

# DEVASTATING IMPACT OF THE US GOVERNMENT STOP-WORK ORDER ON YOUTH, HIV AND SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

## A Call to Action

In early 2025, a stop-work order from the US government (USG) initiated a worldwide funding crisis for HIV, sexual reproductive health (SRH) and youth programs. Services ceased, advocacy initiatives were put on hold, and numerous organisations confronted the threat of collapse. This fact sheet presents the pressing consequences impacting young people and urges donors to take immediate action.

## Demographic information

Over half of those who responded to our survey – **58.2%** – were young people under the age of 30.

Youth-led and youth serving organisations from across the globe contributed to this survey, offering a snapshot of the devastation:

- 56% of responses came from Eastern & Southern Africa, the region with the largest population of young people living with HIV.
- 12% of responses each came from West and Central Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, showing that the impact of the funding freeze spans continents.

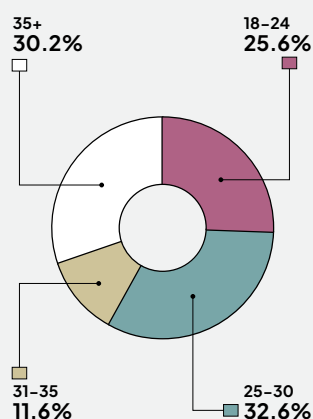
This may reflect the wide geographical coverage of USG-supported youth programming, particularly in regions where HIV remains highly prevalent.

**41.9% of all respondents were youth-led organisations**, highlighting how deeply the crisis has affected those most embedded in communities.

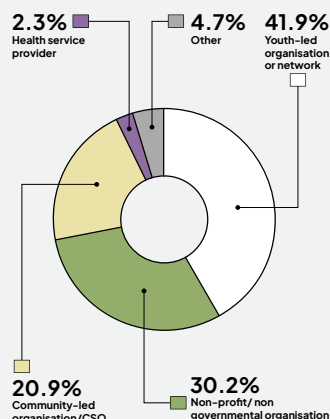
## What the data tells us

- 56%** of responses came from **Eastern and Southern Africa**, the region hosting the largest population of young people living with HIV.
- 41.9%** of all respondents were **youth-led organisations**.
- 46%** of organisations received **indirect USG funding** (sub-contracts, grants, etc.)
- 26%** received **direct USG funding**.
- 60%** reported **disruption of HIV service delivery**, their primary intervention area.
- 100%** of organisations reported seeking alternative funding to maintain minimum service levels.

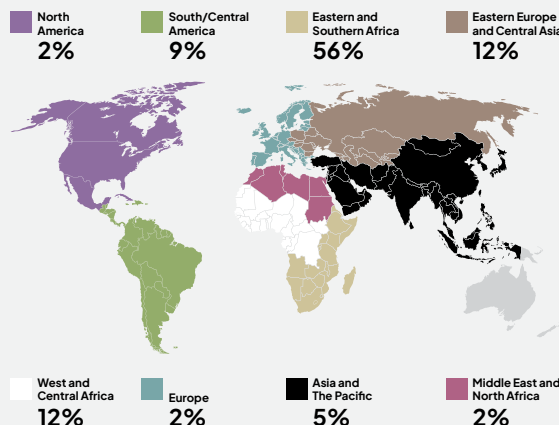
Age



Type of organisation



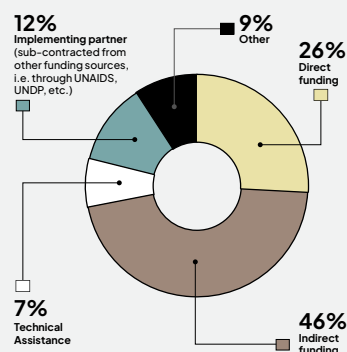
Regions



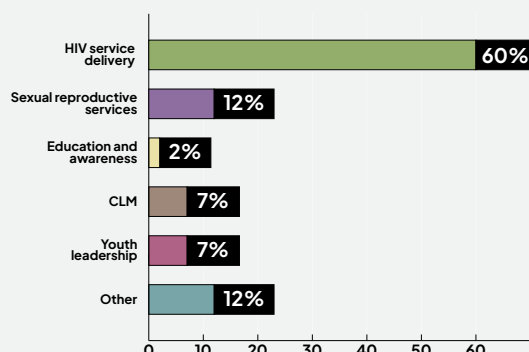
## Affected funding

- 46% of organisations received indirect USG funding**, often through sub-grants or intermediary partners, making them especially vulnerable to upstream freezes.
- 26% received direct USG funding**, indicating they would have experienced delays or full closure to their operations or service provisions.

