



# **Sexuality and Political Change – A New Training Program**

## **Sexuality Policy Watch**



**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

**March 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> 2013**

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## The Sexuality and Political Change – A New Training Program

### Preface

The Sexuality Policy Watch training program hosted in Rio de Janeiro differs from other non-academic capacity-building models in this area in that it did not focus strictly on sexuality theory and research per se, but rather aimed at exploring the various linkages and gaps that exist between sexuality theorizing and research in sexuality and social and policy change. The program is designed to examine how theory, research and policy can be connected most effectively in order to contribute to meaningful social change. The content areas covered by the course have encompassed HIV/AIDS, LGBT rights, laws and policies affecting transgender persons. The course examined challenges experienced in connecting theory and practice and translating research into change mostly through the critical exploration of exemplary cases of both successful and failed attempts to bring about social and policy change.

This report does not intend to translate in depth the complexity of debates and the process of learning experienced by all participants. It simply aims to recapture the key moments of the sharing and learning experience as a sort of “aide memoire” for those who were in Rio and as a guide and inspiration for those who will participate in future courses.

Good reading,

**Sonia Corrêa and Richard Parker**  
SPW's Co-Chairs

## The Agenda

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Welcome	The Brazilian Parliamentarian frontline: Representative Jean Wyllys	Global Commission on HIV/AIDS and The Law: Vivek Divan	Reflection on what has been learned in the first three days Template 2	Group work on case studies continues to process the cases studies
Presenting training objectives and methods	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break
Participant Presentations Group 1	Theorizing on sexuality research and change Panel: Rosalind Petchesky and Mario Pecheny	The Indian battle against 377: Vivek Divan	How media uses or not research in sexuality: Claudia Antunes	Group Outcome Presentations
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Participant Presentations Groups 2 & 3	Theorizing Panel Continued: Comments and Facilitation by Sonia Corrêa and Richard Parker	1. The Argentinean gender identity law: Emiliano Litardo	Group Work on 3 Specific Case Studies	Group Outcome Presentations
General Discussion	Time to Breath	2. Trans issues ate the regional and international human rights system - Tamara Adrian  3. Starting the reflection on learning – Mario Pecheny	Time to Breath	Evaluation

## **DAY 1 – Monday, March 18, 2013**



The day started with a collective welcome and a presentation of the training objectives, program and methodology which also included a brief recapturing of the Sexuality Policy Watch mandate, trajectory and its cross-boundary & cross-issue frame of work. This was followed by the individual presentations of participants who introduced themselves to the group (using a four slide power point presentation) focusing on the following topics: key dimensions of their work, the role theory and research plays in their research, and the questions they would like to explore during the course.



**Hakima Abbas** (Africa) is a political scientist, policy analyst and activist. She has been active in struggles on issues of self-determination, race, class, gender and sexuality for over fifteen years. Her professional work as a trainer, strategist and researcher has focused on strengthening and supporting movements for change in Africa and the Middle East. Hakima is the editor and author of various publications on aid and development, the African Union, peace and security, gender and sexuality. She is currently co-editing, with Sokari Ekiné, of the Queer African Reader (<http://fahamubooks.org/book/?GCOI=90638100911630>). Hakima is a board member and advisor to several global philanthropic and civil society initiatives.

- Role of Theory and Research (RoTR): Theory should be used for movement building, developing political consciousness, and building alternatives.
- Questions to Explore (QtE): Is sexuality a universal epistemological and ontological category and how do we understand sexualities that shift us away from dominant Northern frames and contextualize struggles for equality?

**Tamara Adrian** (Venezuela) is a lawyer who graduated from the Andrés Bello Catholic University. She further obtained a Doctorate degree in Law and a Diploma in Comparative Law from the Paris Institute of Comparative Law. As a transsexual lesbian woman, she has constantly been involved in promoting the recognition and protection of the civil and human rights of lesbian, gays, transsexual, transgender and intersexual people. She is the author of the drafted Gender Identity Law, a Civil Partnership Law, and a Non Discrimination Law and a Civil Registry Law and an active participant in many of the lead legal movements in the country concerning gender and sexual diversity issues. She has proposed successful amendments to the Venezuelan constitution in 2007 about LGBTI rights, that were further reproduced in the Ecuadorian and in the Bolivian constitutions as of 2008 and 2009.

- (RoTR): Is to have knowledge about the facts, to use theory, and predicts the relevant consequences of lack of action. This is what gives you credibility at the national or international level.

