



Canadian Society for International Health

10TH Canadian Conference on International Health

October 26-29, 2003, Ottawa, Canada

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10th Canadian Conference on International Health (CCIH)
October 26-29, Ottawa, Canada

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM

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Is the primary Author a Student? **No** Your abstract is: **Program/project-related**

Keywords: **Policy, Gender Mainstreaming, HIV/AIDS, Best Practice, East Africa**

ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 400 WORDS)

BEST PRACTICES: A GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORKSHOP IN EAST AFRICA

Jacqueline Gahagan, Aideen Reynolds

Rationale:

Many social and cultural norms tend to be rooted in gender differences, often leaving women at increased risk for and vulnerability to HIV infection and/or adverse effects of HIV/AIDS. As such, “gender mainstreaming” has been widely adopted as a conceptual framework for HIV/AIDS policy and programming sectors to ensure that an understanding of the differential impacts of the disease on males and females are being incorporated and addressed. At a conceptual level, gender mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS makes sense. In practice however, gender mainstreaming is often more difficult to achieve. It requires policy, programming and service delivery sectors, among others, to undertake a careful analysis of deeply rooted societal and cultural norms that may reveal evidence of gender-based inequalities. Such gender-based inequalities may lead to or perpetuate differential vulnerabilities and impacts of HIV/AIDS that further exacerbate the spread of the virus worldwide.

Objectives:

- To present a best practice model for building capacity to mainstream gender into African programmes and policies; and
- To present an analysis of the gender mainstreaming training needs identified by policy makers and managers in East Africa.

Description:

This session will present a best practice case study of an initiative designed to build capacity to mainstream gender into HIV/AIDS policies and programmes in East Africa. Representatives from the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health (ACEWH) and Dalhousie University were invited by Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and organizing partners; ILO, UNIFEM, and CHRCS, to present and participate in a workshop titled “East African Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS Policy and Practice” in Arusha, March 2003. The purpose of the workshop was to assist countries in the East African region to share experiences in order to strengthen their national responses to HIV/AIDS through the incorporation of gender sensitive principles into national HIV/AIDS policies and practices.

With exception of two representatives from ACEWH and Dalhousie University and two from ComSec, all 60 participants were senior policy makers and managers from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, making for rich region-specific dialogue. Participants were led through a process of identifying key policy, legal, social, economic and cultural issues in terms of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support that may not adequately address gender differences. Country specific action plans for mainstreaming gender into policies were developed and presented by the National AIDS Commission Directors of the three countries. A training needs assessment was circulated by ACEWH and Dalhousie University at the conclusion of the workshop to gather information about the types of training and capacity building mechanisms that are required to assist with

gender mainstreaming in East Africa.

Biographies:

Jacqueline Gahagan has worked in the area of HIV/AIDS for over 15 years. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University where she teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the Health Education Program. Jacqueline was recently appointed by Federal Minister of Health, Anne McLellan, to the Ministerial Council on HIV/AIDS, and also serves on the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS.

Aideen Reynolds is Research Officer at the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, has been coordinating activities related to the development of an International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS (IIGH/A), including organization of two international workshops convened in Halifax, Nova Scotia and a Satellite Session at the World AIDS Conference in Barcelona. Aideen is Project Coordinator on a two-year research project funded by the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research that is examining the sexual health needs of young males in Nova Scotia and is an active representative on the Nova Scotia Roundtable on Youth Sexual Health.