

Doing Business with Pride Economic Empowerment of LGBTIQ+, BIPOC, and Women in German Economic and Development Cooperation

Conference in Hamburg
on October 15 – 16, 2026

The conference is conducted by **Engagement Global** as part of the **Programme for Development Policy Education in Germany (Entwicklungsbezogene Bildung in Deutschland, EBD)**, funded by the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**, in cooperation with the **Hamburg Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship**, and with support from **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**.

Within the EBD program, Engagement Global works with local and national partners to promote education on global development and sustainability. A key focus of the program is promoting a **sustainable economy**.

The conference explores how the economic human rights of women, LGBTIQ+ and BIPOC can be integrated into a **sustainable economy within the framework of German Economic and Development Cooperation**.

Economic participation: The conference brings together entrepreneurs, civil society actors, researchers, and development cooperation actors to discuss how to strengthen economic participation for LGBTIQ+ people, BIPOC,¹ and women.

Learning across contexts: While experiences of structural economic exclusion differ widely, the conference explores what can be learned across different contexts and experiences. During the conference, participants will look at the economic costs of exclusion and compare strategies and approaches developed in different contexts, considering how they might be adapted or transferred to improve access to economic resources and opportunities. Building on examples and concrete challenges from social enterprises, participants will also develop practical ideas for expanding access to economic opportunities and resources. The conference will conclude by exploring how these insights and models can inform German economic and development Cooperation, including how organizations and companies can contribute to more inclusive economic structures and supply chains in the Global South.

Connecting conversations: The aim is to connect conversations that often run in parallel and give participants ideas and perspectives they can take back into their own work.

¹ LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer; the "+" includes other sexual orientations and gender identities not explicitly represented in the acronym. BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Agenda

Day 1 | Oct. 15 | 13:00 – 18:00

13:00 – 13:30 Registration / Welcome Coffee

Introduction: Welcome & Conference Introduction

13:30 – 14:00

Objective: The conference will open with brief remarks from the convening and partner organizations, followed by an introduction to its focus and key questions.

Introductory remarks: Lana Damm (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), Kai-Oliver Farr (Engagement Global gGmbH, Regional Office Hamburg), Dr Linda Helfrich (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH), Boris Kozlowski (Hamburg Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship)

Session 1: The Economic Costs of Inequality: Consequences of Excluding LGBTIQ+ People and the Value of Embracing Diversity

14:00 – 15:30

Objective: This workshop addresses the socioeconomic consequences of the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals from the economy. The goal is to foster a shared understanding through brief introductory presentations followed by an open discussion, with a focus on the following questions:

- Why is economic participation relevant for LGBTIQ+ people?
- Where does systematic exclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals occur, and how does this affect the economy?
- What positive effects on the work environment and productivity can be observed in LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplaces?
- What implications does this have for businesses and development cooperation?

Co-Hosts: Dr Linda Helfrich & Josua Wendt (GIZ)

Confirmed Speakers & Contributors: Amar Nigam (Koppa – The LGBTI+ Economic Power Lab), Dominik Koehler (World Bank, SOGI Team), Lena Anna Meyer (GIZ, Mexico Country Office), Loubna Messaoudi (BIWOC* Rising), Susanne Sikora (Deutsche Bank)

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break and networking

Session 2: Inclusive Economics and Enterprises: What Can We Learn Across Different Approaches to Economic Empowerment?

16:00 – 18:00

Objective: The workshop brings together organizations and practitioners working on economic empowerment and participation in different contexts. While not assuming that

experiences of exclusion are the same, the session focuses on concrete practices, strategies, and lessons that may offer opportunities for cross-learning. Following brief practice-oriented inputs from contributors, participants will work in thematic Cross-Learning Labs to reflect on the potential and limits of transferring approaches across different contexts. The following questions will guide the exchange:

- What concrete approaches have organizations developed to strengthen economic empowerment and participation?
- What makes these approaches effective in their specific contexts?
- Which elements might be useful for organizations working in other fields or contexts?
- What would need to be adapted for such approaches to work elsewhere?
- Where are the limits of transferability, and which structural barriers remain?

Co-Hosts: Sonja Schelper & Charlotte Jung

Confirmed Speakers & Contributors: **Anja Limon** (ORAM – Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration), **Ise Bosch** (Dreilinden), **Juliana Kraus Neira** (GIZ Ecuador), **Juliane Rosin** (TGEU – Trans Europe and Central Asia), **Loubna Messaoudi** (BIWOC* Rising), **Mary Njeri** (AiDiA – Afro-German Startup Pitch), **Sarah Kohrt** (Hirschfeld-Eddy Foundation), **Sophia Mwikali Koerner** (WIDU.africa, GIZ)

Optional Evening Program

Hamburg International Queer Film Festival: Join us for an evening at the festival. Tickets must be booked individually via the [festival website](#).

OR

Evening Get-Together in the Schanzenviertel: Wind down the first conference day with fellow participants in Hamburg's lively Schanzenviertel.

Day 2 | Oct. 16 | 9:00 – 14:00 (optional program until 16:00)

09:00 – 09:30 Arrival / Morning Coffee

Session 3: Social Entrepreneurship for Economic Empowerment

09:30 – 11:30

Objective: This interactive workshop explores how social enterprises can address societal challenges, strengthen empowerment, and develop economically sustainable structures.

Three social enterprises will present their work and a concrete challenge from practice. Participants will then work in small groups to develop practical ideas and possible next steps. The following questions will guide the exchange:

- How can social enterprises contribute to empowerment, inclusion, and societal change?
- What conditions help social enterprises develop economically sustainable structures?
- What practical approaches could help address the challenges presented by the participating social enterprises?

- What resources and first steps would be needed to put these ideas into practice?

Co-Hosts: Johanna Eisenhardt & Lea Gies (Hamburg Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship)

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break and networking

Closing Session: Conclusions / Outlook / Next Steps

12:00 – 13:00

Objective: In the wrap-up discussion, participants will reflect on how the insights and models explored throughout the sessions can be translated into practice within German economic and development cooperation. It will also examine the role that organizations and associations such as Hamburg Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship, AiDiA, Engagement Global, and GIZ can play in this context.

Furthermore, the role of German companies in promoting more inclusive and equitable economic participation across their supply chains in the Global South will be addressed, including the structural challenges faced by women, LGBTIQ+ and BIPoC in different contexts.

This will provide an opportunity to consider how conference participants can contribute their expertise on economic human rights and economic inclusion of these groups when advising and training companies.

Moderators: Mary Njeri (AiDiA – Afro-German Startup Pitch) & Kai-Oliver Farr (Engagement Global, Regional Office Hamburg)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 – 16:00 Optional visit to [*Dialoghaus Hamburg*](#)

Experience *Dialogue in Silence*, where communication comes to life without sound, and learn about the social enterprise model behind *Dialoghaus* and its approach to inclusive employment. With noise-cancelling headphones, you immerse yourself in a world free of sound yet rich in expression. During this 60-minute experience, your deaf guide shows you the power of facial expressions, gestures, and sign language. You will not only be amazed but also laugh, experiment, and join in – all without words, yet with total engagement.

REGISTER NOW

To register, please email F21_Economic_Empowerment@engagement-global.de by October 8, 2026, and indicate which day(s) you plan to attend and whether you would like to join *Dialogue in Silence* on October 16. The conference venue will be shared upon successful registration.

Please feel free to share the invitation with people in your network who may be interested. To help create a safe and respectful space for open exchange, we kindly ask you to share it thoughtfully.