

ICASA 2021 – Community Village

Title: **Raising awareness and mobilizing action for African children during COVID-19**

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Background

While children are not the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, they might risk to be among its biggest victims. According to [UNICEF](#), 4.2 million children, adolescents and pregnant women living with HIV globally require uninterrupted access to life-saving HIV treatment. 89 % of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. Recent reports show that around 2.8 million children and adolescents aged 0–19 years and 1.3 million pregnant women living with HIV globally may experience adverse effects due to COVID-19 control measures. The 13.8 million children who have lost parents due to AIDS may disproportionately suffer.

The harmful effects of this pandemic are expected to be most damaging for children in the poorest countries, in the poorest neighbourhoods, and for those in already disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, such as children living with HIV.

In addition, a concerning number of children has been orphaned or bereft of their caregivers due to COVID-19. Such children often face adverse consequences, including poverty, abuse, and institutionalisation, which put them at higher risk of HIV infection.

What is the impact of COVID-19 on children? What is the situation in Africa? What faith leaders and FBOs are doing or should do to support children orphaned by COVID? How FBOs and faith communities are supporting children's access to HIV services during COVID?

Objectives

This panel session will raise awareness and mobilize action by faith leaders and non-faith actors for African children during COVID-19, by:

- Providing estimates for the magnitude of COVID orphanhood and describing the need for actions by the faith sector and for resource allocation ([Lancet](#));
- Sharing [Messages of Hope and materials](#) for faith leaders and communities to ensure appropriate information on both COVID-19 and HIV to promote greater access to COVID-19 mitigation measures, vaccines as well as HIV services for children;
- Presenting [Promising Practices by FBOs on paediatric HIV](#) interventions and programmes during COVID-19;
- Calling African faith leaders to join the [12Million Campaign](#) which promotes action by the faith sector in support of children, women and men who are living with HIV but have no access to HIV services.

Format: Interactive panel (4 speakers followed by Q&A)

Duration: 45m

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