



Atlantic Centre of Excellence  
for Women's Health

# **“Gender Inequality and HIV/AIDS: Lessons for International Development in the New Millennium”**

**March 7, 2005  
Halifax, NS  
Public Archives Bldg., Akins Room  
9:00- 4:30pm**

*Co-sponsored by:  
Atlantic Centre for Excellence in Women's Health  
and the Saint Mary's University International Development  
Studies Graduate Student Society*

*With financial support from the Canadian Association for Studies in  
International Development (CASID), as part of a broader CASID Regional  
Event, themed “International Development for the New Millennium” taking  
place March 5-7<sup>th</sup>.*



Gender Inequality and HIV/AIDS:  
Lessons for International Development in the New Millennium

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**Keynote Speaker**

**June Larkin**

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*June Larkin is the co-coordinator of the Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) project which includes a number of studies with Canadian and South African youth. Their overall goal is the development of gender sensitive HIV prevention programs through innovative, participatory approaches to working with youth.*

Presentation:

**Gender & HIV/AIDS in a Globalizing World: Risk, Representation and Prevention**

In this presentation, I raise questions for thinking about gender and HIV/AIDS in an increasingly globalizing world. How do we understand the rising infection rates of girls and women in the context of a more complex relationship between gender, gender relations and HIV infection. How do dominant representations of AIDS contribute to gendered risks? What are the implications for HIV prevention work? In general, how do we situate HIV/AIDS in a global equity framework?

**Panelists**

**Larry Baxter**

Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS  
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*Larry Baxter is the Chair of the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS and is co-ordinating the efforts to implement Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2003).*

Presentation:

**Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS and its Gender Implications**

*Presented with Sandra McFadyen, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

An overview of the development of Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS will be presented as will the process of having conducted a gender-based analysis of the strategy's recommendations. Lessons learned from this foray into gender and diversity inclusive public policy development will be described. Next steps for implementation of the strategy and awareness and skill building around the gender issues inherent in HIV/AIDS will be discussed.

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**Erika Burger**

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*It was during the two years that Erika spent working as a volunteer physiotherapist in Malawi, Africa that her commitment to working on issues of gender and HIV/AIDS developed. She returned to Canada to learn more about the political economy of health through a Masters in International Development Studies and conducted her fieldwork back in Malawi, looking at the impact of health sector reform on women caregivers in the context of HIV and AIDS. Erika now works as the Gender and HIV/AIDS Programme Officer at the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.*

**Audrey Campbell**

International Development Research Center and McMaster University  
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*Audrey's recent research focuses on gender and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, specifically health care system roles in primordial and primary prevention among girls/women, with a focus on Barbados. Her previous work includes research on gender and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, with a focus on Trinidad and Tobago, and education curriculum development for a Gender in Medical Education project, a web-enabled resource designed to be used by Ontario medical schools.*

Presentation:

**Gender & HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean: The role of the health care system in HIV/AIDS prevention**

Research conducted in Trinidad in 2004 that produced a literature review highlighting issues in Gender and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean will be presented. An overview of ongoing research that builds upon this 2004 work, focusing on the role of the health care system in HIV/AIDS prevention among girls/women, by basing interventions on gender-related factors involved in risk.

**Barbara Clow**

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*Dr. Barbara Clow is Executive Director of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, a centre for research and policy advice on women's health funded by Health Canada under the auspices of Dalhousie University and the IWK Health Centre. She has a PhD in*

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*the history of medicine and over the past ten years has been actively engaged in research related to health history and women's health, such as women's unpaid care giving work, the impact of health reform on women and girls, the role of gender in the HIV/AIDS pandemic, women's sexual and reproductive health, and the health of African Canadian women. Barbara was the co-director of the inaugural International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS, held in South Africa in June 2004 and a moderator and presenter at the "Acting on Rights: Women and HIV/AIDS" at the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, July 2004. She is currently planning the second International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS, to be held in the Caribbean.*

Presentation:

#### **Experiences with the International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS**

The International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS is an initiative of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat. It is designed to support efforts to augment research on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, to incorporate new and existing research into policies, to translate policies into action, and to integrate good practice into policies. Its purpose is to strengthen and link a global network of experts and institutions addressing capacity building in Gender and HIV/AIDS in the areas of research, policy, and programming.

The Institute comprises a set of resources that are flexible and evolving to enable sharing of information and experiences with policy and legal frameworks, programme and practical approaches, advocacy and research initiatives across regions and sectors. The inaugural International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2004 and plans are underway for a second Institute activity in the Caribbean. This presentation will look at the lessons learned thus far.

