT TO ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C GOES ON...

These achievements result from six years of forging links, exchanging information and launching initiatives. We must now make sure they last and are reinforced in order to bring the pandemic to an end by 2030. Today, Coalition PLUS is calling on the international community to take action to:

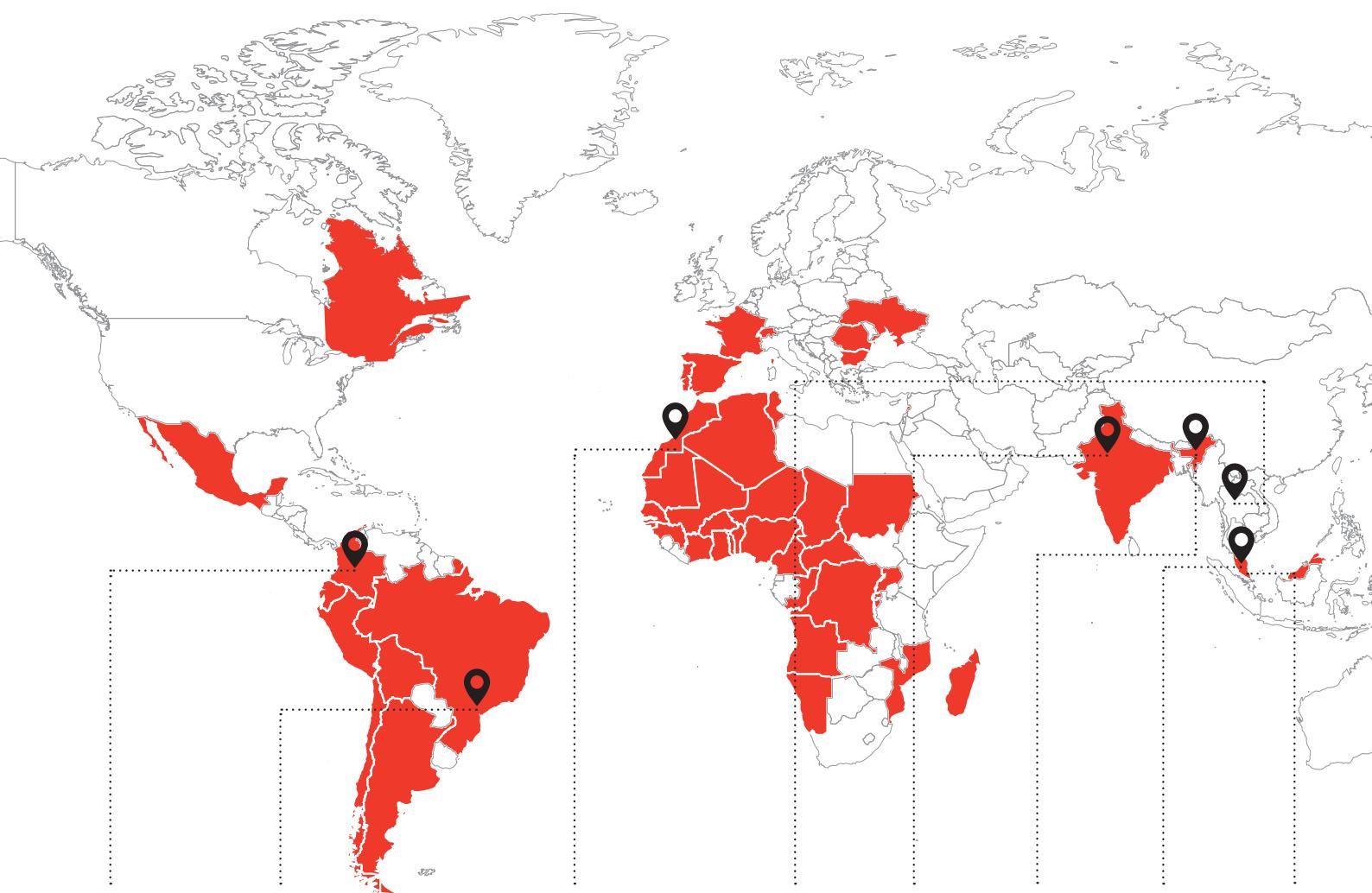
- Ensure sustainable funding for the fight against viral hepatitis;
- Guarantee that the populations concerned will be taken into account when developing and implementing national responses to viral hepatitis;
- Give recognition to the skills and central role of community-based actors in eliminating viral hepatitis.

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The partner associations



Positive Malaysian Treatment Access & Advocacy Group



THE COALITION PLUS NETWORK
All countries in red on the map

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BRAZIL

FÓRUM DAS ONG/AIDS DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO

Fórum das ONG/Aids do Estado de São Paulo (FOAESP) is an established and pioneering organization bringing together around 100 NGOs working on AIDS, human rights and public health in the state of São Paulo. FOAESP was founded in 1997. It campaigns for better public health policies concerning AIDS, HCV and STIs, expanding HIV and co-infection prevention and awareness, and defense of the rights of people living with HIV. FOAESP's lobbying campaigns are aimed at the legislative, executive and judiciary authorities, and are carried out both at federal and state level. FOAESP also helps strengthen member organizations through capacity-building, training and mediation.

