



African  
Sex  
Workers  
Alliance



## Personal stories of sex workers in Tanzania affected by the U.S. foreign aid freeze



Tanzania



# 1 Introduction

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The recent suspension of U.S. foreign aid, particularly affecting the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), has had significant repercussions for sex workers in Tanzania. PEPFAR has been instrumental in providing HIV prevention, treatment, and care services across Tanzania. The abrupt funding freeze has led to the closure of clinics and the cessation of essential services, disproportionately impacting sex workers.

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## Impact on HIV Services

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In Tanzania, numerous clinics that offered HIV testing, counseling, and treatment services have been forced to shut down due to the funding halt. These closures have left many sex workers without access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), increasing their vulnerability to HIV-related complications and transmission. The lack of services also means the loss of vital support systems that addressed the unique challenges faced by sex workers, including stigma and discrimination.

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## Personal Stories

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- In Tanzania, clinics serving marginalized groups, including sex workers, have closed, leaving many without access to necessary healthcare. This situation has heightened fears among sex workers regarding their health and livelihood, as they are unable to obtain essential HIV prevention and treatment services.
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  - Organizations supporting sex workers have reported increased anxiety and uncertainty within these communities. The sudden loss of services has not only affected their health but also their sense of security and support, leading to heightened vulnerability.
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## Challenges Faced

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The funding freeze has exacerbated existing challenges for sex workers in Tanzania:

- **Healthcare Access:** The closure of clinics means reduced access to ART and other HIV-related services, leading to potential increases in HIV transmission rates and health complications.
- **Stigma and Discrimination:** Without dedicated services, sex workers are more likely to face discrimination in general healthcare settings, discouraging them from seeking necessary care.
- **Economic Hardship:** The loss of health services can lead to increased absenteeism due to illness, reducing income and exacerbating poverty among sex workers.
- **Mental Health:** The uncertainty and loss of support systems contribute to heightened stress and mental health challenges within the sex worker community.
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The suspension of PEPFAR funding has had a profound impact on the health and well-being of sex workers in Tanzania. Addressing this crisis requires urgent restoration of funding and targeted interventions to ensure that sex workers receive the support and services they need.

