

The International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS: Lessons learned from Southern Africa

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Objectives:

The Inaugural International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS (IIGHA), held June 7-11, 2004 in Johannesburg, South Africa, offers lessons about how to strengthen the connections between national government policy, practice, and research in order to enhance existing efforts to tackle issues of gender and HIV/AIDS.

Methods:

Eighty-eight participants from Botswana, Canada, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland met with the goal of building expertise and sharing experiences on the fundamental role of gender in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Institute brought together policy makers, programme leaders, civil society organizations, youth, researchers and people living with HIV/AIDS to build skills on using a gender-based perspective to help mitigate HIV vulnerabilities among women, men, girls and boys.

Results:

The Institute created a forum for transformative learning that allowed participants to share research and experience on gender and HIV/AIDS, and to develop realistic inclusive policy recommendations. Country delegations transformed themselves into National Chapters, reflecting the Institute's tripartite structure, to create time-bound action plans for using gender based analysis in the response to HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion:

IIGHA emphasized the importance of the tripartite structure working together: government, civil society and researchers. It highlighted a continuum of capacity for organizations to include gender analysis in their work and this should be addressed through further training and follow-up activities, which are taking place in the region.