COLOMBIA

FUNDACIÓN IFARMA

Fundación IFARMA is a nonprofit organization carrying out research, consulting and advocacy for access to medicine. IFARMA is part of international networks working on public health policies aimed at increasing access to essential medicines and improving their rational use thanks to research excellence and evidence-based lobbying. Since it was set up in 2001, IFARMA has forged substantial partnerships with several civil society groups in the Latin America region. IFARMA has launched initiatives in favor of the declaration of public interest by the Colombian government for essential medicines, especially the latest generation of hepatitis C treatment.

INDIA, MANIPUR

COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR EMPOWERMENT

Community Network for Empowerment (CoNE) is a network representing community-based organizations of drug users, working in the state of Manipur. It contributes to the state's counter measures in areas linked to drug-use, HIV and other blood-borne viruses such as HCV. It also deals with issues and questions faced by drug users at the state and federal level. The network was set up in 2011 and encompasses 11 affiliated community-based organizations. It promotes and protects the health and human rights of drug users. The network's primary mission is lobbying, with a focus on evidence-based lobbying, and the goal of delivering changes in line with the priorities identified by drug users. The partnership between CoNE and the state has enabled Manipur to develop one of the most effective programs in the country. CoNE is also active in crisis intervention and plays a watchdog and whistleblower role.

INDIA, DELHI

THE DELHI NETWORK OF POSITIVE PEOPLE

The Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+) is a network of people living with HIV. DNP+ was founded in 2000, and aims to ensure that one day everyone in need of treatment will receive it and that no one suffers or dies due to lack of access to medicine. The activities of DNP+ are to provide services and support for treatment, to help communities develop independence and to promote access to medicine. DNP+ campaigns against shortages of antiretroviral drugs and free-trade agreements threatening access to generic drugs. It also opposes patents on HIV and HCV drugs. DNP+ has worked hard to supply vital services to people living with HIV/AIDS and HCV in Delhi. DNP+ asks the government to take responsibility for supplying health treatments and works alongside the authorities by providing crucial logistical support to reach people with little access to medical treatment, and especially drug users.

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MALAYSIA MALAYSIAN AIDS COUNCIL

The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) was founded in 1992 as an umbrella organization to support and coordinate the efforts of non-governmental organizations and other associations working on the issues of HIV/AIDS in Malaysia. MAC works in partnership with government agencies, the private sector and international organizations to guarantee a committed and effective response to issues linked to HIV/AIDS and HCV in Malaysia. MAC has developed close relations with the government and the main political decision-makers in Malaysia from the outset. It has acquired national and regional legitimacy, not only regarding HIV and co-infections, but also access to drugs and trade agreements thanks to its human rights actions. MAC has been a full member of Coalition PLUS since 2018.

MALAYSIA POSITIVE MALAYSIAN TREATMENT ADVOCACY AND ACCESS GROUP

The Positive Malaysian Treatment Advocacy and Access Group (MTAAG+) works with people living with HIV/AIDS on a national level. The priorities of MTAAG+ are to push for implementation at national level of the flexibility measures of the TRIPS Agreement, both in legislation and in practice, and to oppose the provisions of intellectual property in bilateral and multilateral agreements that work against public health, especially regarding access to affordable medicine. MTAAG+ mobilizes the community of people living with HIV and HCV so that they can take control of their lives and their situation by developing a shared program through a national network aiming to improve access to ARV and DAA treatments.

MOROCCO ASSOCIATION DE LUTTE CONTRE LE SIDA

A founding member of Coalition PLUS, the Association de Lutte Contre le Sida is a pioneering community-based organization in the HIV and viral hepatitis response in the Middle East and North Africa. It is also one of the largest NGOs in the region and the coordinator of the Coalition PLUS MENA platform.

ALCS was set up in 1988 and was officially recognized as a public-interest organization in 1993. It is the Health Ministry's main partner in the fight against HIV. It is also the only association in Morocco involved in HIV and viral hepatitis prevention, providing access to care and psychological and social assistance to people living with HIV. With over 300 volunteers and staff, ALCS works on the ground but also in research and advocacy.

SOUTHEAST ASIA THERAPEUTICS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND AIDS TRAINING IN ASIA

Established in 2001, TREAT Asia (Therapeutics Research, Education, and AIDS Training in Asia) is a collaborative network of clinics, hospitals, research institutions, and civil society working to ensure the safe and effective delivery of HIV treatments to adults and children across the Asia-Pacific region through research and treatment, education on HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis, community advocacy and policy.

The Coalition PLUS international network

Founded in 2008, [Coalition PLUS](#) is an international coalition comprising over one hundred community-based organizations in the HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis response in 52 countries.



We advocate for community-based approach to the fight against these epidemics. We therefore advocate for the systematic involvement of people infected with, affected by or particularly vulnerable to HIV and/or viral hepatitis in the decision-making processes, and in the development and implementation of health programs that affect them.

Coalition PLUS exists to pool the capacities of community-based organizations in the fight against AIDS for a more effective response

to epidemics on a national and international scale. Today, Coalition PLUS brings together 16 member organizations, which set out the Union's strategic direction based on a principle of shared governance. Through our thematic, geographic and linguistic networks, we work with around one hundred civil society organizations.



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