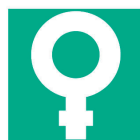




ICWNA



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF
WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV
NORTH AMERICA

2014/2015 ANNUAL REPORT

**International Community of Women
Living with HIV - North America
(ICW-NA)**



CONTENT

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Message from the Chair | 1 |
| Our Vision and Mission | 3 |
| ICW-NA Year in Review | 5 |
| Auditor's Report | 30 |
| ICW-NA Board Members | 37 |
| Acknowledgements | 38 |



WORLD AIDS DAY

USCA

VOICES OF POSITIVE WOMEN
1991 - 2010
GONE

CONFERENCE ON AIDS
USCA
Community Connections
Women's Zone
Thursday, September 11, 2015

FORWARD!
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017
GOAL
To increase access and availability of quality care for the Black community and to ensure that all Black people have access to the highest quality of care and that all Black people are able to live long, healthy lives.
DIMENSIONS OF CARE
Clinical Services, Behavioral Health, Quality Improvement
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
OUTCOMES
FORWARD!

Elevators
To Washington Guest Rooms

High Vel
Restro

USCA

AERO

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Deloris Dockrey
Chair

Dear Sisters in North America,

It is my pleasure to share with you our journey in the 2014-2015 financial year. This is our first annual report from International Community of Women Living with HIV- North America (ICW-NA) (Canada and the United States).

The ICW-NA experienced phenomenal growth in 2014-2015. Since our inception in 2009, this was the first year that the network received grant

funding to support its operation. We were able to recruit a coordinator, support, and mobilize women living with HIV in Canada and United States.

I take this opportunity to celebrate ICW-NA's achievements and to acknowledge the volunteers who actively worked together to establish the network and bring attention to the needs of women living with HIV.

Women living with HIV were able to engage in leadership and empowerment activities and to dialogue with policy makers in the local and national arenas.

We are excited to receive funding from the Robert Carr Network Funds to support our efforts and we are equally pleased to receive continued funding for the next three years.

We have made progress and have applied for charity status in the United States and look forward to expanding our reach. We have formed partnerships and joined coalitions so that we are better able to meet the needs of the women we represent.

ICW-NA is committed to continue building our network and creating opportunities for women living with HIV to become educated, mobilized, trained and effective advocates for improved access to health care and sexual reproductive health, free from violence and criminalization.

We are proud of our gains and look forward with enthusiasm to the future. As long as our sisters are with us, we will be able to make a world without HIV a reality!

We are ICW-NA!

Deloris Dockrey

ICW-NA Board Chair

International Community of Women Living with HIV – North America
is a network for and by women living with HIV in Canada and the United
States of America

VISION

ICW-NA envisions a world where all women living with HIV live free of gender oppression, realizing and claiming our full rights inclusive of sexual, reproductive, legal, social, economic and health rights.

MISSION

ICW-NA exists to lead efforts to secure and improve the quality of life for women living with HIV in Canada and the United States. We do this by mobilizing, organizing, advocating, mentoring and raising consciousness on the issues and policies that directly impact our lives.

CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Accountability:

We answer to the members of our network and the women living with HIV whose interests we serve.

Self Determination and Emancipation:

We promote and practice the principles of GIPA/MEWA (Greater Involvement of People with AIDS/ Meaningful Engagement of Women with HIV and AIDS).

Integrity and Critical Reflection:

We are committed to working in a way that is transparent to our members and that builds our capacity to put the needs of women living with HIV above individual interests.

Feminisms and Gender Equality:

We work to support the ability of all women living with HIV to define, establish and achieve equal political,

economic, cultural, personal and social rights

Social Justice:

We recognize that as with all people, we share a common humanity and therefore a right to equitable treatment, support for our human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources.

Commitment to Advocacy:

We are committed to improving health and social policies that increase fairness and access for all women living with HIV.

Self Care:

In doing our work with its many demands, we commit to care for ourselves as we offer care and support to each other.

ICW – NA YEAR IN REVIEW

GOVERNANCE

Strategic Plan Development

ICW-NA developed and implemented a strategic planning process in 2015. A three-year strategic plan was developed (2016-2018) with the support of a consultant, at the board and membership meeting held in Toronto, Canada in November 2015. The group agreed on a vision and mission statement, goals and objectives, and developed strategic areas of focus for the next three years. The completed document is available on the website at www.iamicw/north-america.

In preparation for the development of the strategic plan, an environmental scan was conducted by online questionnaire sent to ICW members in the region seeking input on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the current landscape. The survey was presented to some 50 members in attendance in Toronto and further comments were incorporated. This formed the basis for discussion and development of a new strategic plan led by current and new board members.

Board members reviewed ICW-NA's vision, mission, and core value and principles.

ICW-NA's developed the following strategic priorities:

- **We will educate and equip women living with HIV with skills and tools to improve policies that affect our health and wellbeing.**
- **We will strengthen and grow the capacity of ICW-NA to mount an equitable and effective response to the HIV epidemic.**
- **We will ensure the sustainability and future growth of ICW-NA through diversified funding**

Hiring an expert in organizational development allowed us to develop a strategic plan with a broader scope. The consultant, who was not attached to ICW-NA, objectively provided feedback on the strengths and challenges collaboratively suggested by ICW-NA's board and membership.

