

The EQUAL Insights Report

**The EQUAL Network
Stakeholders Insights Report
Executive Summary**
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EQUAL GLOBAL NETWORK FOR
GENDER AND HEALTH

The EQUAL Network Insights Report - Executive Summary

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The global health and gender equality sectors are in crisis. A global shift to the political right has resulted in the withdrawal of USAID funding in early 2025. This shutdown brought lifesaving work to a halt in communities across the world, but the crisis did not begin with that withdrawal. It began long before, as a result of chronic underfunding, deliberate fragmentation, and systemic invisibility that have defined this field of work.

Beginning November 2025, we conducted 24 in-depth interviews with professionals working across the global health and gender equality ecosystem, spanning 12 countries and five sectors: researchers and academics, grassroots advocates, clinicians, investors, and social enterprise founders. What they described was a field doing extraordinary work in exceptionally difficult conditions, largely in isolation from one another.

The stories they told were striking. A reproductive rights campaigner collected over *one million* verified signatures across the European Union, and organized their entire coalition-building effort using a Google spreadsheet and cold emails. They contacted over one thousand organizations individually because there was simply no other method. A Ugandan social impact founder with a startup for youth sexual education described spending years trying to access decision-makers at his country's Ministry of Education, a breakthrough that finally came when *a single contact* passed along two names. These are the norms across a field where the most important professional connections are left to chance, and dedicated infrastructure to remedy this reality does not exist.

The EQUAL Network is a purpose-built, verified, algorithm-free professional networking platform for those working at the intersection of health and gender. This platform is designed to connect people so they can do this work better, together. We are currently fundraising \$12,000 to purchase the platform license, with a target beta launch of mid-2026. We are 36% of the way there, and are building an alliance of supporters globally.

If this report moves you, there are a few ways to get involved. The first is to contribute to our fundraiser; every dollar goes directly toward purchasing the platform license that will make this community a reality. The second is to get involved as an early member or advisor. Early members will have access to the platform from day one and be given a direct hand in shaping the community as it grows. Advisors will help guide the platform's development, lend their public voice in support and open their personal networks to help drive membership and engagement in the platform's critical early phase.

Get in touch with us to learn more: hello@equalnetwork.org