

HER Voice in Health

Insights from Berlin and the Global Health Community



Advancing Women's Health Together

Welcome to HER Voice in Health, Edition #1, a newsletter by the GHA – German Health Alliance. As a multi-stakeholder network, we bring together actors from policy, research, industry, healthcare and international organisations to advance women's health globally through collaboration, innovation and partnership.

Through this regularly updated newsletter, we want to share key developments, initiatives, events and insights from across the women's health landscape. Our aim is to foster exchange, highlight promising approaches and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders committed to improving women's health worldwide.

We warmly welcome contributions from our community. If you would like to feature a publication, initiative, event or perspective in a future edition, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Among GHA's recent activities is the publication of the study Investing in [Women's Health: Economic Opportunities and Social Responsibility](#), highlighting the importance of women's health as a health, social and economic priority.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Foreword

Foreword by Prof. Dr Frank Louwen,

President of the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO)

Dear Readers,

The health of women and girls is finally receiving the global attention it deserves. There is a growing recognition across healthcare, research, policy, and industry that investing in women's health is not only a medical imperative but also a social and economic necessity.

Yet significant challenges remain. Women continue to face disparities in terms of access to healthcare, diagnosis, treatment, and research. Despite accounting for half of the global population, less than 1% of global healthcare research and development funding is dedicated to conditions affecting women specifically, beyond oncology. Women also spend approximately 25% more of their lives in poor health than men, highlighting a consistent disparity in health outcomes that affects individuals, families, and societies.

Although significant progress has been made in the past two decades, maternal mortality remains one of the most pressing global health inequities. Today, a woman still dies from a preventable cause related to pregnancy or childbirth almost every two minutes. This is not merely a health challenge. It is a call to strengthen health systems, expand access to quality care, and ensure that every woman, everywhere, can exercise her right to safe motherhood.

As the first German physician to be elected President of FIGO, I am honoured to help raise the profile of women's health on the global agenda and to contribute German perspectives, expertise, and innovation from Germany to the international dialogue. FIGO works across a global network of obstetrics and gynaecology societies to strengthen health systems, reduce preventable maternal deaths, advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, and improve access to quality healthcare for women and girls worldwide. It unites societies from around the world and collaborates closely with partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to achieve these goals.

FIGO's key priorities include improving maternal and newborn health, advancing the prevention and treatment of gynaecological cancers, and supporting innovations that expand equitable access to care. We are also committed to addressing persistent data gaps and research inequalities, as well as the long-standing underinvestment in women's health.

It is becoming increasingly evident that women's health is no longer a niche subject. It is a strategic priority for health systems, societies and economies worldwide. Evidence suggests that closing the women's health gap could generate up to one trillion US dollars in annual global economic value through improved health, productivity, and workforce participation.

In this context, initiatives such as the Berlin Roadmap for Collaborative Action in Women's Health demonstrate the potential of collaboration between science, policy, business, and civil society. Backed by partners including Charité, UNFPA, FIGO, Berlin Partner, the GHA - German Health Alliance and WomenX Collective, among others, the roadmap exemplifies a shared commitment to accelerating innovation, strengthening evidence generation, and expanding access to quality healthcare for women and girls around the globe.

As I recently noted, "This work represents more than collaboration. It is a shared promise to advance the health, rights, and dignity of every woman and girl, and to leave no one behind."

I hope this newsletter will provide valuable insights, inspire new partnerships and contribute to our shared commitment to advancing women's health, not only as a matter of equity, but also as a foundation for healthier, more resilient and more prosperous societies.



Prof. Dr Frank Louwen

President, [FIGO](#)

Building Momentum for Women's Health: From Partnership to Impact

Guest Contribution by Dr Nigina Muntean, *Chief of Staff and Founder of WomenX Collective, UNFPA*

In September 2024, UNFPA presented the newly established WomenX Collective to the German Bundestag's Subcommittee on Global Health. The discussion reflected something important: women's health was increasingly being recognized not as a niche health issue, but as a development, equity and economic priority.

That moment helped reinforce a partnership that has continued to grow. Over the following year, the collaboration between the UNFPA WomenX Collective programme and the GHA - German Health Alliance, supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and other partners, contributed to building a stronger evidence base and greater visibility for women's health. The message emerging from these efforts has been increasingly clear: closing the women's health gap requires us to work differently and to work together.

The case for action is compelling. Although women tend to live longer than men, they spend significantly more of their lives in poor health. Yet less than one per cent of health research and development funding is directed towards female-specific conditions beyond oncology. Diseases and conditions that disproportionately or uniquely affect women remain under-researched, under-diagnosed and, too often, under-treated, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. **This is precisely the gap that the WomenX Collective was created to help address.**

Led by UNFPA, WomenX Collective brings together governments, research institutions, innovators, investors, health systems and the private sector to identify promising solutions, generate evidence and support their adoption and scale. Our ambition is not simply to produce more innovation. It is to help ensure that solutions proven to work actually reach the women and girls who need them.

