

Reviewing AIDS2024: Does the International AIDS Conference enable equitable representation of women and transgender people living with HIV, given their overall global numbers, rights to participation, leadership and expertise?

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Background:

Why is it important to monitor representation and visibility of women living with HIV, and the recognition of their research, at the International AIDS Conference?

As WHO recommends, women living with HIV in all their diversities should be recognised as experts, and as equal partners in research¹. Women-led responses are widely recognised as essential, because they directly address the gender-based violence, economic inequalities, and harmful norms driving the epidemic.

The recently approved Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS² expresses deep concern that gender inequality, human rights violations and underinvestment continue to undermine progress.

The POWER Group has been monitoring progress on gender equality at the International AIDS Conference since AIDS2016. This poster reports our findings on women's representation at AIDS2024.

Methods:

To assess recognition of the vast experience and expertise of women and trans people living with HIV and our networks at the International AIDS Conferences (IAC)³ as a forum for knowledge exchange and advocacy, we analysed two aspects of AIDS2024:

- Representation as invited speakers, abstract presenters and scholarship awardees.
- Community co/authorship of oral abstracts and poster exhibitions.

We collected data on women and trans people living with HIV at AIDS2024 through:

- A) Data requests to IAS for numbers of women and trans people living with HIV as invited speakers, abstract presenters and scholarship recipients at AIDS2024, and comparison with data from AIDS2022 to assess trends
- B) Analysis of the AIDS2024 Abstract Book for community co/authorship of oral abstracts and poster exhibitions that primarily focus on women and trans people living with HIV.

Results:

Invited speakers, abstract presenters and scholarships, comparing AIDS2024 with AIDS2022⁴, and AIDS2016⁵:

INVITED SPEAKERS

- **Women living with HIV:** 14 (5.9%) in 2024, DOWN from 16 (9%) in 2022. In 2016, 15 of the invited speakers were women self-identifying as living with HIV.
- **Trans people living with HIV:** 2 people (1.2%) in 2024, 2 people (0.9%) in 2022, 1 person in 2016.

	AIDS2016	AIDS2022	AIDS2024
 WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV	15	16 (9%)	14 (5.9%)
 TRANS PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV	1	2 (1.2%)	2 (0.9%)

- **Progress?** There has been little or no progress in the numbers of invited speakers who are women or trans people self- identifying as living with HIV.

ABSTRACT PRESENTERS

- **Women living with HIV:** 47 (1.84%) in 2024, DOWN from 59 (2.4% of all abstracts presented) in 2022. In 2016, only 21 abstracts submitted by women living with HIV were accepted.
- **Trans people living with HIV:** 9 (0.35%) in 2024, compared to 7 (0.29%) in 2022. In 2016, there were none: 17 abstracts were submitted by trans people living with HIV, none of which were accepted.

	AIDS2016	AIDS2022	AIDS2024
 WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV	21 (6.1%)	59 (2.4%)	47 (1.84%)
 TRANS PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV	0	7 (0.29%)	9 (0.3%)

- **Progress?** There has been little or very patchy progress in abstracts presented by women and trans people living with HIV from AIDS2016 to AIDS2024.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Women living with HIV:** 115 (13.29%) scholarships in 2024, UP from 97 (6%) in 2022.
- **Trans people living with HIV:** 25 (2.89%) scholarships in 2024, compared to 27 (1.7%) in 2022. For trans women living with HIV, there were 6 (0.69%) scholarships in 2024, compared to 9 (0.6%) scholarships in 2022 - a small percentage increase in 2024, but a drop in real numbers.

	AIDS2022	AIDS2024
 WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV	97 (6%)	115 (13.29%)
 TRANS PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV	27 (1.7%)	25 (2.89%)
 TRANS WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV	9 (0.6%)	6 (0.69%)

- **Progress?** We do not have data on scholarships for women living with HIV at AIDS2016, but there was an increase in scholarships for women living with HIV in 2024 compared to AIDS2022.