Regional Board Meetings

ICW NA held two regional board meetings, one in USA in November 2014 and elected seven board members. The second in Canada in November 2015 and five new board members (USA - 3, Canada - 2) were elected for a total of nine board members. Committees of the board were put in place and are functional. At the membership and board meeting in 2015, the board members

participated in a governance workshop to review and understand board roles and responsibilities. The following board committees were established at the meeting held in Toronto:

- Executive and Finance
- Communication, Membership and Advocacy
- Operational and Procedural policy



BOARD MEMBERS IN 2014

Membership Meetings

One membership meeting that included representatives from national networks was held with 50 members in November 2015 in Canada. Representatives from national networks and organizations who attended included: African Black Diaspora Global Network, African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario, Canadian HIV Women's Sexual & Reproductive Health Cohort Study, Prisoners with HIV/AIDS Support Action Network, Women's Health in Women's Hands CHC, National Stigma Index Project, and most of the women were also members of Voices of Positive Women

(a provincial women's network which was closed, due to lack of funding in 2010).

Voices of Positive Women was a community-based, charitable organization which provided free and confidential support and other services to women living with HIV and AIDS regardless of race, creed, colour, ethnic origin, ability or sexual orientation, in the province of Ontario, Canada. When Voices of Positive Women closed, HIV-positive women were extremely devastated as there were no more annual retreats where they could meet safely and interact with diverse women living with HIV.



ICW BOARD AND CONSULTANT NOVEMBER 2015



WOMEN AT VOICES OF POSITIVE WOMEN MEMORIAL

ICW-NA members' meeting was a great opportunity for women to meet again. All the women who participated in the meeting voiced the need to strengthen ICW-NA in Canada, as it would facilitate women coming together to participate meaningfully in the development of HIV-positive women's agenda.

New members joined the network and showed their interest to be kept informed of ICW-NA's ongoing activities. It was exciting to note that most of the women, some of whom were involved in the formation of Voices of Positive Women, still have a passion to contribute to ICW-NA meaningfully. Some members indicated that they would be interested

in contributing to the newsletter, participate in Ad Hoc Board Committees, fundraising, recruiting new members, and advocating for women's rights. A diverse group of women attended the members' meeting: newly diagnosed, long-term survivors, rural and urban residents, various ethnic backgrounds, sex workers, drug users, and formerly incarcerated. All of them were united by the need to breakdown the isolation of women living with HIV in decision-making, program planning and implementation, and policy development at local and national levels.

Some of the issues that were discussed at the members' meeting included:

Empowerment

- Women noted the importance of inviting young women to the space and to facilitate peer mentorship of young positive women.
- Lack of youth at the table was perceived as concerning and something that needed to be addressed
- Self-care was identified as important and the need to carve time for both board work and self-care.

Communication

- It was suggested that ICW-NA should include English, Spanish, and French as part of their main languages when disseminating information.
- Participants mentioned that a lot of members have a lot of skills and could offer in-kind services to ICW-NA without necessarily sitting on the board.
- Women bring a lot of valid experience as well as intersectionality of gender dynamics.
- Communication was identified as a weakness and there was a call to have legislation/documentation in the form of policies and procedures be clearly developed to support future succession

Branding

- ICW-NA need to identify a niche, what makes it unique and different from other chapters, and finding

ways to communicate this as it ties into the Global network.

- Although ICW global is already recognized, ICW NA needs to do its own form of branding and get its own recognition.

Accessibility

- ICW NA needs to find ways to make accommodations for those who are vision and hearing impaired, as it is a challenge for them to participate meaningfully.
- Language and literacy can also be a barrier for women living with HIV to participate in various forums and trainings
- We also need to keep mobility issues in the forefront when looking at venues as this created some challenges for individuals during the planning of the Voices of Positive Women event, held in conjunction with the ICW-NA membership meeting.

Funding

- With limited funding, ICW-NA resources including human resources were limited, making it a challenge to meet some of the deliverables.
- Membership often require services that are not covered by the funding, making the network appear inefficient
- Once ICW-NA gets a charitable status, it will support in sourcing for other funding.

The raised issues will be taken into consideration when developing ICW-NA

activities, and meeting the strategic directions.

Collaboration & Partnership

ICW-NA has developed partnerships with Women Health in Women's Hands, Community Health Centre in Toronto, Canada and The Women's Collective in Washington DC, and has developed MOUs to facilitate joint activities. The Chair, Deloris Dockrey, was given a Women's Leadership award by The Women's Collective "Sheros in the Movement". The ICW-NA supported the event with 10 women living with

HIV and also advocated for women's issues were given similar awards. At the event in Washington DC and in the picture below were Karen Marcinczyk, Deloris Dockrey, and Claire Gasamagera.

In addition, ICW-NA is a member of several coalitions including US PLHIV Caucus, Sero Project, US National Steering Committee for the PLHIV Stigma Index. Efforts are in place to develop other strategic partnerships in Canada.



WOMEN'S HEALTH IN WOMEN'S HANDS



SHEORES IN THE MOVEMENT



WOMEN'S HEALTH IN WOMEN'S HANDS

PROGRAMMING

Sensitization sessions

Sensitization sessions were held in USA and Canada;

- Empowerment and leadership retreat in New Jersey, USA
- Remembrance of Voices of Positive People (a provincial network for WLHIV which was closed due to lack of funding in 2010) meeting held in Toronto, Canada
- Workshop at PWNUSA Summit in Florida,
- Two (2) Love Positive Women events in Canada
- Workshop on intersection of HIV/ IPV at Irish House Women's Summit in New York
- USCA networking zone in Washington DC.
- ICW partnered with Visual AIDS, an organization for artists living with HIV, in New York City, NY
- The Fire Island Artist Conservancy to create and distribute Valentine cards to women living with HIV throughout the world.
- HIV-positive women's Coffee Night, held at AIDS Committee of Toronto, Canada
- Health Promotion and Skills Development group for African and Caribbean women living with HIV in Toronto, Ontario

Informational emails were circulated using the contact email addresses we had and through list serves for ICW informing women living with HIV in North America about the network and encouraging them to join as members including two calls for nominations for those interested on becoming board members. A membership committee was formed to spearhead the membership drive campaign and French and English membership forms and English brochure was developed.