Germany has been an important partner in building this ecosystem. Through the WomenX Collective Berlin Hub, established with Charité and the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH), we are connecting global health needs with Germany's strong research, technology and innovation capabilities. Our collaboration with GHA has helped broaden that conversation further, bringing together expertise from across the German health sector and creating opportunities to connect innovation with implementation and investment.

We are already seeing this ecosystem grow, with institutions including Charité, BIH and partners such as Ghent University and the Hasso Plattner Institute advancing new initiatives in women's health. Momentum is growing beyond Germany as well, reflecting a broader recognition that better health for women is fundamental to healthier societies, stronger economies and more resilient health systems.

But momentum alone will not close the gap.

The next challenge is to translate attention into investment, scale and measurable results. Promising solutions must move beyond pilots. Evidence must inform policy and financing decisions. Public and private capital must reach areas of women's health that have historically been overlooked. And innovation must be designed around the realities and needs of women, including those living in low-resource and humanitarian settings.

This is where partnerships such as the one between UNFPA's WomenX Collective and the GHA - German Health Alliance matter. No single government, UN organization, research institution, company or investor can transform women's health alone. By bringing their respective strengths together, partners can help move solutions from research to implementation and from individual projects to sustainable change at scale.

The 2026 World Health Summit provides an opportunity to build on this momentum, mobilize new partnerships and investment, and accelerate solutions that can improve women's health at scale.

WomenX Collective has set an ambition to mobilize at least US\$100 million for women's health by 2030. But the real measure of success will not be the amount mobilized. It will be whether more women can access the innovations, services and quality care they need, and whether health systems become better equipped to respond to women throughout their lives.

As we look towards the World Health Summit, the task before us is clear: **build on the momentum, deepen partnerships, and turn today's possibilities into better health and greater choice for women everywhere.**

Berlin & Brandenburg Women's Health Ecosystem

Berlin-Brandenburg is emerging as one of Europe's leading hubs for women's health innovation, bringing together healthcare providers, research institutions, startups, digital health pioneers and international organisations.

Charité Competence Centre for Clinical Global Women's Health

Within this evolving ecosystem, the Charité Competence Centre for Clinical Global Women's Health (CCCGWH) brings together clinical excellence, research and global health expertise to strengthen women's health worldwide. Through international partnerships and collaborative initiatives, the centre promotes knowledge exchange, research cooperation and innovative approaches to addressing unmet needs in women's health.

One of the centre's key international partnerships is its collaboration with UNFPA's WomenX Collective, whose Berlin Hub became operational in 2025. The partnership connects stakeholders from academia, healthcare, international organisations and industry to accelerate innovation and advance women's health globally.

In recent years, CCCGWH has further expanded its international engagement through contributions to the World Health Summit, collaboration with the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) and partnerships such as the Pan-Arabian Research Society for Gynecological Oncology (PARSGO), supporting knowledge sharing and access to specialised expertise in gynaecologic oncology across multiple regions. These activities underline the centre's commitment to translating research, innovation and global collaboration into tangible improvements for women's health.

Berlin Roadmap for Collaborative Action in Women's Health

Building on these efforts, the Berlin Roadmap for Collaborative Action in Women's Health brings together stakeholders from across sectors to strengthen collaboration, foster innovation and accelerate progress in women's health.

Supported by partners including UNFPA, FIGO, Charité, GHA - German Health Alliance, Berlin Partner and WomenX Collective, the initiative aims to translate evidence, innovation and investment into practical solutions that improve health outcomes for women and girls worldwide.

Stakeholders from academia, healthcare, industry, policy, international organisations and civil society are invited to contribute to this shared effort by joining the initiative.

Upcoming Events

09 October | [Women's Health Data and AI: From Principles to Progress](#) | GHA & FemTech Germany

10 October | [Virchow Prize](#) | Virchow Foundation

11-13 October | [World Health Summit](#)

14 October | [10th German-African Healthcare Forum](#) | GHA & German-African Business Association

Policy & Funding Updates

Germany: Women's Health as a Research Priority

The Federal Ministry for Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) continues to strengthen its commitment to women's health, with a focus on areas such as reproductive health, endometriosis, new contraceptive methods and closing the Gender Data Gap. In early 2026, the ministry launched a new funding initiative on patient-centred women's healthcare, supporting research on gaps in care, health inequalities and the use of data and artificial intelligence to improve healthcare services for women. [Read more](#)

EU Strengthens Investment in Women's Health Research

Women's health is gaining increasing prominence within the EU's research and innovation agenda. Through Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, the European Union has invested more than €2 billion in over 1,000 women's health-related projects, covering areas such as reproductive and maternal health, cardiovascular disease, cancer prevention and personalised medicine.

