

International Community of Women
Living with HIV – North America

2018/2019 Annual Report



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Contents

1. Message from the Interim Regional Coordinator	2
2. Vision and Mission Statement	3
3. Core Values and Principles	4
4. ICW-NA Board Members (2018 & 2019)	5
5. ICW-NA Key Achievements for (2018 & 2019)	6
6. Financial Statements	10
7. Funding	11



1. Message from the Interim Coordinator

Dear ICW Members and Partners,

The leadership of International Community of Women Living with HIV – North America (ICW-NA) is thrilled that this report is being published so we can share with you the immense amount of work that we have accomplished through 2018 and 2019. While 2018 was a period of extreme outward growth and an abundance of programing, we lacked some of the internal structures to maintain the growth. Therefore, the vast majority of our work in 2019 was building and strengthening our governance, fiscal and secretariat infrastructure.



Through the development of this joint Annual Report document, we were also able to go back and monitor our collective progress to achieving the deliverables in our 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan. We are now able to proudly appreciate that in spite of the challenges and setbacks, ICW-NA has been on task and delivering on the key priorities that were set out by our first functioning Board and Staff. We were able to reflect on the strengthening and maintaining of ICW-NA’s partnerships and seven institutional seats, the capacity and leadership of ICW members to make policy change in their respective states on HIV criminalization. Additionally we experienced how incredible and powerful the Feminist Movement Building Program was for the participants who maintained involvement and grew in 2018. We saw an increase in engagement by ICW-NA members in both Canada and the United States, in particular in small towns where ICW Board members strategically designed outreach and implemented programing. Our growth in 2018 particularly was larger than in previous years.

Unfortunately, the pressure to perform without the established internal policies and procedures specific to North America caught up to our organization at the end of 2018. Our Board had some tough decisions to make and decided to scale back our external growth and focus on internal reform and rebuilding. 2019 was a very tough year for ICW-NA due to the transition of both the Global and Regional ICW organizational leadership, including the Regional Coordinator. The team that remained at regional level weathered the storm, and fulfilled their organizational and fiscal obligations. I am extremely proud of the work that we accomplished to complete our 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.

Organizational and Fiscal strengthening is not usually funded by donors as the process isn’t always transparent and can be difficult to demonstrate to members and partners; however, for people having worked in the nonprofit arena for a substantial amount of time, the need for reorganization in an inevitable and necessary part of growth and betterment for the entire network – and specifically the populations we serve. This internal reflection and realignment of our priorities and objectives have been a win for ICW, and the credit for this is due to the Robert Carr Fund, which is unique and exemplary in its support of this kind of institutional strengthening work.

I have had the great privilege of serving as Interim Regional Coordinator for one year, after having served as the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for two years. The success that we have seen could not have been realized with the express support and contributions of both the past and new Board of Directors and their absolute commitment to the vision and mission of ICW.

We did it together!

It’s our great pleasure to share the fruits of our labor!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martha'.

Martha Cameron
Interim Regional Coordinator

ICW-NA **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.

ICW-NA **Mission**

ICW-NA exists to lead efforts to secure and improve the quality of life for women living with HIV in Canada, the Caribbean, 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.

3. 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

Feminism 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

Diversity and Inclusion: We recognize women in all of their diversity and are actively inclusive of all women living with HIV, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, gender conformity, socioeconomic status, educational background, marital or parental status, housing status, employment status, substance use, or any other circumstance in which women exist.



2018

Tara Jewal, ON, Canada – Chair
Melissa Sandel, NY, USA – Vice Chair
Martha Cameron, DC, USA – Treasurer
Brittany Cameron, ON, Canada – Secretary
Kelly Jardine, WA, USA
Chantal Mukandoli, ON, USA
Carol Odada, PA, USA
Claire Gasamagera, MI, USA

2019

Kneeshe Parkinson, MO, USA – Co-Chair
Tara Jewal, ON, Canada – Co- Chair
Brittany Cameron, ON, Canada – Secretary
Carla Martinez, ON, Canada – Treasurer
Nadine Caines, ON Canada
Melissa Sandel, NY, USA
Alecia Tramel, FL, USA

Our 2018 and 2019 achievements were focused on ensuring that we were able to strengthen ICW-NA and deliver on our strategic goals. Here's how we did!

Strategic Goal #1

1. We will educate and equip women living with HIV with skills and tools to improve policies that affect our health and wellbeing

We supported, educated and shared knowledge through 12 workshops and events.

2018

HIV Criminalization

2 *Dating, Sex, Love, and Marriage = My Right, My Responsibility?* (PWN Summit)

1 Law & Policy HIV Criminalization Workshop (Tacoma, Washington)

ICW-NA continued our HIV criminalization advocacy work in both Canada and the USA, which included 3 workshops led for and by women living with HIV engaging 54 participants. These workshops eventually led to an advocacy session in Washington at Capitol Hill with a health committee – to support modernization of Washington law on HIV. We partnered with The Sero Project and HIV Justice Network who provided Technical Assistance. The law has since then been changed and our input adopted partly.

