



Funders Concerned About AIDS AIDS PHILANTHROPY SUMMIT

November 5 & 6, 2018 | Washington, DC

November 5-6, 2017

[FHI 360 Conference Center](#)

Washington, DC

Opening Plenary:

U.S. Policies Undermining the Human Rights and Autonomy of Activists

Monday, November 5th 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Bilateral funding and policies have long been used as tools for donors to advance their ideological agendas in ways that undermine the autonomy of groups and locally-driven efforts to address human rights concerns. Using the Trump administration's reinstatement and unprecedented expansion of the Global Gag Rule, as well as other donors' counter policies to address it, this panel will illustrate the ways that donor conditionalities on funding are further disempowering local organizations and harming locally-driven advocacy, human rights, and the HIV response. Under the Global Gag Rule, organizations are forced to make the impossible choice between staying true to their mission to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare, education, and advocacy - though in many cases at extremely reduced capacity - and accepting the U.S. funds which will allow them to continue to provide HIV and other health services, but will eliminate their ability to conduct any abortion related service delivery or advocacy. As a result, organizations may self-censor, choose sides, and sever partnerships, which leads to the further siloing of organizations and movements, and in many cases, completely stalls progress on local advocacy efforts to protect, respect, and fulfill the rights of all people. This session, designed by **Open Society Foundations** and **American Jewish World Service** in partnership with the **Global Philanthropy Project**, will contextualize the current threats to HIV, health, and human rights posed by the Global Gag Rule and related conservative religious actors. It will also explore ways that funders can support a shift in power toward grassroots human rights movements and community-led approaches to health and human rights to drive change in their countries. The session will also provide an opportunity for funders to strategize together about ways to support advocacy to mitigate the harms of ideologically-driven conditionality.

Moderators: Heather Benjamin, Open Society Foundations; Javid Syed, American Jewish World Service.

Panelists: Cinthya Amanecer Velasco Botello, Colectiva Mujeres y Salud; José Manuel Morán Faúndes, National University of Cordoba; Jedidah Maina, TICAH; Santos Simione, AMODEFA.

Session Bios

- **Heather Benjamin** is a Program Officer for the Open Society Public Health Program, where she focuses on global health and human rights financing and harmful influences on health-related policy making. Her work exposes and challenges the ways donor ideologies are harming sexual health and reproductive rights and rights-based health responses for marginalized and criminalized communities. She currently serves on the international steering committee of the Red Umbrella Fund, which supports sex worker rights globally, and she previously served as a

member of the board constituency of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Prior to joining Open Society, Benjamin served as the program director for Close to Home, a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing and reducing the impact of gender-based violence through community mobilization and youth leadership development. As a consultant, she has provided technical assistance and training to national and international NGOs on implementing community-led approaches to intersectional social change work, youth leadership development, and grant-making and advocacy strategy development. Benjamin has also worked in direct service as a gender-based violence counselor in shelter settings. A social worker by training, Benjamin holds an MA in social policy from Columbia University School of Social Work.

- **Javid Syed** is the Director of AJWS's Sexual Health and Rights department. He came to AJWS with a decade of experience in helping communities develop their capacity to pursue social justice. Most recently, Javid worked as the TB/HIV project director at the Treatment Action Group (TAG). On a volunteer basis, Javid contributes his skills to community organizing efforts among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of color. He helped found the Audre Lorde Project, a center for community organizing for queer people of color in New York, and served as a leader both the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association of New York and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. Javid has a master's degree in public health from Columbia University. He is originally from Bombay, India, and has lived in the United States since 1989.
- **Santos A. Simione** is the Executive Director of AMODEFA – Mozambican Association for Family Development - the oldest Mozambican organization on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and has been working in designing and managing SRHR and community-based HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment, and supporting programs for more than 10 years. He is a sexual and reproductive rights activist, and expert on developing programs and services which respond to key populations' rights and needs, and which support awareness creation and advocacy. Simione has a successful track record in strengthening civil society organizations and activists in support of SRHR, KP, and PLHIV through his experience as a trainer on gender equality, gender identity, sexual rights, HIV and AIDS, CSE and KP-friendly service provision amongst others.
- **Cinthya Amanecer Velasco Botello** a lesbian feminist, is the Executive Director of the Collective for Women and Health (Colectiva Mujeres y Salud), a leading feminist organization in the Dominican Republic that promotes ideological, social, and cultural change by fighting to improve the visibility of and strengthen access to sexual and reproductive health. She has 20 years of experience in sexual and reproductive rights and is a leading spokesperson on these issues in Dominican print, broadcast, and radio outlets. She has spent the last decade advocating for the decriminalization of abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean, youth rights, sexual comprehensive education, and LGBTQ rights. She has also led a number of social change initiatives, including the Latin American and Caribbean Sexual and Reproductive Rights Youth Network and The Right Here Right Now platform. Originally from Mexico City, Velasco graduated from the National School for Anthropology and History with a degree in Anthropology and Gender and Politics in 2010.
- **Jedidah Maina** is the Executive Director of the Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH), a Kenyan feminist organization established in 2003 with the aim to promote health through training and research on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights and advocacy. She has over eight years of experience as an activist, researcher, program manager, and organizer concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights. Jedidah joined Trust for

Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) in 2007 as the Sexuality Program Officer. She manages the “Our bodies, Our Choices”, a program that provides safe spaces to learn about our bodies, discuss our sexual experiences, become better communicators, design educational materials, heal from abuse and advocate for changes in attitudes policies, programs and power relationships. Her work includes developing the program, educational materials and training in communities on reproductive health choices. Before Joining TICAH, Jedith worked for Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) where she championed for the enactment and the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act. She holds a Masters of Arts in Project Planning and Management and a Bachelors of Arts in Economics and Sociology from the University of Nairobi.

- **José Manuel Morán Faúndes** is the co-author of the Growing Solidarity Report commissioned by the Global Philanthropy Project and Professor of the Sociology of Law and researcher in the Program of Sexual and Reproductive Rights at the National University of Cordoba in Argentina. Previously, he was a researcher for the Gender Equity Program and Governance Program at FLACSO-Chile, and fellow of CLACSO, CONICET, the Iberoamerican Network for Lay Freedom, among others. Currently, he is the co-editor of "Sexualities, Inequalities and Rights: Reflections on Sexual and Reproductive Rights", "Sex, Crimes and Sins: Intersections between religion, sexuality and law in Latin America", and "Laicidad and Religious Diversity in Latin America". He holds a PhD in Latin American Social Studies and a Master of Sociology from the National University of Cordoba.