The Board and membership will continue to look for creative ways of engaging stakeholders in the recruitment and retention of ICW-NA members. We will continue to encourage members



LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN IN CANADA

to contribute articles to be included in the newsletter, and to facilitate or present topics of interest in their geographical areas or through webinars. Involvement of board, membership, and partner organizations is of great importance to ICW-NA, as it will assist in raising the profile of ICW-NA and recruitment of diverse populations.

The membership committee will spearhead the development of recruitment strategies and ensure that sensitization sessions are prioritized. Since new members joined the board, the membership committee will be revitalized in 2016, and will make all efforts to engage all populations of WLHIV in ICW-NA agenda. Sensitization sessions will be supported financially by ICW-NA when necessary, and will also be

done in partnership with other grassroots stakeholders.

“A positive impact of sensitization groups is the invigoration of the network and stimulation of interest from potential members and allies.”

A positive impact of sensitization groups is the invigoration of the network and stimulation of interest from potential members and allies. Attendees at the retreats were nominated for board membership and three were elected to the Board.

Regional Website

ICW-NA solicited the services of Hothouse Designs to design the ICW-NA website to work in concert with the ICW Global website. A website was developed for ICW-NA and linked to the “IAMICW” website. The site has several email addresses of Board officers and staff. A consultant developed the website and logos for the network. The new website allows the network to post an online membership form, and a confidential demographic survey link. Present and new members have the option to complete a confidential

online survey collecting a wide range of demographic data, and they can choose to complete the online membership form, or send one by email to the Coordinator. After only one month our online survey revealed ICW-NA members in both countries are at risk and under-represented populations, diverse geographic areas of the US and Canada, ages, ethnic and background identities and more. In 2016, we will continue circulating our monthly ICW-NA email correspondence to our membership list.

WLHIV at Technical Meetings



AT THE RETREAT IN USA, WOMEN DISPLAYED THEIR VISION BOARDS

A membership meeting and retreat was held in United States. Women represented ISPs including young women, women with (history of) using drugs, and survivors of violence against women. Twenty-one women participated in leadership and personal growth training and support. Membership recruitment was extremely successful.

During the grant cycle ICW-NA has facilitated the attendance of ICW members to participate in key global and regional meetings. ICW-NA supported more than 40 women to attend and participate in empowerment and leadership activities. Several women from USA participated in high level meetings as follows:

- ICW-NA women participated at Network Empowerment Seminar with SERO/PWN-USA, developing skills for local criminalization laws repeal (USA/states).
- Women represented ICW-NA at PEPFAR DREAMS Initiative: Advancing a Prevention Agenda for Women and Girls.
- Members also participated in the development of women's research in HIV
- International Women's Day, New York, United States
- The Committee on the Status of Women in March 2014-2015;
- Post Beijing, at the United Nations.
- ICW-ISC North American representatives participated in Post 2015

Agenda discussions at the United Nations in May and September, 2015

- AIDSWATCH 2014 and 2015, Washington, DC, US and spoke with legislators about issues vital to women living with HIV in the United States
- Chair of ICW-NA is a member of the US PLHIV Stigma Index and is the Coordinator for the roll out of the PLHIV Stigma Index in New Jersey funded by the NJ Department of Health.

Through participation in these national and global level advocacy meetings, ICW-NA members were able to envision a role for ICW-NA in monitoring funding and global policy. In Canada ICW-NA members attended various local and regional meetings where they raised the banner of ICW-NA including:

- Our Board Secretary attended the Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR) Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in May and presented: "National Women, Trans People and Girls HIV, Hepatitis C and Co-infection Health Re-search Summit,"
- "History of Positive Women in Research," presentation developed with support from Canadian HIV Trials Network (CTN)
- The Board Secretary is Chair of the Canadian HIV Trials Network's Prevention and Vulnerable Populations



WOMEN AT USCA IN USA

core's Women's Working Group. Currently developing a Canadian national protocol on Women and PTSD (CTN link www.hivnet.ubc.ca)

- The Secretary is Chair of the Knowledge Translation Exchange Committee for CHIWOS which is a great opportunity for ICW-NA to collaborate and provided linkages
- Our co-chair attended three conferences - Canadian Conference on Global Health, Racial Justice Matters Conference, Gender-based Violence and HIV
- Outreach Events were also held at Afrofest and Caribana Festival in Toronto
- ICW-NA members raised awareness of the network at various PHA

forums including: Support the Supporter Forum, Stigma Index, AIDS Committee of Toronto – Coffee Night, Toronto HIV/AIDS Network, Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment, HEALTH project, Health Promotion and Skills Development project for African and Caribbean women living with HIV

- Information about ICW-NA was also shared at service providers' forums held in Canada: African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario – Strategy Workers, CATIE HIV/AIDS Navigators, Women Under Surveillance Project, REACH Leadership, French Speaking Services Group

- Outreach was also conducted at Ryerson University and George Brown College in Toronto, Canada
- Grant Proposal for women specific studies were developed and submitted for funding
- One manuscript will be printed in February on MIWAinResearch. Two other medical manuscripts are currently under review

“We established a strong relationship with an Indigenous women’s group and one of our Board member represents this population.”