Feminist Movement Building

2 *Feminist Movement Building (FMB) Workshops* (New Jersey and Washington) =

4 FMB Micro Grant Activities:

- Love Positive Women North Carolina Networks Meeting
- Love Positive Women Advocacy Forum (North Carolina)
- Women and Girl's Awareness Month Event (New Jersey)
- HIV Criminalization Workshop (Washington)

1 4-Series Feminist Movement Building Advocacy Campaign Workshop (virtual) + launch of *Housing is Prevention for Women Living with HIV* social media campaign

The Feminist Movement Building Program once again showed us the power in brining women together and giving them the tools to engage in community organizing and advocacy. We engaged in 3 more FMB Workshops in Newark, Tacoma, and Raleigh and Washington which engaged 46 new FMB participants. The best part of the FMB program was that women living with HIV develop and implement their own programing through a micro grants program. While the groups documented 4 events, they all engaged in ongoing planning meetings further strengthening their connection. We were especially proud when all former FMB participants from 5 cities were invited to create a joint ICW-NA advocacy campaign on issues that were collectively important to them – they agreed on access to safe, affordable housing and deemed that *Housing was Prevention for Women Living with HIV.*

“The FMB definitely did movement building. Though it has been incremental. More needs to be done – like there needs to be more FMB workshops to continue to build leadership of new women living with HIV. It could be used as a tool for new members and have previous graduates facilitate it. It would be great to do a Train the Trainer.”

-New Jersey Interview Participant, 2018

Our Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
Self Care, Self Love Women's Networking Zone
Workshop at AIDS 2018 (Amsterdam)
For Us, With Us: Research & Policy for Women & Girls/National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Commemoration Community Event (Washington, DC)
ICW-NA Women's Lounge Event at Opening Doors (London, Ontario)

ICW-NA continued to focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights in 2018 as we believe that this is a core issue to any and all women living with HIV. Led by our Board members, we developed interactive conference events such as the Self Care – Self Love workshop during the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam and the Women's Lounge during Opening Doors. We were particularly proud about the partnership with the WELL Project, The Women's Collective, We the People and AIDS United during the National Women and Girl's HIV Awareness Day where we hosted a full-day, community led, research event with over 100 participants from across the USA including high level participation from the Director of HAHSTA the HIV/AIDS division of DC Public Health, and official representatives from the Mayor's office.

38 women living with HIV engaged in conversation, reminisced on the [former] women's retreats, and other women's workshops that used to be offered in Ontario....[the women] acknowledged that this is the time to start to get involved with [ICW-NA to support] women's rights and needs. – Women's Lounge Report, 2018

We promoted and supported gender specific research through our work and representation on the CFAR CAB Girls and Women HIV Research Initiative.

ICW-NA was invited to serve at the scientific Committee for Women and HIV workshop – held in Boston. We also participated in designing program for the next year's workshop and prioritizing community participatory research led by women living with HIV. – Teresia Otieno, Regional Coordinator 2017 - 2019

We ensured representation of women living with HIV in decision making settings through

our 7 institutional seats in both 2018 and 2019

Canadian Positive People's Network - Board
AIDS Watch - Steering Committee
US PLHIV Caucus
Canadian Coalition for HIV Criminalization Reform
Positive Women's Network USA - Board
International Community of Women Living with HIV – International Steering Committee
CFAR CAB Scientific Committee

Strategic Goal #2

2. We will strengthen and grow the capacity to mount an equitable and effective response to the HIV epidemic

We strengthened partnerships with national partners but also with our global ICW network. In 2018, ICW-NA participated in a global strategic planning (Nairobi) and conflict resolution (Bangkok) meetings with the other 10 regional networks.

ICW-NA learned a lot from these meetings, as we were embarking on some of our internal challenges as well within the larger ICW sisterhood. Together we joined our 10 regional partners as well as representatives from the Chapter of Young Women, Adolescents and Girls and created a strong 2018-2021 Global Strategic Plan and ICW-NA is very proud that we collectively did that together. Our strength is in our united global voice.

We developed the capacity of the Board in 2018 through a 3- day intensive Board Capacity Building and Governance Training focusing on fiduciary and legal accountabilities, legal liabilities, fiscal oversight, and good governance.

The Board identified a series of documents needed urgently during this meeting

Financial Policy
Communication Policy
Grievance and Dispute Resolution
Performance Review Procedures
Staff Performance Review
Conflict of Interest and Bullying Policies

We created tools to evaluate our workshop impact.