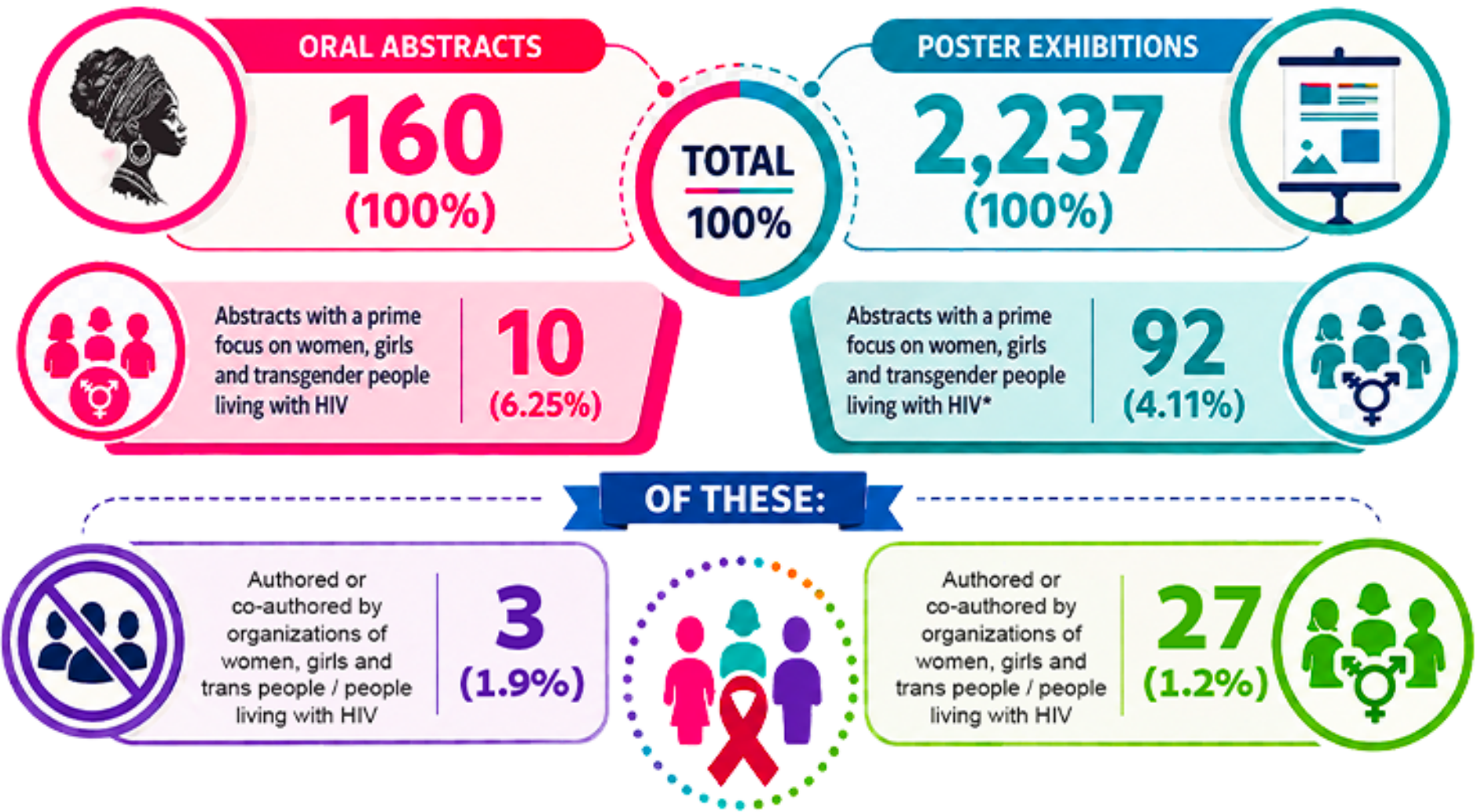
For trans people, we do not have figures for AIDS2016. At AIDS2018, 29 scholarships were awarded to trans people, but we do not have information on how many identified as living with HIV, so we do not have comparable figures.

Reference citations

1. WHO 2017 Consolidated Guideline on SRHR of Women living with HIV
2. UN General Assembly 2026 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS
3. <https://makingwaves.network/resources/>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/59jxmn64>
5. <https://tinyurl.com/bdw8mtjw>
6. AIDS 2024 Abstract Book
7. <https://www.iasociety.org/conferences/aids2026/take-part/abstract-submission>

AIDS2024 ABSTRACTS

We analysed the AIDS2024 Abstract Book⁶ for community co/authorship of **oral abstracts and poster exhibitions** that primarily focus on women and trans people living with HIV.



Only 3 of 160 **oral abstracts** (1.9%) had a *meaningful focus* on women, girls and trans people living with HIV, and were *co/authored* by organisations of women/trans people/people living with HIV. A read of oral abstracts found that *gender disaggregation* was far from the norm. Only 4% of **posters** had a *meaningful focus* on women, girls and trans people living with HIV, and only 1.2% of the total were *co-authored*. 95.8% of poster exhibitions did not have a *meaningful focus* on women, girls and trans people living with HIV. Many were presented as *gender-neutral*.

At AIDS2024, things had not changed significantly since AIDS2022 or even AIDS2016.

Conclusions:

Representation of networks of women and transgender people living with HIV falls far short of equity. We are underrepresented as co/authored researchers, scholarship recipients, abstract presenters, and/or invited speakers. Even when we are 'involved' in research, opportunities are missed to invite our networks to co-produce and co-author.

We are glad to see that AIDS2026 guidelines⁷ for abstract writers and reviewers respond to our previous research, by encouraging gender disaggregation, meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in research, co-authorship and presenting author roles.

To further advance gender equality and recognition of women and trans people living with HIV as researchers and experts, IAS should:

- Monitor if new guidelines increase co-authorship and presenting authorship for women and transgender people living with HIV.
- Increase the numbers of women and transgender people living with HIV who are invited speakers, abstract presenters and recipients of scholarships.
- Track provision of gender-disaggregated data in abstracts.