The International AIDS Society

Educational Fund meeting: Outcome report
28 August 2019
Argentina

HIV and sexual and reproductive rights throughout life
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*This report was developed in collaboration with Fundación Huésped. The views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of the International AIDS Society.*

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## 2. List of abbreviations and acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Antiretroviral therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTTA</td>
<td>Asociación de Travestis Transexuales y Transgéneros de Argentina (Association of Transvestites, Transsexuals and Transgender of Argentina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CABA</td>
<td>Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (City of Buenos Aires)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELS</td>
<td>Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (Center for Legal and Social Studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESI</td>
<td>Educación Sexual Integral (Comprehensive sexual education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FALGBT</td>
<td>Federación Argentina LGBT (LGBT Federation of Argentina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGEP</td>
<td>Fundación Grupo Efecto Positivo (Positive Effect Group Foundation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ</td>
<td>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer or related identities</td>
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<td>MTCT</td>
<td>Mother-to-child HIV transmission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>PrEP</td>
<td>Pre-exposure prophylaxis</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAJAP</td>
<td>Red Argentina de Jóvenes y Adolescentes Positivos (Argentina Network of Positive Youth and Adolescents)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual and reproductive health and rights</td>
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<td>STIs</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>U=U</td>
<td>Undetectable Equals Untransmittable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTREF</td>
<td>Universidad de Tres de Febrero (National University of Tres de Febrero)</td>
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3. Introduction

The IAS Educational Fund meetings are held to facilitate learning and debating opportunities for the HIV workforce and communities around the world. During these meetings, specific issues and advances that shape local epidemics are discussed in order to strengthen the local response to HIV and AIDS. Since 2017, five meetings have been held in Latin America and the Caribbean, and there is increasing involvement of HIV stakeholders in this region in International AIDS Society (IAS) activities. However, they still represent only 7% of IAS memberships. The last meeting held in Buenos Aires in 2017, titled Challenges for PrEP Implementation in Argentina, was one of the first debates on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) implementation at the national level.

On 28 August 2019, another meeting was held in partnership with the XVI Scientific Symposium Fundación Huésped in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The symposium with a national and regional scope was attended by leading national and international researchers, advocates, healthcare workers, and policymakers. Horacio Salomón, IAS Governing Council member representing the Latin America and Caribbean region, and Leandro Cahn, Executive Director of Fundación Huésped, delivered welcoming remarks and launched the XVI Scientific Symposium Fundación Huésped hosted in parallel to the IAS Educational Fund meeting. The IAS Educational Fund symposium objective was to present advances in topics related to HIV and AIDS, viral hepatitis, vaccine-preventable diseases, other communicable diseases and sexual and reproductive health issues, and the implications at the national level. The aim of the meeting was to ensure that participants benefitted from a better understanding of HIV science and new developments and that they had the opportunity to come up with ideas and solutions for challenges that they face in their day-to-day work. In addition, the goal of the discussions was to have participants apply what they learned at the meeting to local issues. Participants were also provided with the opportunity to propose strategies on how to improve HIV policy and programmes regarding local and national implementation in question and answer sessions with panellists. Lastly, networking opportunities

Scientific symposium participants, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 28 August 2019
offered the time for attendees to create new contacts in their field of work and to have them collaborate to improve local and regional HIV policies and programmes.

On this occasion, the meeting on the theme, *HIV and sexual and reproductive rights throughout life* highlighted Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advances and challenges throughout every stage of life (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age) among people living with HIV and other key and vulnerable populations. In each of the four sessions that took place, researchers, healthcare workers, activists and policymakers were brought together to present their work. The speakers discussed and made recommendations on HIV and SRHR related to the following topics: 1) children and adolescents, 2) sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace, 3) challenges of sustaining the rights acquired at every stage of life, and 4) aging.
4. Background and context

