

POSITIVE LIVING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



@may17.org

May 17: we mark International Candlelight Memorial Day and join the Worldwide Celebration of Sexual and Gender Diversities. This edition focuses on gay men living with HIV. Coming up soon is an edition dedicated to trans communities.

CHECK THIS OUT!

MPact's [COVID-19 page](#) features a series of sex-positive blogs for gay and bisexual men, LGBTIQ+ advocates and their health providers.

Hear queer advocates share their stories on in this [film by MPact](#).

See AFE MENA's [COVID-19 page](#) with resources in Arabic and French.

[GayLatino](#) is organising a series of discussions on COVID-19 for Latin American advocates.

APCOM's [The COVID Effect Series](#) catalogues the impact of the pandemic on diverse SOGIESC communities in Asia Pacific.

See [ECOM's report](#) on the impact and response of LGBTIQ+ NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

FILL OUT SURVEY NOW!



Calling all networks of people living with HIV to [fill our survey](#), and share how you are adapting to Life in the time of COVID-19.

TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

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

WHAT WE ARE HEARING FROM GAY COMMUNITIES

In many countries, religious leaders are linking COVID-19 to homosexuality, resulting in gay men being blamed, humiliated or beaten up. In **Morocco**, a public outing of LGBTIQ+ people led to them being blackmailed or kicked out of their homes. From **Belize** to **Uganda**, police are using the pretext of lockdown conditions to harass, beat up or arrest gay men.

Across **Middle East and North Africa**, gay men are having to tone down or hide their sexuality because of homophobic living environments. In **Sri Lanka**, gay men face violence at home but are unable to seek support. In **South Korea**, a new COVID-19 outbreak has been linked to LGBTIQ+ clubs, leading to increased homophobia and a fear among the gay community of being outed by contact tracing measures.

LGBTIQ+ groups globally are having to provide greater mental health support with many members reporting high levels of isolation, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

In the **Philippines** and **Zimbabwe**, HIV testing and treatment sites and staff are being deployed as COVID-19 centres, posing a much greater challenge for gay men who fear going to other health care facilities.

COVID-19 has intensified the economic crisis in **Lebanon** and the food crisis in **Zimbabwe** with people struggling to pay rent or buy food. In the **Philippines**, the government social grant does not include people living with HIV or LGBTI-led families.

In **Kenya**, as motels and massage parlours are shut down, male sex workers have lost their livelihoods, becoming homeless and facing violence as they are seen as "COVID-19 spreaders".

HOW OUR COMMUNITY IS RESPONDING

"No one is looking at us, so we have to look after each other" ~ Elie Ballan, AFE MENA, Beirut.

Beirut Tayf, Lebanon launched an online mental health clinic and volunteers equipped with PPE are delivering food baskets and sanitation supplies to gay communities. A church group approached them, and together they have set up an online discussion group on life and uncertainty in the time of COVID-19.

100 Food Boxes
100 Sanitation Kit
300 Facemasks



Have been distributed to LGBTIQ individuals in Lebanon

To donate to this relief project contact:
03 631 044

To request support
76 098 990

AFE ARAB FOUNDATION
الجمعية العربية للتوعية والتدريب

بدك تحكي؟



طيف يقدم دعم نفسي اونلاين

لطلب موعد تواصلوا معنا على
76 098 990

("Want to talk?" mental health support poster)

ALCS, Morocco is providing information, home delivering ARVs and advocating for continuity of HIV and health services.

HOYMAS, Kenya are raising resources, have acquired motorbikes and are engaging peer educators to deliver ARVs, food baskets, masks and sanitisers. They are providing shelter and food to homeless male sex workers as well as online counselling and support.



Iloilo Pride Team, Philippines are delivering ARVs and providing relief packages. They are also facilitating referrals to testing centres and treatment hubs for HIV and STI testing and treatment.



GALZ, Zimbabwe now hosts a HIV testing and treatment site. They have secured police passes and are using their vehicles to transport people who are unable to attend as a result of the lockdown.

Globally **MPact**, and **AFE MENA**, **APCOM**, **Youth Voices Count** and many other regional organisations are providing information (from HIV prevention and sexting, to tips on dealing with abusive families and improving mental health), organising fundraisers, setting up safe spaces and helplines, and advocating for the rights of the LGBTIQ+ communities.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU AND WANT TO SALUTE YOU – LIKE HEALTH CARE WORKERS YOU ARE ALSO ON THE FRONTLINE.