We established a strong relationship with an Indigenous women’s group and one of our Board member represents this population. Many members are willing to attend and participate in meeting, but they need support for accommodation and travel and sometimes our budget does not allow us to assist fully. We need support to map specific meetings and policy tables where ICW-NA members should be present and participate. In particular we need to begin working with partners to engage and cultivate ICW-NA members to represent the organization in different policy tables in the US and Canada. Once charitable status has been finalized the ability to find outside funding opportunities will greatly improve.

Focus Groups and Policy Briefs

ICW NA with the assistance of a consultant, who is also an ICW-NA member, developed three policy briefs. A survey was distributed to the membership on the list serve requesting for input on advocacy topics of importance to women living with HIV. The response rate was 30%. Consultation was conducted with the ICW-NA Board. A core group of board members were identified to review,

edit, and comment on the briefs. The briefs that were developed are:

Woman and HIV Criminalization, Women, HIV and Violence, and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for Women Living with HIV.

The briefs are available on the website at www.iamicw/north-america. We hope that policy briefs will bring a

- *Woman and HIV Criminalization,*
- *Women, HIV and Violence, and*
- *Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for Women Living with HIV.*

better HIV response in Canada and USA. We will collaborate with other organizations that specialize in HIV criminalization, HIV and violence, and SRHR. We will participate in knowledge exchange activities and conferences or meetings that address these issues, so that we can bring the voice of women living with HIV and influence change.

Identify Potential Leaders among WLHIV

In June 2015, Board members from British Columbia (BC), Canada met with VIVA and with the BC Gathering of Positive Living to discuss ICW-NA, and they had an excellent reception. The attendees expressed how much they liked the Valentines from Love Positive Women programs and many joined ICW-NA. One BC Board member conducted a Community Forum on Managing Medication speaking from a woman's point of view, for example, women have higher usage of the birth control pill, depression medications, supplements and more. We have learned that although we have volunteers supporting our work we must institute stronger Monitoring and Evaluation Practices to not only capture the

numbers of attendees, but to understand the impact of our sensitization programming on the individuals who participate so that we can improve our deliverables.

In all ICW NA activities every effort has been made to engage young women and transgender women. Two young women leaders were elected to the ICW-NA Board. These young leaders are representative of women in their communities. Efforts are being made to include transgender women to join ICW-NA, in partnership with other stakeholders in both USA and Canada. The support of the women from Toronto will be beneficial as Voices had a strong relationship with this demographic. More work needs to be



KAREN AND CLAIRE AT USCA 2015

done to reach key priority populations in remote, rural and reserves. ICW-NA can also facilitate this recruitment by

engaging membership in the recruitment process.

ICASA 2015

The Chair and Vice Chair for ICW NA attended the ICASA 2015 in Harare, Zimbabwe and participated in ICW International Steering Committee meeting with representative from all the regional networks. The conference theme “AIDS in Post 2015 Era: Linking Leadership, Science & Human Rights” engages the whole continent and all

stakeholders in the post MDG framework, where sustainability of the response in reaching 90, 90, 90 of UNAIDS will not be possible if Human Rights are not key priority for a new vision of leadership in the context of strengthening the application of science based evidence.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR ICW-NA

ICW-NA was able to develop a cadre of WLHIV who are knowledgeable in advocacy and equipped with skills to undertake strategic efforts in both Canada and USA. More than 40 women attended and participated in empowerment and leadership activities which were held at grassroots and national levels within the two countries. ICW-NA recognizes that greater and meaningful involvement of women living with HIV in advocacy efforts is essential; as a result, there is a greater need to continue developing and sustaining the involvement of WLHIV from diverse populations to participate in various strategic meetings. It is very important to recognize that women living with HIV from the diaspora have different issues based on their day-to-day context, compared to women from the South, hence different advocacy requirements.

Two of our board members and the Coordinator had the opportunity to attend high level meetings in New

York, and mentorship was provided by the Global office staff members. This was a great opportunity to learn and share lessons with policy makers, and civil society. More efforts will be made to train more members in advocacy skills, so that they will be equipped to undertake strategic advocacy efforts at national and international levels.

“ICW-NA was able to develop a cadre of WLHIV who are knowledgeable in advocacy and equipped with skills to undertake strategic efforts in both Canada and USA.”

We acknowledge that some of our members are interested in participating in advocacy efforts at community and policy level, but have limited lobbying

and advocacy skills to engage decision makers. We will continue to build on this, by ensuring on-going strengthening on our newly established North American network, and building partnerships, as well as utilizing opportunities at events held over the year where we can have a strong impact and audience. We also realize due to this expansion of membership the funding from Robert Carr is not enough to sustain our current advocacy effort, as well as expand them. During the membership meeting held in Toronto, we were fortunate enough to recruit some HIV-positive women who have been involved in advocacy efforts for a long time in Canada. Some have been board members and staff members of organizations providing services to WLHIV. Our next steps will be to create mechanisms for mentorships among women who are interested in advocacy and activism.

We were not able to include a large number of most at risk populations (MARPS) and young WLHIV as much as we had anticipated. We made efforts to include demographics on our membership forms, so that we would be able to track the number of MARPS and young WLHIV, but it is still work in progress. One of the recently recruited board members from Canada has previously worked with an organization called Prisoners with HIV/AIDS

Support Action Network (PASAN), and will be assisting ICW-NA with some of the strategies to include ex-prisoners/prisoners to join ICW-NA. Linkages to CHIWOS (www.CHIWOS.ca) and Women's College Research Institute may help recruit women from other underrepresented group

One of the board members is Aboriginal and very active in her community, with her support we are hopefully that we will be able to reach some of Aboriginal women in USA and Canada. A lot of work has been done at local levels in both countries by other partner agencies, in creating safe environments for sex workers, and we will utilize existing structures to raise awareness of ICW-NA.