#### **Peter Delefes**

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*Peter Delefes is the Coordinator of In-Canada Operations for the Nova Scotia-Gambia Association, which operates a nation wide, school based Peer Health Education Program in The Gambia.*

Presentation:

#### **Nova Scotia-Gambia Association Peer Health Education Program in West Africa**

The program which focuses on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention also deals with other health issues including malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, drug abuse and healthy relationships. In August, 2004, at the request of the government of Sierra Leone, the program was extended to that country. The Peer Health Education program engages the full participation of girls and women. Peer education teams in each school (20 students) are comprised of equal numbers of males and females. The health issues dealt with in the program (HIV/AIDS, STIs early marriage, maternal health, contraception, family planning, traditional practices and human

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sexuality) have immediate application to girls attending junior and senior high school. Indeed they have specific relevance to the lives of all girls and women in West Africa.

**David Divine**

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*Dr. David Divine is the James R. Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University and has research interests related to HIV/AIDS and the Black male.*

Presentation:

**Lynched Bodies: Black men, sexuality and racial violence**

The presentation explores the sexual meanings that have been attached to the Black male body over time, and how such meanings can shape and be shaped by Black men, with both negative and positive consequences

**Jacqueline Gahagan**

School of Health & Human Performance, Dalhousie University/ACEWH  
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*Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan's program of research (and related activism) over the last 15 years has focused on HIV/AIDS, including: a national study on HIV counseling and testing among pregnant women, a national study on HIV prevention, care, treatment and support among women in federal prisons in Canada, Living with HIV in Nova Scotia, HIV prevention education among young heterosexuals, formal and informal caregiving for people with AIDS in the last month of life, HIV/AIDS and gender inequality in the agricultural sector, the IIGH/A, etc.*

Presentation:

**Gender and the social determinants of health: Bridging local and international perspectives**

This presentation will offer a brief overview of the centrality of gender as a key determinant of health, and more specifically, in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Canada as well as internationally. Examples from both the agricultural and sexual health sectors will be used to illustrate the importance of gender-based approaches to HIV prevention.

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**Roetka Gradstein**

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*Roetka is a Dalhousie medical student with an interest in sexual health and women's health. In 2004 she completed research on sexual health promotion billboards in East Africa- most of these billboards address HIV/AIDS issues.*

Presentation:

**Sex, AIDS, and Ads - Sexual health promotion billboards in East Africa: a photographic display and presentation.**

Agencies focused on the health of populations often launch 'social marketing campaigns' to promote awareness on health issues. A previously excessively private issue, sexual health promotion now takes the form of larger-than-life images pervading our public spaces. Health advertising through commercials, print ads and billboards has become more common in the past few decades and has reached a peak of activity in the effort to prevent the spread of HIV infection worldwide. Sexual health promotion slogans and images can be seen on billboards in the rural and urban landscapes of Kenya and Tanzania. These billboards have become part of the cultural discourse on sex and reveal some of the major public health issues related to sex, and in particular HIV/AIDS, in these countries.

The photographic work consists of a series of 10 posters containing an image or a collage of images of billboards promoting sexual health in Kenya and Tanzania. The vast majority of these billboards focus on HIV and AIDS prevention and awareness. The posters also contain text illuminating elements of the sexual health campaign, usually quotes from the organization responsible for the billboard. The images and text draw the viewer into various issues and themes in the public health efforts to address HIV and AIDS.

**Susan Kirkland**

Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University  
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*Dr. Susan Kirkland is a Principal Investigator on the Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network (AIRN) for Social and Behavioural Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS. Her contributions to research, broadly defined, lie in the area of women's health, specifically including an epidemiologic examination of health outcomes that are prevalent in women and investigation of the risk factors and underlying determinants of chronic diseases in women, including lifestyle behaviours and the interplay between gender and the genetic, social, cultural and economic determinants of health.*

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Presentation:

**Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network (AIRN) for Social and Behavioural Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS**

Infections caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) lead to chronic and serious health consequences for individuals and create a major public health burden for society. Notwithstanding their unique characteristics, these infections have many features in common, including their emerging prevalence among marginalized populations, the high risk behaviours associated with transmission, and the stigma and negative impact on the lives of infected and affected individuals. This provides the rationale to jointly target research on prevention strategies, interventions and policy. The Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network (AIRN) for Social and Behavioural Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS proposes to enhance capacity and maximize productivity by coming together to contribute to a research agenda for the prevention and enhancement of care of both diseases. The key feature of AIRN is cross-fertilization. In addition to bringing together established researchers who have worked in the individual areas of HCV and HIV/AIDS, from different provinces and from a broad range of disciplines, we are committed to the integration of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Collaborations will be sought with other academic researchers and members from different sectors, including government, health care and service provision organizations, and community based organizations.