Towards achieving UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals by 2030, Latin American countries have made efforts to expand and strengthen their HIV treatment and prevention services. Despite many challenges, recent reports show slight progress (UNAIDS, 2019). The proportion of 1.9 million [1.6 million–2.4 million] people living with HIV who knew their status increased from 70 to 80% between 2015 and 2018. Similarly, there was a growth observed in the percentage of people living with HIV with access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) from 57% [41–72%] in 2017 to 62% [43–78%] in 2018; and viral suppression rose from 50% [37–62%] in 2017 to 55% [42–69%] in 2018. AIDS-related deaths in the region decreased by 14% between 2010 and 2018, and the incidence-prevalence ratio continues to diminish, reaching 5.4% [4.1–6.8%] in 2018 (UNAIDS, 2019). In addition, PrEP demonstration studies have expanded and this approach is being implemented in Brazil, as an additional prevention tool for key and populations within combination HIV prevention strategies (Luz et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, and contrary to other regions that show declines in HIV incidence in the past decade, the number of new HIV infections increased by 7% between 2010 and 2018 in the Latin American region (UNAIDS, 2019). An estimated 100,000 [79,000–130,000] people acquired HIV in 2018. There is few available information about key and populations in many Latin American countries, yet reported data showed that these groups suffer the highest burden of the HIV epidemic. In 2018, 40% of new infections were among men who have sex with men and the highest HIV prevalence was among transgender women [20–30%]. Although HIV programmes in many Latin American countries are domestically funded, there has been insufficient investments in expanding strategies targeting these key and populations and monitoring human rights violations that could present barriers to HIV healthcare (UNAIDS, 2019). Likewise, many countries face challenges to ensure access to HIV testing and healthcare services. Late treatment initiation and patients’ ART adherence problems are still pervasive in the region (Luz et al., 2019).

In Argentina, there was an estimated 129,000 people living with HIV in 2018. Approximately 80% knew their HIV status, and 83.5% of those received ART. Twenty percent of men and 22% of women with HIV were under the age of 25; almost 60% of men and 54% of women are between 25 and 44 years old, and 20% and 21%, respectively, are over 45 years old. Moreover, it was estimated that 1,800 people living with HIV [1,600–2,100] were under the age of 14. Comparing the years 2006-2007 and 2014-2015 of the rate of the HIV diagnoses in young males aged 15 to 19 years old, there was an increase from 4.9 to 6.9 x 100,000 and 22.9 to 34.9 x 100,000 among 20 to 24 years old (Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social, Argentina, 2018).

Similarly, to other Latin American countries, Argentina has a concentrated epidemic with higher prevalence found among key and vulnerable populations, including men who have sex with men (12-15%) and transgender women (34%) (Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social, Argentina, 2018). Since the beginning of the epidemic, civil society has played a major role in achieving a favourable legal framework for people living with HIV and key and vulnerable populations; guaranteeing universal ART access (National AIDS Law, 1996), same-sex marriage (2010) and recognition of gender identity (2012) (UNAIDS, 2015). However, in recent years, political changes have raised concerns regarding the protection of these rights. In a context of economic crisis, the Ministry of Health was downgraded to a secretariat and fused into the Ministry of Health and Social Development, resulting in budget cuts to several programmes, including the National HIV/AIDS and STD Programme. Advocates have denounced shortages, fractioning and compulsory ART changes of antiretroviral drugs across the country (Corresponsales Clave, 2019).
Given that AIDS-related morbidity and mortality is steadily decreasing because of the expansion of ART, many people living with HIV around the globe are living longer (Caro-Vega et al., 2018). There are important challenges to be addressed in the region to promote access to healthcare and ART to secure quality of life for people living with HIV in every age group, particularly among those groups most affected by the epidemic. Thus, this IAS Educational Fund meeting aimed to address issues concerning sexual and reproductive health rights throughout life in Argentina’s context, working towards strengthening the country’s HIV response in the current situation.
5. Meeting report

5.1 Executive summary

The IAS Educational Fund meeting in Buenos Aires was held on 28 August 2019 in the context of Fundación Huésped’s XVI Scientific Symposium. The meeting titled *HIV and sexual and reproductive rights throughout life* aimed to address issues concerning SRHR in every age group, particularly among those groups most affected by the HIV epidemic.

Leading national and international researchers, advocates, healthcare workers, and policymakers discussed and made recommendations on HIV and SRHR. The meeting was divided into four sessions covering the following aspects and life stages: 1) childhood and adolescence, 2) sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace, 3) challenges of sustaining the rights acquired at every stage of life, and 4) aging.

The first session focused on childhood and adolescence and included presentations of a young man living with HIV, a young transgender man representing the Federación Argentina LGBT (FALGBT), a young man who contracted HIV by mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) working at Red Argentina de Jóvenes y Adolescentes Positivos (RAJAP), an infectious diseases specialist from Garrahan Hospital and the Director of the National HIV/AIDS and STD Programme. They discussed: the stigma and discrimination that transgender youth and young people living with HIV face; the lack of comprehensive sexual education; the particular struggles of young people living with HIV who contracted HIV from MTCT; programmes to facilitate linkage to HIV services for adults and the need for healthcare workers to improve communication with their young patients. There was a protest by people living with HIV to demand the National HIV/AIDS and STD Programme to guarantee the provision of antiretroviral therapy (ART).