When we were developing our policy briefs efforts were made to reach all populations, including MARPS to contribute to the development of the SRHR policy brief. At the members' meeting held in Toronto, MARPS contributed to the development of the strategic plan, and we ensured that their contributions were incorporated in the new strategy plan. We facilitated and provided financial support for WLHIV to attend the members meeting held in Toronto, and other meetings to influence the agenda for women's issues.

We have two young women as part of the board, which will also be part of the team that will ensure that young women are a priority in directing and influencing the SRHR & HIV agenda in CANADA and USA. The global office occasionally sends information on global activities

with young women, and we share the information with some of the young women in the community.

More efforts will be made to reach out to marginalized populations, so that they will be meaningfully and respectively involved in ICW-NA activities related to SRHR and HIV agenda.

Membership

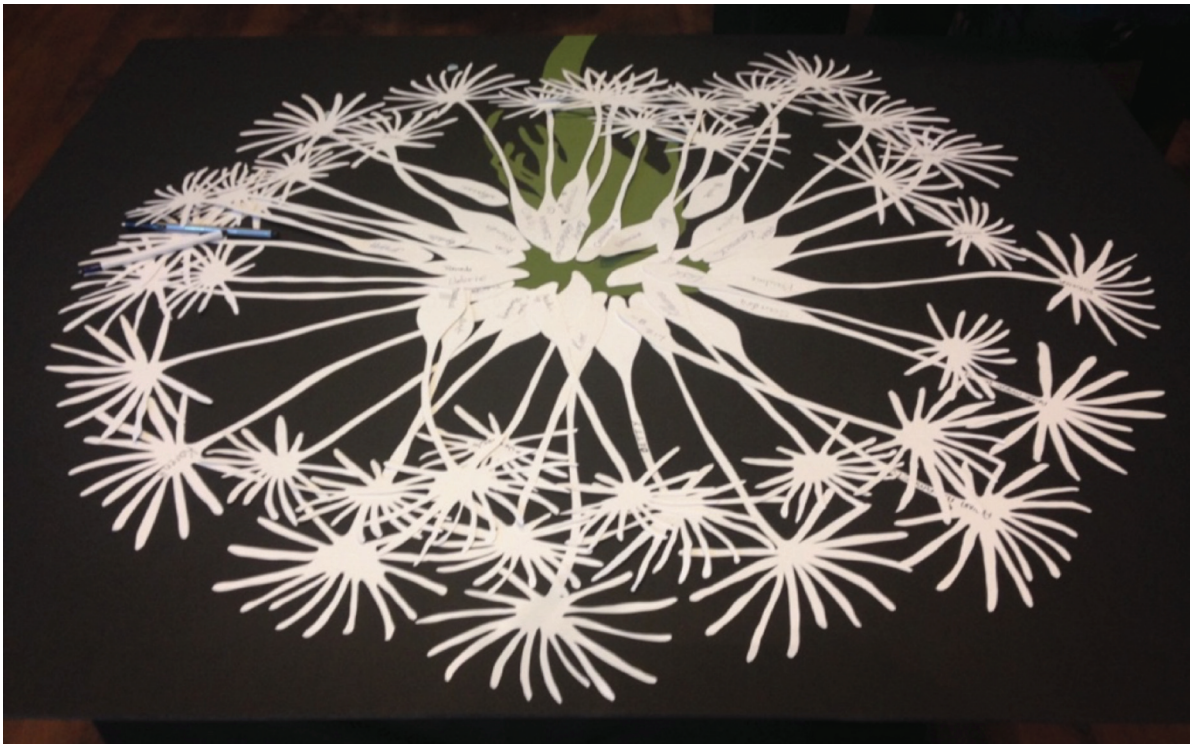
ICW-NA in 2014/2015 increased membership by more than 50%. The network has an active list serve and endeavors to increase the number of WLHIV in the network. Membership forms were developed in English and French, and circulated through our networks and membership to facilitate recruitment of new members. Great efforts were made to increase our membership; women who were members of ICW in their home countries were invited to register with ICW-NA. We also realized that the board alone is not able to reach a lot of WLHIV, so we utilized other networks and organization to share the membership forms with WLHIV.

During the coming year, we will develop innovative mechanisms to increase our membership. We plan to open a Facebook page, utilize our new

website, and also do more sensitization workshops in both Canada and USA. We are also planning to create partnerships with GNP+ NA, Inter-agency Coalition on AIDS and Development, Canadian Positive People's Network, and other national organizations that work closely with WLHIV.

**“ICW-NA in
2014/2015
increased
membership by
more than
50%. ”**

Unfortunately, we were not able to have a higher percentage in key populations represented in network mem-



IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WE LOST AND WHO COULD NOT BE HERE

bership. With the development of a demographic data collection mechanism through our website, and the membership forms we hope to be able to identify the number of key populations reached.

The best example of strengthening capacity building, improving relationships and governance would have to be the five day membership board strategic planning meeting that occurred in Toronto from November 27, to December 1, 2015. Two of the Canadian board members took the lead on the project and partnered with a local organization that was holding an event at the same time. ICW-NA partnered with HIV-positive women, and local organizations to commemorate all the

great things Voices of Positive Women did for women living with HIV. For most of the women who attended the members' meeting, it was also a great opportunity to reconnect, and discuss the benefits of having a women's network where diverse women can meet.

