

# POSITIVE LIVING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

*This edition is dedicated to Deloris Dockery a tireless champion of women living with HIV.*



Women living with HIV bring their resilience and expertise to respond to COVID-19 around the world. @ICW

## WHAT WE ARE READING NOW

[How to balance work, life and family](#) by Lillian Mworeko

[Sex, parenting and living with HIV: Life in Lockdown](#) by Jessica Whitbread

[CEDAW guidance note: practical guidelines for States on mitigating COVID-19 impact on women & girls.](#)

[WHO: COVID-19 and violence against women](#) - What the health sector/system can do.

## PEER SUPPORT GOES VIRTUAL

Feeling isolated or just want to talk - join ICW's virtual support group or set up your own virtual support group!

**CONTACT:** [info@icwnorthamerica.org](mailto:info@icwnorthamerica.org)

## SURVEY NOW IN 5 LANGUAGES!



Fill out the GNP+, ICW, and Y+ Global [survey](#) this week to share how you are adapting to Life in the time of COVID-19.

Visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#) to find the survey, past editions of the newsletter and other resources.

## HOW ARE NETWORKS OF WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV RESPONDING?

Networks of women living with HIV have been securing resources, documenting rights violations and mobilizing to support women, including those from key populations can access medicines, food, and other essential supplies.

- [Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS](#), have developed a global program to deliver ARVs to women living with HIV, who are stranded away from home in other countries.
- [ICW Eastern Africa](#) are advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights to be considered as essential services in the context of COVID-19. They successfully lobbied the government in Uganda to exempt pregnant women from the lockdown so they can travel to health facilities.
- [ICW North America](#) members are delivering street-based survival sex work kits in Canada.
- [ICW Asia Pacific](#) is coordinating with different stakeholders to deliver ARVs to migrant workers and advocating with governments to secure access to treatment before stockouts.
- In Nigeria, [ICW West Africa](#) members are serving as community pharmacists to provide ARVs.
- [ICW Costa Rica](#), [NFWLHA Nepal](#), [ICW Mexico](#), [VNW+ Vietnam](#), [Positive Women Ukraine](#), [ICW Zimbabwe](#), [Association Tunisienne de Prevention Positive](#), are delivering food packages and provisions to the most vulnerable women including sex workers and women in conflict regions.
- [Positive Women's Network, USA](#), is holding a virtual Friday night Crafting Club - such as making flowers from random objects you already have in your house!
- In Africa, adolescent girls and young women are using the [ATHENA Network](#) [#WhatWomenWant](#) and [#WhatGirlsWant](#) platforms to share experiences and advocate for human rights.

# WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE PANDEMIC

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS UNDER THREAT

In the US, there are attempts to ban or eliminate access to abortion in the name of the COVID-19 epidemic. In Uganda, women are dying in labour as they walk to, or fear to go to health facilities. In many countries, women and girls are unable to get contraceptives or sanitary products due to travel restrictions in lockdown. In Nepal, women living with HIV are not able to access PMTCT services.

## DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING TREATMENT

Women are also reporting forced disclosure of HIV status where they must carry a letter or passes to travel to collect their ARVs, and in some cases they have to share this with police or security personnel in countries like Esawtini, South Africa and Tunisia.

## FOOD INSECURITY AND LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD

From Rwanda to Indonesia, women living with HIV often work in informal sectors so a lockdown has meant a complete loss of livelihoods. Across the world, women living with HIV are saying they fear hunger more than COVID-19.

Sex workers, who are criminalised in most countries, have lost their livelihoods. In some countries they are also denied social protection and relief packages.

## IN FOCUS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN KILLS JUST LIKE THE EPIDEMIC!

The lockdown due to COVID-19 has led to increased rates of intimate partner violence all over the world - from Botswana to the United States.

In Africa, adolescent girls and young women living with HIV are facing more violence during lockdown and are unable to leave as they are not financially independent. In Trinidad & Tobago, networks of women living with HIV are concerned with emerging numbers that show a rise in domestic violence cases from only 232 in 2019 to more than 558 in 2020 so far.

Networks of women living with HIV are leading public education campaigns to reduce violence against women and ensure that women experiencing violence during lockdown know where to get help and resources.



As we are in hard times to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the entire world as an Advocate in ICW Rwanda Chapter am encouraging everyone to follow the instructions given by our authorities because the virus has no vaccine and no medicine.

- \*Wash your hands properly
- \*No hand Shake
- \*Avoid areas with huge number
- \*Avoid unnecessary walks outside.

Let all of us stop Attracting and Spreading the virus by Staying home.

And by staying home let also stop Gender Based Violence and any other Human violence.

#Stayhomeandhelpsavelives.

Ariane Nadege Uwamahoro  
ICW Rwanda Chapter Advocate.



NETWORKS IN RWANDA, MEXICO AND TUNISIA ARE SPEAKING OUT!

WE SALUTE OUR SISTERS – LIKE HEALTH CARE WORKERS, YOU ARE ALSO ON THE FRONTLINE.