Flagship initiatives including CARMEL, SPIOMET4HEALTH and ConcePTION reflect ongoing efforts to address long-standing research gaps and advance gender-sensitive healthcare across Europe. [Read more](#)

Women's health is also receiving growing political attention at the European level. In early 2026, stakeholders from across Europe called for the development of a comprehensive [EU Strategy for Women's Health](#), promoting a life-course approach to women's physical and mental health and strengthening coordination across policy, research and healthcare. In

parallel, the European Commission's [Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#) reinforces commitments to improving women's health and access to gender-responsive healthcare.

Research & Publications

Recommended Reading

Policy & Research

Improving Women's Health Globally: A Smart Research Investment for the EU | *Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW)* | **Policy Brief/ Report**

Feminist Perspectives on AI in Women's Health | *Global Health Hub Germany* | **Discussion Paper**

Industry & Innovation

[w]Health Healthcare and Life Sciences Index | *Kearney, UNFPA, HBA* | **Index Report**

Women's Health Innovation Radar | *World Economic Forum Global Alliance for Women's Health, Gates Foundation, Wellcome Leap and Kearney* | **Innovation Report**

Investment & Financing

Prescription for Change: Policy Recommendations for Women's Health Research | *World Economic Forum Global Alliance for Women's Health, Gates Foundation and more than 45 organisations from industry, academia, healthcare and policy* | **Policy Report**

Investment Radar Accelerating Private Capital Investment in Women's Health | *Kearney* | **Investment Report**

Women's Health Investment Outlook 2026 | *World Economic Forum and Boston Consulting Group (BCG)* | **Market Outlook Report**

Technology Manifesto: From Ambition to Impact with Data, Digital and AI | *Kearney in collaboration with Microsoft* | **Strategic Report**

Global Women's Health Highlights

WHO Reports Major Progress Toward Eliminating Cervical Cancer

In 2025, the world marked the first-ever World Cervical Cancer Elimination Day, highlighting significant global progress in HPV vaccination, screening, and treatment programs. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that countries are accelerating efforts to achieve the global 90-70-90 targets, while Gavi and its partners estimate that HPV vaccination programs reached approximately 86 million girls by the end of 2025.

[Read more](#)

Gates Foundation Launches USD 2.5 Billion Women's Health Initiative

The Gates Foundation announced a USD 2.5 billion commitment through 2030 to accelerate research, development, and innovation in women's health. The funding will support breakthroughs in maternal health, menstrual health, gynecological conditions, contraception, and sexual and reproductive health, areas that have historically received limited research investment.

[Read more](#)

Melinda French Gates Expands Investment in Women's Health

In June 2026, Melinda French Gates announced an additional USD 215 million commitment to women's health through Pivotal, bringing her total support for women's health initiatives to more than USD 600 million over the past two years. The funding focuses on reproductive health, contraception, maternal health and menopause, highlighting growing philanthropic momentum in women's health globally.

[Read more](#)

FemTech Continues Its Rapid Growth

The global FemTech market surpassed US\$66 billion in 2025 and is projected to exceed US\$73 billion in 2026, reflecting growing demand for innovative solutions in fertility, maternal health, menopause care and digital women's health. Increasing investment and technological advances are accelerating the development of data-driven solutions that support earlier diagnosis, more personalised care and improved health outcomes for women across the life course.

[Read more](#)

Recent Events and Engagements

2024 | GHA | [Cross-sector exchange: Gesunde Frauen, starke Gemeinschaft: Engagiert für Globale Gesundheit](#) (*Healthy Women, Strong Communities: Advancing Global Health*)

2024 | World Health Summit | [Launch of the first WomenX Collective Hub in Berlin through collaboration between UNFPA, Charité and BIH](#)

2024 | [PETRA-AI: AI-Based Innovation Project for Women's Health](#)

2024 | [GAIA – German FemTech Alliance Addressing the Gender Data Gap](#)

2025 | [DMEA 2025 | Digital Health, Gender Medicine and AI Bias](#)

2025 | [BIONNALE 2025 | Women's Health and Global Health Innovation](#)

2025 | [Launch of the GHA Study “Investing in Women's Health: Economic Opportunities and Social Responsibility,” at the German Bundestag](#)

2025 | [FemTech Germany Summit Berlin 2025](#)

2025 | [MenoSupport: Research Project on Menopause Challenges in the Workplace](#)

2026 | GHA | [Dialog über Perspektiven zur Stärkung der Frauengesundheit mit FIGO](#) (*Dialogue on Advancing Women's Health: Perspectives and Opportunities*)

2026 | [BMFTR Funding Call: Innovative Data Analytics for Women's Health and Gender-Sensitive Medicine](#)

2026 | [AI & Women's Health Event](#)

2026 | [GLOHRA Parliamentary Evening on Women's Health Research](#)