The meeting in Toronto, Ontario, Canada also provided the opportunity for the board present to make connections with leaders who work both provincially and nationally in Canada from various under-represented groups. Conversations about possible collaborations or ways to support each other were able to, begin. Staff members from Women's Health in Women's Hands, PASAN (Prisoners with HIV Support Action Network) a



leading researcher in women and HIV, a member of the Ontario HIV/ AIDS Strategy (OHAS) and many HIV-positive women who have leadership roles with key populations attended the meeting. Through the weekend some topics for advocacy were identified specifically the lack of effective services for women living with HIV across the province. An ICW-NA board member has taken the lead on this topic and will be holding a conference call to identify next steps for interested partners.



VOPW MEMORIAL SIGN

PROJECT IMPACT



CHANTAL MUKANDOLI

My name is Chantal Mukandoli, I migrated to Canada from Rwanda in 2006. I was the representative of ICW Central Africa from 2003 to 2006. Before I migrated to Canada, my work with ICW, We- Act, Care International, and Presbyterian Church included: outreach, advocacy, activism, peer mentor and educator. I also participated in International advocacy platforms including demanding the formation of ICW in the early years. I represented Central Africa in fundraising efforts for various HIV-related projects. I also used my voice and personal stories to share my life living with HIV.

In 2006, during the International AIDS Conference I submitted an abstract which was accepted, and presented on the health of women raped during genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The abstract highlighted how women, who got infected by HIV, got stigmatized and discriminated, and those who were poor and disabled. After the conference, I decided to stay in Canada for a better life and opportunities. I got to know about ICW-NA, while attending an HIV-positive women's group held at Women's Health in Women's Hands in Toronto. I was so excited to be re-connected with ICW. I joined as a member and got the opportunity to be invited to the members' meeting, which was held in Toronto, at Ramada Hotel in November 2015.

I felt rejuvenated, more powerful and knowledgeable by attending the meeting with other powerful women from diverse backgrounds, which came from different provinces. As a long-time survivor living with HIV, I had so much to share with other women, including newly diagnosed

women. The meeting was an opportunity to bring out the voice for women living with HIV in Canada, as we do not have a National Network for women living with HIV. I was so happy to have ICW-NA as a platform to bring women together, to fight stigma and discrimination, build the capacity for women, and for women to be aware of their rights as women living with HIV.

My dream is to end the stigma and discrimination I face as a woman living with HIV, and be the mentor for other women. It is my hope that one day women will be able to disclose their HIV status without fear of being discriminated, beaten, killed, and refused services or employment. I see ICW-NA as an umbrella for women living with HIV, where they can find a safe place to talk about their issues, advocate for

their rights, and participate meaningfully in program planning, implementation, evaluation, knowledge exchange in national, international conferences, and other community meetings.

Many other women also felt the impact of the gathering. It provided opportunities to heal relationships and for all the strong women of the province to recognize that the desire, allegiance and support for each other are still there. Many women felt rejuvenated and ready to rejoin the movement in some capacity to improve the lives of women living with HIV. The ability of so many women from such diverse populations to forget their differences and come together as a collective voice for all was extremely powerful.

Impact of RCNF Funding

RCNF funding provided the necessary infrastructure for ICW-NA to communicate effectively with its members in the USA and Canada. In addition, the funding provided the opportunity to meet the goals of the organization.

Connecting and empowering women to have a say in issues that face women

living with HIV and including them in the process as the North American Chapter develops will be essential to the success of the network.

Another great impact was bringing strong women leaders together to strategize on priorities that were essential in strengthening the network.

“Robert Carr Network Funds (RCNF) funding provided the necessary infrastructure for ICW-NA to communicate effectively with its members in the USA and Canada.”

The ability for many to feel the connection to others helps break down feelings of isolation and ICW-NA as we move forward. Sharing their lived experiences will empower other women to do the same. HIV disclosure is still a big

challenge for most women living with HIV, and they feel safe talking about their struggles with other women living with HIV. Other women who are open about their HIV-status indicated that they are interested in sharing their testimonial in public to raise awareness of the challenges faced by women living with HIV, and influencing policy change.

Furthermore, a sense of rejuvenation and renewal and connectedness necessary for ICW-NA was built when women got the opportunity to meet again at the members meeting. By building on the successes and learning from our challenges over the past few years we can move forward to reach our goals to empower other women to have an impact of others living with HIV.

Lessons Learned

During the reporting period so much work was done to strengthen the network, at the same time, we also faced challenges along the way. When the interim board members met in the USA, the intention was to have all policies in place in the first year. Unfortunately, it was a challenge for board members to meet more often to draft all the proposed policies. Some policies were put in place, but we still need to develop other essential policies

to ensure that ICW-NA is guided by the policies. Not having personnel, risk management, and other relevant policies was a challenge when trying to resolve issues. An operational and procedural policy committee was set up, and they will be prioritizing putting policies in place. We will also seek external support when required, from ICW-NA members who indicated they have expertise in board roles and responsibilities.

Episodic illness also hinders women to participate fully; sometimes this might also affect board members and staff members. There is need to put policies in place stipulating procedures that need to be followed if staff members need assistance. Self-care was identified as a need for board members, staff and membership. ICW-NA realizes that it is essential to support each other, but also ensure that ICW-NA activities are not negatively impacted.