The second session addressed sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace and the speakers represented the perspective of a young adult living with HIV (Asociación Ciclo Positivo) and the HIV/AIDS Programme of the City of Buenos Aires. In addition, the panel consisted of a lawyer from a non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides services for people living with HIV (Fundación Huésped), an older transgender woman (ATTTA), and a professional in assisted reproductive treatment from Muñiz Hospital. They spoke about young men who have sex with men are the most affected by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and older heterosexual men often know of their HIV diagnosis at a late stage. They agree that combination HIV strategies should be proposed, including Educación Sexual Integral (ESI) – which refers to the National Programme on comprehensive sexual education in Spanish for implementation in local policies – Discrimination Zero, Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U), condoms, ART, HIV testing and PrEP. They also addressed the lack of interventions to prevent discrimination in the workplace, complaints about pre-employment HIV testing and restrictions in HIV pensions. Moreover, the need to advocate for a comprehensive law for transgender people that include employment quota and pensions for older transgender women was highlighted.

The third session focused on discussing the challenges of sustaining the rights acquired at every stage of life. In the panel were included lawyers (CELS), a transgender woman (ATTTA and Fundación Huésped), a person living with HIV (FGEP), a representative of the Public Defense Office and an employee of the Ministry of Health and Department of Health and Social Development. The presentation included issues concerning the increasing problems with ART provision; the advances that the Gender Identity Law represented for transgender people and the discrimination, violence and lack of access to healthcare that persists; the barriers that limit the
access to HIV pensions; people living with HIV who are activists and their role demanding the State for ART provision; and the crisis in the national health system.

The final session regarding HIV and sexual and reproductive rights and aging included the voices of a psychologist representing two Argentine NGOs (Puerta Abierta a la Diversidad and Casa del Orgullo), a professional of the Network for Older Adults of the City Government, academics from Tres de Febrero University, and an older man living with HIV (Mayores en la Diversidad). The speakers presented different projects addressing healthy aging, preventing isolation and discussing older adults’ sexuality. The projects presented include: Casa del Orgullo, a safe and friendly place for the older LGBTQ community; Red de Gerontología de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, a network that carries out workshops to promote healthy aging; and Ancestras, an action-research project focused on empowering older women. It was also highlighted that older adults are being neglected in sexual health policies putting them at risk for contracting HIV and other STIs, and late diagnosis. The activist representative of older people living with HIV stated that when he was young, people living with HIV suffered in the absence of state policies, and that civil society fought for the rights to ART treatment. This older generation is once again facing the abandonment of the State.

5.2 Discussion and recommendations on HIV and sexual and reproductive rights and their interconnection with children and adolescents

Lissandro Cottone and Gastón Vera (Secretaría de infancias y adolescencias trans y sus familias and Secretaría de VIH-sida from FA-LGBT), spoke about stigma and discrimination experiences that transgender youth and young people living with HIV face in society. These children and adolescents suffer stigma and discrimination inside their families and schools. Stigma and discrimination, fuelled by misinformation and adult-centrism, cause pathologization of sexual diversity, transgender identities and those living with HIV. Moreover, discrimination, self-stigma and lack of information lead transgender adolescents to marginalization, sexual exploitation and a risk of contracting HIV. Young people living with HIV also face the fear of being discriminated by their families, potential sexual partners and in their workplace. They also highlighted that misinformation regarding HIV and condom use is the primary cause of adolescents contracting HIV.
Matias Chavez (RAJAP) addressed the particular issues of young people living with HIV who contracted HIV through MTCT. He stated that this group has been made invisible and neglected. They usually face stigma and discrimination in schools in situations where their right to confidentiality may be violated. Moreover, this group of young people living with HIV have taken ART all of their lives, leading to important side effects and often struggling with ART adherence. To conclude, he invited civil society and healthcare workers to work together and hear their experience for the benefit of newly infected young people living with HIV.

