

Discussion series on the future of global health

Gender under Pressure

Impacts of anti-gender movements and toxic gender stereotypes on HIV programs worldwide

Monday, June 08 2026. 10:00-11.00 CET



The goal of the discussion “Gender under Pressure” is to address the impacts of the anti-gender backlash and ideologically driven health financing on global HIV work, and to identify strategies to strengthen evidence-based, human rights-centred, and gender-transformative approaches.

According to current UNAIDS data, vulnerability among certain groups is as follows: Worldwide, around 4,000 young girls and women become infected with HIV every week due to structural gender inequalities and limited control over their sexual health. Trans people (especially trans women) have about 20 times higher HIV risk compared to the general population, primarily as a result of stigma, violence, and limited access to health services. The HIV risk for MSM (men who have sex with men) is around 25–30 times higher, mainly due to social discrimination and restricted access to prevention and care.

Global HIV work is increasingly under political and ideological pressure. There is a growing worldwide backlash against gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and programs for women, girls, trans people, and LGBTIQ communities, directly affecting prevention, treatment, and access to life-saving health services.

A particularly far-reaching setback has been the renewed expansion of the so-called Mexico City Policy (“Global Gag Rule”) by the U.S. government under President Trump, which, under the cynical banner of “*human flourishing*”, ties international health funding to ideological conditions. This policy undermines integrated HIV and SRHR programs, weakens civil-society and community-led organizations, and endangers evidence-based approaches to global health policy. At the same time, key structural drivers of health inequality are not being adequately addressed. The anti-gender movement and

toxic stereotypes of “masculinity” and “femininity,” along with rigid, traditional notions of gender roles, undermine evidence-based and effective programs that target the needs of vulnerable communities, such as those supported by Multilateral Organizations. Gender-based violence and unequal access to healthcare increase infection risks among vulnerable groups, but are still insufficiently taken into account in political strategies and funding decisions. Effective HIV work therefore requires recognizing gender norms as structural determinants of health and systematically integrating them into political strategies, programs, and funding mechanisms. By *gender-transformative approaches* we mean measures, projects, or strategies that actively aim to change existing gender roles and power relations, rather than merely taking into account differences between men and women.

Key Discussion Questions

- How are Multilateral Organizations responding to current developments in implementing the human right to health for all?
- What impact do anti-gender movements and measures such as the Global Gag Rule have on international HIV programs and marginalized groups, particularly women, transgender people, and LGBTIQ communities?
- How do gender inequality, gender-based violence, and toxic gender stereotypes influence both individual HIV risks and the design of HIV programs and political strategies?
- How can the discussion on gender be depoliticized to create the conditions necessary for realizing the human right to health, ensuring that no one is left behind?

When: Monday, June 08 2026, 10:00–11:00 CEST

Panelists:

1. Cate Nyambura, ATHENA Network
2. Amanita Calderón-Cifuentes, HIV Research and Advocacy Officer, Trans Europe and Central Asia (TGEU)
3. Gracia Violeta Ross, World Council of Churches

Registration here:

<https://flow.cleverreach.com/fl/b6b60c74-27f3-48d4-8e35-31af43a5a070/>