Recruitment of new members requires innovative ways, as women are located in different geographical areas, and some in remote, and isolated areas. Language and linguistic barriers should be taken into consideration when engaging members through webinars, training sessions, or outreach. Translation is very expensive if we want to print materials in most spoken languages in Canada and USA.

If we would like women to attend meetings or participate in community

events, we need to take into consideration logistical requirements e.g. childcare, transportation, and honorarium. We have noted that policies are different between Canada and USA regarding reimbursements of childcare cost, and honorarium. For example, in Toronto, Casey House fundraises for childcare, and organizations can be reimbursed for childcare expenses incurred by women while attending information sessions, or whenever they need childcare support to enable them to access care and treatment in crucial situations.

Advocacy issues might be different between Canada and USA, and agreeing on which language to use, or what to prioritize, requires patience. Using survey monkey assisted in coming up with common advocacy issues. We will continue to engaging our members in identifying issues that impact them.

NEXT STEPS

- Board orientation for new members, as some of the new board members were not able to participate virtually during the meeting held in Toronto
- Finalizing the formation of Board Committees, and identifying members who can assist in some of the committees
- Creating Ad- Hoc meetings when required
- Develop and reviewing policies that are required to make ICW-NA efficient
- Develop communication mechanisms, including record keeping
- Recruit an additional staff member, as the work is too much for one person
- Identify other organizations to collaborate with in Canada and USA
- Establish mechanisms to increase our funding

In conclusion, ICW-NA is proud of the achievements in the previous two years and the network looks forward to what is possible in the next three years. In the USA, ICW-NA applied for charity status and was successful. With this status, the network will be able to galvanize additional funding for activities with women living with HIV in the region. We will be able to increase personnel support and support more women engagement in decision making processes.

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ACCOUNTANT'S COMPILATION REPORT

FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015 & 2014

Accountant's Report

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Activities

Statement of Functional Expenses - 2015

Statement of Functional Expenses - 2014

Notes to the Financial Statements

BRAMBLE & ASSOCIATES, LLC
Certified Public Accountants

Accountant's Report

To The Board of Directors
The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America,
ICW-NA

We have compiled the accompanying Statement of Financial Position of The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America, ICW-NA for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2015 & 2014 related Statement of Activities and the Statement of Functional expenses for the year then ended in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

A compilation is limited to presenting in the form of financial statements information that is the representation of management. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Company's management. We have not audited or reviewed the accompanying financial statements and, accordingly, do not express an opinion or any other form of assurance on them.

Bramble & Associates, LLC

Date: January 28, 2016

Bramble & Associates, PO Box 392, Newtown, PA 18940
Phone: (215) 504-1228, Fax: (215) 504-1068, info@brambleandassociates.com

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America, ICW-NA

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2015 & 2014

| ASSETS | | 31-Dec-15 | 31-Dec-14 |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Current Assets | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | | \$ 1,876 | \$ 22,987 |
| Accounts receivable, net | | - | - |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets | | - | - |
| Total Current Assets | | <u>1,876</u> | <u>22,987</u> |
| Property and Equipment | | | |
| Office furniture & fixtures | | - | - |
| Equipment | | - | - |
| Total property and equipment | | - | - |
| Less accumulated depreciation | | - | - |
| Net PPE | | - | - |
| Total Assets | | <u>\$ 1,876</u> | <u>\$ 22,987</u> |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Accrued expenses | | \$ 5,476 | \$ 4,380 |
| Deferred revenue | | - | - |
| Note payable | | - | - |
| Total Current Liabilities | | <u>5,476</u> | <u>4,380</u> |
| Long Term Debt | | | |
| Other liabilities | | - | - |
| Total Long Term Debt | | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| Total Liabilities | | <u>\$ 5,476</u> | <u>\$ 4,380</u> |
| Net Assets | | | |
| Temporarily Restricted | | 1,876 | 22,987 |
| Unrestricted | | (5,476) | (4,379) |
| Total Net Assets | | <u>(3,600)</u> | <u>18,608</u> |
| Total liabilities and net assets | | <u>\$ 1,876</u> | <u>\$ 22,987</u> |

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America, ICW-NA

Statement of Activities

For The Years Ended December 31, 2015 & 2014

| | Temporarily | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Unrestricted | Restricted | 2015 Total | 2014 Total |
| Support, revenue and gains | | | | |
| Contributions and Grants | 79,671 | | 79,671 | 63,032 |
| Donated Srevices | - | - | - | - |
| Fundraising Special Events | - | - | - | - |
| Miscellaneous | - | - | - | - |
| Nets assets released from restrictions | 21,111 | (21,111) | - | - |
| Total Income | 100,782 | (21,111) | 79,671 | 63,032 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Program services | 62,153 | - | 62,153 | 34,858 |
| Supporting services | | | | |
| Management and general | 44,104 | - | 44,104 | 9,566 |
| Fundraising | - | - | - | - |
| Total supporting services | 44,104 | - | 44,104 | 9,566 |
| Total expenses | 106,258 | - | 106,258 | 44,424 |
| Change in net assets | (5,476) | (21,111) | (26,587) | 18,608 |
| Beginning Net Assets | - | 22,987 | 22,987 | - |
| Ending Net Assets | \$ (5,476) | \$ 1,876 | \$ (3,600) | \$ 18,608 |

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America,**Statement of Functional Expenses**