Rosa Bologna (Chief of the Department of Infectious Diseases of Hospital Dr Juan P. Garrahan) presented a programme based in a paediatric hospital that facilitates the linkage of young people living with HIV to adult HIV services. More than 200 young people living with HIV participated in this programme, which included a peer support group. Young people living with HIV struggle with the normal process of growing up and at the same time they cope with stigma and discrimination, grief for the death of a parent from an AIDS-related disease, sexual initiation and condom use, alcohol and drug use, etc. She stated that promoting doctor-patient communication without prejudice, support groups, comprehensive sexual education, access to services for contraception and safe abortion services are essential for the wellbeing of young people living with HIV.
Before Claudia Rodríguez (Director of the National Programme of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Viral Hepatitis and Lepra, and Infectious Disease Specialist for Hospital Dr Cosme Argerich) spoke, there was activism demanding a solution for the shortages and fractionation in the delivery of antiretroviral drugs. After the protest, Rodríguez invited the activists to ask for a meeting with her in the National Programme office. Then she presented global statistics of people living with HIV, highlighted the importance of the family support for young people living with HIV and commented on the challenges of ART adherence among young people living with HIV who contracted HIV through MTCT. Rodríguez shared statistics from 85 young people living with HIV patients from Hospital Dr Cosme Argerich (78% linked to healthcare, 73% taking ART and 50% virally suppressed). She also spoke about the results of a study in Hospital Dr Cosme Argerich that showed that 26% of young people living with HIV were taking medications that could interact with ART and diminish its effect, stressing the need to improve doctor-patient communication.
Key recommendations

- Guarantee the implementation of the Educación Sexual Integral (ESI) policy, meaning comprehensive sexual education in every school.
- Promote campaigns to address stigma and discrimination towards transgender youth and other key and vulnerable populations.
- Include the voices and experiences of young people living HIV who contract through MTCT to tailor services for young people living HIV.
- Promote peer support groups for young people living HIV to improve adherence and help navigate healthcare services.
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive services adapted to young people living HIV with healthcare workers trained for their specific needs.
- Promote doctor-patient communication without prejudice as essential for transgender youth and young people living with HIV healthcare.
- Work toward 90-90-90 among young people living with HIV to increase life expectancy and improve quality of life.
- Guarantee provision of ART by the National Programme.
5.3 Discussion and recommendations relating to sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace

Matías Muñoz (Asociación Ciclo Positivo) indicated that in Argentina, adolescents and young adults are the most affected by sexually transmitted infections (STIs). He stated that combination HIV strategies should include every step: The Educación Sexual Integral (ESI) policy, which refers to comprehensive sexual education in Spanish for implementation in local policies, Discrimination Zero, Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U), Condoms, ART, HIV testing and PrEP. There is a need to urgently implement ESI in schools and universities and address the reduction in provision of condoms by the government. To conclude, he added that there are no interventions set in place to prevent discrimination in the workplace, although several solutions exist to address this issue and are often suggested to higher authorities for implementation.

Adriana Durán (HIV/AIDS Programme of the City of Buenos Aires) presented statistics from the HIV Programme of Buenos Aires, which showed different modes of transmission and different barriers to HIV testing in each age group. Stigma can affect in a “positive” manner by pushing key and vulnerable populations to HIV testing. On the contrary, other people are often left outside of HIV campaigns and believe that they are not at risk (for example, older adults). In the city, the epidemic is increasingly affecting older women. Among men, new infections are detected in young men who have sex with men who receive early diagnoses. On the other hand, late diagnoses and AIDS-related deaths are prevalent among older heterosexual men. Durán agreed with Muñoz that combination HIV prevention approaches are the best strategy to address the local epidemic. The community demands female condoms, HIV and syphilis rapid test in community settings and tailored interventions for transgender women.
Romina Cavallo (Fundación Huésped) spoke about direct services that Fundación Huésped provides free of charge. She mentioned: psychological and legal counselling for people living with HIV, projects including Educación Sexual Integral (ESI) that is comprehensive sexual education in Spanish for implementation in local policies, and online SRHR information for transgender women and adolescents. She highlighted the development of #Dónde, an open-source platform to locate SRHR services and #Vamos, a Latin American version. In the legal service, more than 4,000 enquiries have been received in the last year. Main inquiries are in the areas of work (complaints about pre-employment HIV testing and discrimination in the workplace), health (complaints about lack of post-exposure prophylaxis, health insurance problems and shortage of ART provision) and restrictions of continuity or access to pensions.