**Sandra McFadyen**

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*Sandra works as a researcher and policy analyst for the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Much of her work involves conducting gender-based analyses or taking a gendered perspective in relation to the policies and programs of the government. As part of this work she put together a backgrounder on Women and HIV/AIDS and, with input from many sources, conducted a gender-based analysis of the NS Strategy on HIV/AIDS.*

Presentation:

**Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS and its Gender Implications**

Presented with Larry Baxter, Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS  
(see description on page 1)

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**Albert McNutt**

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*Albert McNutt is the founder and Vice Chairperson of the Northern AIDS Connection Society, a community-based organization focused on prevention education in Northern Nova Scotia. He is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD).*

Presentation:

**HIV/AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination: A Plan of Action for Canada**

Stigma and discrimination are fuelling the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada. The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, with community groups, has released a Plan of Action for Canada to Reduce HIV/AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination. If implemented, the Plan will ensure that the rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

**Sue McWilliam**

Interdisciplinary PhD, Dalhousie University  
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*Sue is a second year Interdisciplinary PhD student studying the impact of HIV-prevention policy on Canadian women. She has been conducting HIV/AIDS research for 6 years now, focusing primarily on the prevention, care, treatment and support needs of women. She has also held various volunteer positions (support staff, board member, chairperson of program planning) in different AIDS Service Organizations in Nova Scotia and Ontario.*

Presentation:

**Hidden in the Data: An exploratory study of the care, treatment and support needs of women living with HIV in Nova Scotia**

The HIV-prevention, care, treatment and support needs of women in Nova Scotia will be discussed based on the findings of my MA thesis, entitled 'Hidden in the Data: An exploratory study of the care, treatment and support needs of women living with HIV in Nova Scotia' as well as my current research that looks at HIV prevention policy for women in Nova Scotia.



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**Katie Orr**

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*Katie is the Director of the International Health Office and has worked in international project management in the fields of health, environment, education, peace building and reconstruction for non-governmental organizations, universities, and international agencies in Africa, Asia and the Balkans.*

**Dr. Walter Schlech**

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*Dr. Walter Schlech is a professor in the Department of Medicine and Division of Infectious Diseases and has been working in the HIV field for 21 years, including recent work teaching in Africa and Northern India.*

Presentation:

**Experiences working in an HIV/AIDS clinic in Uganda: A personal view of HIV issues for women**

Dr. Walter Schlech recently spent time working and teaching in an HIV/AIDS clinic in Uganda. He will share his experiences working in Uganda, as well as his personal view of HIV issues for Ugandan women.

**Boitshoko Seretse**

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*Boitshoko is a Health Education/Promotion Officer for the Ministry of Local Government of Botswana and has been selected by the national government of Botswana to pursue a Health Education degree at Dalhousie University. She is currently completing an internship with the Gender and HIV/AIDS Programme at the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.*

Presentation:

**Vulnerability, Gender Roles and HIV/AIDS**

Gender roles and relations powerfully influence the course and impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Gender related factors shape the extent to which women, men, girls and boys are vulnerable to HIV infection. Therefore, the basis of this topic will be on how a wide range of

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factors make women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men. It will also highlight how gender roles contribute to HIV/AIDS transmission.

**Rebecca Tiessen**

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*Dr. Rebecca Tiessen is the Graduate Coordinator of International Development Studies at Dalhousie. She is currently carrying out research on gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in Malawi as part of a SSHRC research grant.*

Presentation:

**Myths and Metaphors: Making Sense of Gender Inequality and HIV/AIDS in Malawi**

In this paper, I examine various metaphors used by local and international communities to discuss HIV/AIDS in Africa. The language of HIV/AIDS is embedded in a particular discourse that shapes how we think about HIV and the people who are affected by it. How HIV/AIDS is talked about will also determine the course of action and the motivations for such actions as part of the humanitarian impulse. I am particularly interested in the use of metaphors that conceptualize and/or reinforce AIDS as a human security issue. This paper begins with an explanation of the human security and development crisis created by the high rates of HIV infection in Africa more generally, and southern Africa in particular. Widespread changes in the region (demographic, economic, social, and political) foster new development challenges. It is useful to understand how the international community more generally, and international NGOs and development agencies in particular, working in Africa respond to health and human security issues in their work. It is also important to know how Africans themselves have come to understand this crisis and the metaphors they use to make sense of the changes in their lives. In the second part of this paper I highlight some of the metaphors used to express concerns surrounding HIV/AIDS in the region. The research for this paper draws on interviews with individuals from a peri-urban community in Malawi as well as information collected from various media sources including cartoons, comic strips, international news agencies, United Nations documents, and NGO websites. Several themes emerged in this research and are discussed in this paper. The themes include: AIDS as a development disaster; AIDS as a battle/war/enemy; AIDS as a plague; AIDS as a game; AIDS as a Death Sentence; AIDS as a punishment; AIDS as a long illness; AIDS as an African disease; AIDS as a poor man's disease; and AIDS as the thinning disease.