For The Year Ended December 31, 2015

| | | Supporting Services | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | <u>Program Services</u> | <u>Management and General</u> | <u>Fundraising</u> | |
| Contractual Services | 28,494 | 9,306 | | |
| Salaries and wages | - | - | - | |
| Payroll Taxes | - | - | - | |
| Benefits | - | - | - | |
| Total personnel costs | <u>28,494</u> | <u>9,306</u> | <u>-</u> | |
| Travel: Air | 5,935 | - | - | |
| Travel: Land, Taxi/Train | 4,191 | 1,909 | - | |
| Meetings & Conferences | 4,233 | - | - | |
| Per Diem | 1,432 | - | - | |
| Training/Conferences(Mgmt) | 309 | 17,778 | - | |
| Professional/Consulting Services | 11,864 | 3,962 | - | |
| Program Supplies | 4,122 | - | - | |
| Office Supplies | | 2,499 | - | |
| Computer Equipment | | 1,467 | - | |
| Computer Software/Supplies | | 433 | - | |
| Postage | | 106 | - | |
| Telephone/Internet | 1,572 | 781 | - | |
| Website | | | - | |
| Insurance | - | | - | |
| Legal & Accounting | - | 4,950 | - | |
| Miscellaneous Expense | - | 580 | - | |
| Depreciation | - | | - | |
| Bank Fees/Interest Expense | - | 334 | - | |
| Total functional expenses | <u>\$ 62,153</u> | <u>\$ 44,104</u> | <u>\$ -</u> | <u>\$</u> |

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America,**Statement of Functional Expenses**

For The Year Ended December 31, 2014

| | | <u>Supporting Services</u> | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | <u>Program</u> | <u>Management</u> | | |
| | <u>Services</u> | <u>and</u> | <u>Fundraising</u> | |
| | | <u>General</u> | | |
| Contractual Services | 14,700 | 6,300 | | |
| Salaries and wages | - | - | - | |
| Payroll Taxes | - | - | - | |
| Benefits | - | - | - | |
| Total personnel costs | <u>14,700</u> | <u>6,300</u> | <u>-</u> | |
| Travel: Air | 6,869 | - | - | |
| Travel: Land, Taxi/Train | 1,194 | - | - | |
| Meetings & Conferences | 4,757 | - | - | |
| Per Diem | 3,100 | - | - | |
| Training/Conferences(Mgmt) | 555 | - | - | |
| Professional/Consulting Services | 2,000 | - | - | |
| Program Supplies | 1,557 | - | - | |
| Office Supplies | - | 1,539 | - | |
| Computer Equipment | - | 915 | - | |
| Computer Software/Supplies | - | 272 | - | |
| Postage | - | 381 | - | |
| Telephone/Internet | 127 | 127 | - | |
| Website | - | - | - | |
| Insurance | - | - | - | |
| Legal & Accounting | - | - | - | |
| Miscellaneous Expense | - | - | - | |
| Depreciation | - | - | - | |
| Bank Fees/Interest Expense | - | 32 | - | |
| Total functional expenses | <u>\$ 34,858</u> | <u>\$ 9,566</u> | <u>\$ -</u> | <u>\$</u> |

**The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North
America, (ICW-NA)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015**

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North America, (ICW-NA) is a U.S. based nonprofit organization. ICW-NA envisions a world where all women living with HIV live free of gender oppression, realizing and claiming our full rights inclusive of sexual, reproductive, legal, social, economic and health rights. Our mission is to exist to lead efforts towards securing and improving the quality of life for women living with HIV in Canada and the United States. We do this by mobilizing, organizing, advocating, mentoring and raising consciousness on the issues that directly impact our lives.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

Cash

ICW-NA Inc. maintains its cash in separate bank accounts. Accounts are guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) for the maximum amount allowed by law of up to \$250,000 per depositor, effective October 3, 2009 for time and demand deposit accounts. At December 31, 2015, ICW-NA cash balances were fully insured by the FDIC.

Fair Values

Cash, accounts receivable and accrued liabilities are considered financial instruments. The carrying values of these financial instruments approximate fair value because of their immediate or short term maturity.

**The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS-North
America, (ICW-NA)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015**

Supplemental Information

MEMBERS OF THE ICW-NA BOARD

In 2014 the Board Members were:

Tracey Conway, Ontario
Deloris Dockrey, New Jersey
Claire Gasamagera, Michigan
Marvelous Muchenje, Ontario
Susan Mull, Pennsylvania
Denise Wozniak, British Columbia
Romari Undi, British Columbia

In 2015 the Board Members were:

Tracey Conway, Ontario
Deloris Dockrey, New Jersey
Claire Gasamagera, Michigan
Marvelous Muchenje, Ontario
Claudette Cardinal - Vancouver, British Columbia
Janet Francis - Salisbury, North Carolina
Claudia Medina - Toronto, Ontario
Nabbumba, Nuru Kitsui - Boston, Massachusetts
Martha Sichone Cameron - Lovettsville, Virginia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to acknowledge the consultants who supported ICW-NA in 2014/2015. They were:

Karen Marcinczyk – ICW-NA Coordinator

Karen was instrumental in developing and implementing the administrative activities for ICW-NA. She worked tirelessly to facilitate all activities for the Board, arranging meetings, booking flights, and identifying accommodations. She tracked and reported on ICW-NA activities. Karen contributed to the development of ICW-NA in both years. We are grateful for her services!

Other Consultants were:

Vernon Bramble, CPA – Accountant

Sandra Houston – Facilitator in 2014

Shari Margolese – Consultant – Policy Briefs Development

Dr. Rev. Brenita Mitchell – Retreat Facilitator

Ron Rosenes – Consultant – Strategic Plan Development