Marcela Romero (ATTTA) discussed how prejudices regarding aging affect people’s perception of sexuality in older women and older transgender women. When older than 35 years (average life expectancy in this group), transgender women are considered part of adults in an older age group and are left outside of public policies, leading them to poverty. Transgender women are advocating for a comprehensive law for transgender people that include employment quota and pensions for older transgender women.

Mariano Perco (Hospital de Infecciosas Dr Francisco Javier Muñiz) explained the work in assisted reproductive treatment for serodiscordant couples (for men living with HIV and their female partners). The intervention includes intrauterine insemination in combination with semen washing. More than 450 couples have been assisted, 71 went through with the procedure and achieved 44
pregnancies. No HIV transmission cases were detected. Recent developments, such as U=U, open new opportunities.

Mariano Perco speaking on HIV and sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace

Key recommendations

- Scale-up combination HIV prevention strategies, adapting interventions to each key and vulnerable population and age group.
- Facilitate complaints regarding restrictions of continuity or access to pensions.
- Build mechanisms to prevent workplace discrimination and address restrictions in pensions for people living with HIV.
- Disseminate information about U=U as an opportunity to fight stigma and discrimination, as well as self-stigma.
- To achieve U=U, the first step is to ensure access to HIV testing.
- Study acceptability of female condoms, which is currently not available in Argentina.
- Expand HIV and syphilis rapid testing in community settings and healthcare.
- To work towards equality and the full advance of human rights, people should have access to information about their rights and laws that guarantee them.
- Advocate for a comprehensive law for transgender people that includes employment quota and pensions for older transgender women.
- Promote reproductive health counselling and information for people living with HIV.
5.4 Discussion and recommendations on the challenges of sustaining the rights acquired at every stage of life

Mariano Lanziano and Lucia de la Vega (CELS) spoke about the legal clinic they coordinate that provides free legal services in human rights violations. In the last four years, cases regarding problems with medication provision increased (such as ART, cancer medication and more). Every year, they received approximately 20 enquiries. During the second semester of 2018, enquiries reached 103 and from December 2018 to August 2019, more than 200 enquiries were received. Problems with the provision of medication are found also in social security and the private sector, due to lack of monitoring by the state. Finally, patients were given their medication, but they live in uncertainty about future provisions.

Nadir Cardozo (Fundación Huésped and ATTTA) talked about the extremely vulnerable conditions that transgender women lived before the Gender Identity Law (2012). Having now their self-perceived gender identity in the national identity document, encouraged transgender women to look for healthcare, education and employment opportunities. More trans-competent healthcare services are opening. So far, 8,735 transgender people have changed their national ID. However, 59 transgender people have died in the past year due to lack of access to healthcare and hate crimes.
José María Di Bello (FGEP) reflected about the activist movement of people living with HIV that once again have to fight for access to ART medication. Until a few years ago, civil society has been focusing on promoting a new national AIDS law and protesting against pharmaceutical patents and ART monopolies. Since 2012, the Fundación Grupo Efecto Positivo is closely monitoring ART purchasing. In 2016 and 2019, they returned to protesting due to budget cuts and lack of tender process.

Roxana Feliciotti (Public Ministry of Defense) explained that the objective of the Public Defense Office is to eliminate barriers to access justice for people in vulnerable conditions. Most people living with HIV enquire about pensions and ART provision. In 2017, many pensions for people living with HIV were suspended. Since 2019, new requisites are limiting access to such pensions. Although living with HIV is not a disability, it could be considered as one because of the social barriers that people living with HIV face.

Fabio Núñez (Ministry of Health and Social Development) spoke about how he feels as an employee of the National HI/AIDS and STD Programme. Employees of the Programme feel ashamed and fearful of making information public. He shared information related to how the economic and public health crisis brought more cases
of syphilis, tuberculosis and other diseases. Moreover, there is a shortage of condoms, baby formulas, tuberculosis medication, vaccines, etc. He also stated that combination HIV prevention focused on the social determinants of health. Thus, in this context, we should not talk about PrEP if we cannot guarantee ART provision and HIV testing.