Types of funding received



Interventions provided by your organisation



## In terms of service delivery

- 60% of respondents reported that their core programming, centring on HIV services**, has been impacted.
- Sudden and substantial loss of resources has severely hindered their capacity to deliver essential HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support to young people.
- Disruption directly impacts the health and well-being of young people in all their diversity and undermines ongoing efforts to strengthen youth-led responses to HIV.
- Beyond HIV services, other crucial youth-focused programs have also been affected, with SRHR and mental health/life-skills programs each experiencing a 12% impact.
- This funding loss has halted access to vital services like PrEP, antiretroviral therapy (ART), education, harm reduction services and stigma reduction efforts, placing young people at immediate risk.

# MEASURING THE IMPACT: SERVICES COLLAPSING, YOUTH SILENCED, AND FUTURES AT RISK

## In policy and advocacy efforts

**1**  
Organisational collapse is imminent and already happening. Many networks lost core funding needed for salaries, rent, outreach, and institutional survival.

*"Our multi-year grant vanished. We may close our office next month. We already lost 80% of our outreach team."*

**2**  
YLOs are being excluded from HIV policy spaces after years of hard-won inclusion. National advocacy efforts have been suspended, and engagement in forums like CCMs has drastically diminished.

*"Without funding, we've lost our voice in the CCM and national HIV strategies, rolling back years of youth-led policy gains."*

**3**  
Loss of trust and community engagement with the collapse of programs, community trust in youth-led services is eroding. Youth are left without safe spaces, health information, and trusted educators.

*"We had to cut 100% of our HIV education sessions. Young people now lack prevention guidance and mental health support."*

**4**  
Essential HIV Services Disrupted: Drop-in centres closed. Mobile clinics shut down. Programs serving LGBTIQ+ youth, young sex workers, and adolescent girls disappeared overnight.

*"In Kyrgyzstan, we fully suspended HIV and SRHR services. Tajikistan and Ukraine saw partial staff terminations and outreach cutbacks, affecting over 60% of our regional programming."*

## Increased vulnerability

Young people now face compounded stigma, health risks, mental health issues and reduced access to services like PrEP, PEP, and ART. The potential to reverse years of progress toward the 95-95-95 targets is real.

*"Community-led monitors were stopped from work. We froze all expenditures. Everything has collapsed."*

*"We lost at least 70% of our outreach capacity. Young LGBTIQ+ and sex workers who relied on us are now unreachable."*

*"Even our condoms and contraceptives stock ran out. We couldn't distribute anything for weeks, and demand has tripled."*

With the suspension of USG funding, youth-led organisations have lost access to essential decision-making spaces and policy processes. Years of progress toward youth inclusion in HIV responses are now at risk.

- All respondents reported decreased engagement in national and global policy discussions.
- Governments are redirecting resources away from youth-centred HIV programs, creating long-term uncertainty.
- Cuts have weakened participation in Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs), limiting young people's ability to influence Global Fund programming.
- Youth-led advocacy campaigns have been paused or cancelled entirely.

*"For years, we fought to have a seat at the table in CCM discussions. Now, without funding, we are being excluded from policy spaces again."*

In several countries, political backlash and legal threats are intensifying:

- Some governments are proposing restrictive laws that target organisations working on gender, diversity, and SRHR.
- Youth-led organisations warn of the rising use of "foreign agent" language to criminalise their work.
- Women, LGBTIQ+ youth, and key populations are at particular risk of exclusion.

*"The Congress has started a bill proposal to audit NGOs that focus on sexual health and gender."*

*"This suspension particularly impacts women and youth, who rely on these initiatives for their social and economic empowerment."*

In some countries, governments have ordered HIV-specific clinics to be integrated into general health systems. Without dedicated HIV funding, differentiated service delivery models are collapsing, further reducing accessibility for young people.

## Resilience and urgency

Despite these devastating setbacks, YLOs are:

- Launching crowdfunding campaigns
- Seeking alternative national/international partnerships in different development spaces
- Continuing peer outreach with limited resources

*"We started a crowdfunding campaign to raise emergency funds, but it is not enough to sustain us long-term."*

*"We are trying to engage private donors, but most are hesitant to fund HIV programs for marginalised youth."*

## Call to action: Why immediate action is needed!

We urge all donors, partners, and policymakers to act now to save youth-led HIV responses. While this call avoids directly referencing other specific governments, we retain references to PEPFAR, USAID, and USG to honour the integrity of the evidence gathered.

- Strengthen local and international partnerships to ensure sustainable funding sources and emergency funding solutions to keep youth-led organisations operational.
- Call on governments to increase domestic funding to ensure the sustainability of national HIV responses, including youth-led responses.
- Support advocacy efforts to reinstate USAID/CDC/PEPFAR funding for youth HIV programs.
- Engage young people in decision-making to develop alternative funding strategies.

Many youth leaders want to engage in global advocacy discussions and push for policy changes to ensure funding continuity.