

The Inaugural International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS

Strengthening the connections between practice, policy and research
Johannesburg, South Africa

June 7 –11, 2004



Atlantic Centre of Excellence
for Women's Health



COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT



ARASA
AIDS & Rights
Alliance
for Southern Africa



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The inaugural International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS, Strengthening the Connections Between Practice, Policy and Research, was held in Pretoria, South Africa, June 7 to 11, 2004. The Institute, co-developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, Dalhousie University, Canada, brought together policy makers, program leaders, civil society organizations, youth, academics and research organizations from Canada, Botswana, Lesotho, South African and Swaziland to deliberate on the successes and the challenges – the benefits and the obstacles – to integrating a gender perspective into work on the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Institute, based on extensive consultation with international experts in the field over a period of four years, and through face-to-face discussions with representatives from government, academic institutions and civil society throughout the region in March 2004, was launched with a number of partners from the region. These included the Human Sciences Research Council – SAHARA Alliance and the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA).

The delegations from the countries participating in the Institute were led by senior government officials from branches responsible for gender issues and included National AIDS Coordinating Agencies, civil society representatives, youth and researchers.

The Institute lasted for four days, with the following structure:

Day 1 – Road Mapping – Where are we now in understanding and integrating gender into our response to HIV/AIDS?

Day 2 – Learning about strategies that can make a difference

Day 3 – Meeting with our allies, building networks of support, identifying the gaps

Day 4 – Consolidating Lessons – articulating avenues for change.

The Institute did not finish when the delegates returned home. Monitoring strategies agreed upon by the participants will be implemented to follow-up on country specific action plans and regional priorities. These results will help build momentum and facilitate the development of other follow-up initiatives in southern Africa in 2005 / 06. Part of the long term vision is that a model will be established that can be used in other regions of the African continent, the Caribbean, Asia and other parts of the world in the future.