In 2018, ICW-NA did a full evaluation of the Feminist Movement Building Program, which highlighted for us the importance of bringing women together and raising consciousness for our membership. We now have templates to use to monitor other programs in the future.

We raised visibility for ICW-NA through our collective participation in 10 regional and international conferences and special sessions:

Canadian Association for HIV Research
AIDS Conference Amsterdam
AIDSWATCH
Commission on the Status of Women 62
Opening Doors Conference, Ontario
HIV is not a Crime III Conference
Positive Women's Network (PWN) Summit
US Conference on AIDS
Women and HIV Workshop
CROI 2018

2019

All of our work in 2019 was focused internally to strengthen and grow our internal capacity to better serve our members and mission. Therefore, our work focused primarily on Strategic Goal #2. Here's what we did to build our organizational structure and help us through a period of institutional insecurity and instability.

We hired a transitional coordinator to lead the process of organizational rebuilding in May.

In a letter written in May of 2019, the ICW-NA Board of Directors requested Martha Cameron to resign from her role as Treasurer and step in as Interim Regional Coordinator from mid-May 2019 to mid-October 15th, 2019. At that point, the organization had been without Coordinator since March of 2019. Among many other responsibilities Martha had to fulfill administration, communication and fundraising duties for the organization, as

well as create the framework to hire new staff and onboard new board members. At the end of the six months, the Interim Regional Coordinator contract was extended to manage the new grant as part of the ICW-EA consortium and lead the process through development of the 2020-2025 strategic plan.

We reviewed and updated our finance policy and procedures following an external assessment of our fiscal infrastructure.

"ICW-NA was going through some major structural shift, while trying to implement new grant funding as part of ICW-EA consortium. My 20 years of experience and leadership in the HIV community were put to the test, as I helped navigate ICW through conflict resolution and institutional strengthening. It was also a privilege to help ICW-NA press a reset button and initiate the development of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, while reflecting on and appreciating the accomplishments of my predecessors that successfully implemented the 2016-2019 strategic plan.

The important thing about this experience was the determination and hard work by all to get through the storm with an intense focus on the ultimate goal: the larger family of women living with HIV who we represent and whose respective qualities of life, depend on some of the work we had to accomplish.

As a woman living with HIV 23 years the mission of ICW is both personal and professional, and I am extremely proud of the team spirit, tremendous commitment and hard labor of the board and staff of ICW-NA."

– Kneeshe Parkinson, Co-Chair 2018

We engaged in 12 monthly Board meetings including 3 in person meetings. In November, the Board started the process to move forward with the next Strategic Plan, including developing its first ever regional theory of change.

We hired ACLAIM to do an evaluation of ICW-NA and assist the organization in prioritizing ICW-NA through this transitional period. In addition, ICW-NA staff engaged in a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) training with other ICW partners in Uganda in October.

Through our Robert Carr Networks Fund (RCNF) funded ICW-EA consortium we were supported through our fiscal agent ACLAIM, to evaluate and prioritize the building and strengthening of internal mechanisms for our regional office alongside our other regional partners. An action plan to map and chart ICW-NA's key areas of organizational strengthening was established which focused on strategic priority areas including: Governance, Staff, Finance, Strategic Planning, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. While we were unable to complete the all of the tasks, there will be ongoing monitoring of our progress over the next three years of our joint grant.



We raised visibility of ICW at PEPFAR meetings in Washington, DC and shared important information with our sister ICW networks.

Through our meetings with PEPFAR, we strategically were able to raise issues in domestic US spaces that had impacts for other ICW regions. In turn we shared the information we gathered about key issues and targets for the donors with other ICW networks. While ICW-NA does not qualify for PEPFAR, USAID or Global Affairs Canada funding we see our role to advocate for both the Canadian and US governments to maintain their commitment to supporting the development and investment in gender sensitive HIV programming abroad. This is an area that we are working on strengthening as our network grows.

Strategic Goal #3

We will ensure the sustainability and future growth of ICW-NA through diversified funding.

We successfully won a 3-year core funding grant with the ICW-EA Consortia and added once again successfully obtained a AIDS United POP funding for the Feminist Movement Building Program in 2018.

With funding from Robert Carr Networks Fund and AIDS United POP Grant, ICW-NA engaged and collaborated with women in Canada and the US to amplify the voices of women in key issues affecting our lives. Successfully applying for RCNF funding as a consortium under ICW-EA was a highlight during my term as ICW-NA coordinator; this meant secured core-funding for the network for the next three years. I am excited to see the work continue under the leadership of Martha, and to see the network grow stronger.

-Teresia Otieno, 2017 – 2019 Regional Coordinator.

6. Financial Statements

[2018 Financial Statement](#)

[2019 Financial Statement](#)

7. Funding

Thank you to our funders
Robert Carr Networks Fund (2016-2019) and
AIDS United – Positive Organizing Project (2018)
for making this work possible.