**Key recommendations**

- Demand the government to guarantee ART provision.
- Share mechanism within civil society to sort medication shortage and address complaints from people living with HIV.
- Ensure school retention of transgender youth and re-engagement of those who were expelled from the educational system.
- Expand the provision of gender affirmative services (hormone therapy and surgery).
- Raise awareness about the violence that transgender women still suffer and implement programmes to reduce it.
- Guarantee access to HIV healthcare and ART for transgender women.
- Advocate for a comprehensive transgender law with a focus on anti-discrimination policies and access to comprehensive healthcare.
- Demand easier mechanisms to ensure pensions for people living with HIV.
- Scientific community and civil society should join efforts to sustain the rights acquired in the context of economic and healthcare crisis.

### 5.5 Discussion and recommendations on HIV and sexual and reproductive rights and aging

Gabriela Balestra (Puerta Abierta a la Diversidad and Casa del Orgullo) spoke about Puerta Abierta a la Diversidad and their work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or related identities (LGBTIQ) older adults. These older adults keep their sexual orientation secret and isolate themselves. In 2019, Casa del Orgullo opened as a safe and friendly place for the older LGBTQ community.

Paula Vicente (Red de Gerontología de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires) presented the workshops carried out by a network of healthcare workers in the City of Buenos Aires in hospitals and health centers, in line with the law of Human Rights Protection of Older Adults (2017). The activities promote healthy aging, as the age group of 80 and older is constantly growing in Buenos Aires. Workshops focusing on sexual health promotion, HIV and STIs prevention have been included.

Marianela Carchak Canes and Mónica Navarro (Ancestras and UNTREF) spoke about Ancestras that is an action-research project focused on older women. It promotes learning and empowerment of older women through culture, academics and social participation, and gathers women in different venues. It has a gender and feminist perspective and facilitates sharing knowledge with other generations.

Edgardo Cors (Mayores en la Diversidad), spoke about how he received his HIV diagnosis in the early days of the epidemic. At that moment, people living with HIV suffered in the absence of state polices and civil society fought for the rights to ART treatment. This older generation is once again facing the abandonment of the state. Moreover, older adults are being neglected in sexual health
policies putting them at risk for contracting HIV and other STIs, and late diagnoses. He stated that older people living with HIV are fighting together with new generations for social justice, a right to health and a cure for HIV.

**Key recommendations**

- Promote change in social representation concerning older adults’ sexuality and older LGBTIQ to reduce stigma and discrimination.
- Promote safe spaces for older adults and particularly LGBTQ to discuss sexuality, sexual health and to fight isolation.
- Promote healthy aging, as aging should be a right, not a privilege.
- Train health workers to talk about sexual health with their older patients and offer HIV tests to reduce late HIV diagnosis rates.
- Promote programmes for older women with a gender perspective.
- Promote healthy aging for older people living with HIV and guarantee their right to ART medication.
6. Conclusion

The IAS Educational Fund meeting in Buenos Aires was successful in bringing together researchers, healthcare workers, activists and policymakers to discuss HIV and SRHR advances and challenges throughout every stage of life in the context of the current economic crisis in Argentina.

This meeting was an excellent opportunity to hear the voices of the key and vulnerable populations and people living with HIV who struggle throughout their lives to make their sexual and reproductive rights effective. Given the high prevalence and incidence of HIV amongst men who have sex with men and transgender women in the region, addressing discrimination remains a challenge. In every session, speakers shared how experiences of stigma and discrimination and lack of sexual education hinder their access to sexual and reproductive services. Some groups are particularly being neglected by public policies, such as children and adolescents living with HIV who contracted HIV through MTCT, heterosexual men, older adults and older transgender women. Moreover, people living with HIV are struggling with discrimination in employment and limitation in HIV pensions.

Even though young men who have sex with men access HIV tests earlier than other groups, they are still the most affected by sexually transmitted infections of all key and vulnerable populations. This reality highlights the need to implement combination HIV strategies, including all tools available to increase access to prevention, testing, improving linkage to care and promoting ART adherence among key and vulnerable populations in the region in order to reach the 90–90–90 goals. In order to scale-up these strategies, there are important gaps that remain to be addressed at the national level, such as the implementation of the comprehensive sexual education law and work in the provision of PrEP.

Despite Argentina’s advances to ensure universal and equitable access to HIV services in the past decades, the current economic crisis that leads to the downgrading of the Ministry of Health, budget cuts and shortages of ART are putting in danger the health of people living with HIV. Joint efforts of the scientific community and civil society should be made in order to sustain the rights acquired in the context of the economic and healthcare crisis.

Recommendations and next steps

General recommendations:

- Guarantee provision of ART by the National HIV/AIDS and STD Programme.
- The scientific community and civil society should join efforts to sustain the rights acquired in the context of the economic and healthcare crisis.
- Scale-up combination HIV prevention strategies (Educación Sexual Integral [ESI] – which refers to comprehensive sexual education in Spanish for implementation in local policies – Discrimination Zero, Undetectable Equals Untransmittable [U=U], condoms, ART, HIV testing and PrEP), adapting interventions to each key and vulnerable population and age group.
- Promote campaigns to address stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV and LGBTQ.
• Train healthcare workers to improve doctor-patient communication, particularly for those working with youth and older adults.

Childhood and adolescence:
• Guarantee the implementation of the comprehensive sexual education law in every school (Educación Sexual Integral [ESI], the local policy on comprehensive sexual education).
• Include the voices and experiences of key and vulnerable populations and young people living with HIV to improve sexual health and HIV services.

Youth and adults in the working environment:
• Build mechanisms to prevent workplace discrimination and pre-employment HIV tests and address restrictions in pensions for people living with HIV.
• Disseminate information about U=U as an opportunity to fight stigma and discrimination and self-stigmatization.
• Advocate for a comprehensive law for transgender people that includes employment quotas.

Older adults (above 35 years old):
• Promote change in social representation concerning older adults’ sexuality and older LGBTIQ to reduce stigma and discrimination.
• Promote safe spaces for older adults and particularly LGBTQ to discuss sexuality, sexual health and to fight isolation.
• Advocate for pensions for older transgender women.
7. Acknowledgements

The International AIDS Society (IAS) would like to acknowledge the partnership of Fundación Huésped for serving as the local organizer of this IAS Educational Fund symposium in August 2019.

Special appreciation goes to the chairs, speakers and panellists for their participation and contribution during the meeting as well as to all participants and stakeholders in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The IAS would also like to extend its appreciation Gilead and Merck for their financial support for this meeting.
8. References


9. Appendices

9.1 IAS Educational Fund meeting detailed programme

HIV and sexual and reproductive rights throughout life – 28 August 2019

Chair / Co-Chair: Horacio Salomón, IAS Governing Council member, Latin America and the Caribbean
Leandro Cahn, Fundación Huésped, Argentina

09:30 – 09:45 Opening comments and welcome
Horacio Salomón, IAS Governing Council member, Latin America and the Caribbean
Leandro Cahn, Fundación Huésped, Argentina

09:45 – 11:00 Panel discussion: Children and adolescents
Moderator: Silvia Warth, Fundación Huésped
Panellists:
Lissandro Cottone and Gastón Vera, Secretaría de infancias y adolescencias trans (FALGBT)
Matías Chaves, Red Argentina de Jóvenes y Adolescentes Positivos (RAJAP)
Rosa Bologna, Hospital Garrahan
Claudia Rodríguez, Department of AIDS of the National Ministry of Health and Social Development

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 Panel discussion: Sexual maturity and maturity in the workplace
Moderator: Mariana Flighelman, Fundación Huésped
Panellists:
Matías Muñoz, Asociación Ciclo Positivo
Adriana Durán, Coordinación Sida CABA
Marcela Romero, RedLacTrans
Marcelo Gutiérrez, Fundación Huésped
Mariano Perco, Hospital Muñiz
13:00 – 14:30  **Panel discussion: Challenges of sustaining the rights acquired at every stage of life**

*Moderator: Romina Cavallo, Fundación Huésped*

*Panellists:*

Nadir Cardozo, Fundación Huésped and ATTTA  
Fabio Núñez, Department of AIDS of the National Ministry of Health and Social Development  
Mariano Lanziano and Lucía de la Vega, CELS  
Roxana Feliciotti, Public Ministry of Defense  
José María Di Bello, Fundación Grupo Efecto Positivo (FGEP)

14:30 – 16:30  **Panel discussion: HIV and sexual and reproductive rights and aging**

*Moderator: Lucas Villalba, Fundación Huésped*

*Panellists:*

Graciela Balestra, Puerta Abierta a la Diversidad and Casa del Orgullo  
Paula Vicente, Red de Gerontología de CABA  
Marianela Carchak Canes and Mónica Navarro, Ancestras and UNTREF  
Edgardo Cors, Mayores en la Diversidad

16:30 – 16:45  **Closing remarks**

*Horacio Salomón, IAS Governing Council member, Latin America and the Caribbean*

*Leandro Cahn, Fundación Huésped, Argentina*