Empathy, bridges, and support cannot be achieved without theory and research.

- (QtE): How can we create links and bridges between different social movements, political groups, and economic organizations?

**Dawn Cavenagh** (South Africa) – is a lesbian and feminist activist involved in development work. She is a member of the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL), founded in 2003, which is positioned between women's and gay men's movements, struggling to advance both using a focus on human rights, social justice for all, and the freedom to express a variety of gender identities and sexual orientations. She follows human rights negotiations on a global level at the UN Human Rights Council. She works at the Human Rights Council protecting human rights defenders and working with sexuality issues within a cross-movement perspective.

- (RoTR): There is a lack of attention and investment of resources [especially time!] into developing a clear and implementable research agenda that can be used to back up our knowing[s].
- (QtE): To what extent and how can we set and begin to implement a research agenda that articulates the links between sexuality and the right to health and development as a priority research question? How to assess experiences and ideas about research, including who writes and publishes, which sustain the disconnections between the doers and the thinkers?

**Debolina Dutta** (India) is a human rights lawyer, researcher and activist. She is presently a doctoral fellow at the Institute for International Law and the Humanities, Melbourne Law School, where her research looks at sex workers' resistance to the global rescue industry in India. She is co-editing a forthcoming book volume on violence against marginalized women in South Asia and has co-directed two documentary films. She is also developing a research project called 'Sex, Fun and Money' that tries to conceptualize humor as a political force in the everyday lives of sex workers in India. Previously, she worked with several organizations in India as a human rights trainer and researcher. Her last position was at CREA, New Delhi, as the Advocacy and Research Coordinator. She represented

CREA at the UNHRC as part of the coalition called Sexual Rights Initiative and also researched and co-authored the Count Me In Research on Violence Against Marginalised Women in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

- (RoTR): Feminist theory (particularly postcolonial and sex positive feminisms) and a cross-disciplinary repertoire of scholarship share a common vision of re-imagining the world.
- (QtE): How does one respond to sexual rights agendas being coopted into discourses of civilizational progress whenever we articulate them on a global stage?

**Agniva Lahiri** (India) is a development professional and gender queer youth activist whose work spans over a decade. Agniva started working with HIV/AIDS intervention programs in early 1998 with an understanding that discriminated populations probably have among the most valuable insights on HIV/AIDS. In 2003, Agniva founded an organization called People Like Us (PLUS) Kolkata to represent the experiences and realities of marginalized and vulnerable young gender variant men. PLUS also leads a support group working for the promotion, protection and advancement of young gender variant men and transgender health and rights, especially in relation to sexual and reproductive health, to ensure their meaningful participation and perspectives at all levels of decision-making.

- (RoTR): My understanding and frustration is all about how we lose the comfort zone in our own community, country, and region and become ineffective in advocacy and policy formation and lose the platform to share our struggle and benchmark in international advocacy.
- (QtE): I would also like to learn about measurable indicators for policy advocacy and research including impact assessment processes. As donors are mostly focusing on indicators, I do not understand how we can measure global/south solidarity in the process.



**Stephanie Leitch** (Tobago & Trinidad) has been involved in academic feminism for the past six years. She graduated from the University of the West Indies with a Minor in Gender Studies and is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Gender and Development at the same institution. Her activism also involves event co-ordination around women's days including her centennial International Women's Day event WOmantra which transitioned into a feminist networking site, film, and installation. Outside of the creative pursuits Stephanie has been involved in activism around the National Gender Policy and the Equal Opportunities Act through her affiliation with the organizations Support for Change and the Coalition Advocating for the Inclusion of Sexual Orientation.

- (RoTR): As a gender and development scholar, theory is important to understand the local terrain in relation to migration and sexuality which is an under developed area of Caribbean scholarship.
- (QtE): How can a movement effectively mobilize when the culture of discrimination has a direct impact on participation or lack thereof?

**Jamison Liang** is currently pursuing an MA in Anthropology and International Development as a National Science Foundation Fellow at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. Prior to, he interned at UNESCO Bangkok and TREATAsia/Purple Sky Network working on HIV prevention, care, and treatment research for gay men/MSM and transgender communities in Southeast Asia. He has also spent considerable time in Indonesia studying bahasa Indonesia and interning at Gaya Nusantara, the nation's leading LGBT rights advocacy NGO. Jamison is a 25-year-old hapa/Chinese-American originally from Chicago, and he received a bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis in the fields of art history, anthropology, and women, gender, and sexuality studies.

- (RoTR): Queer intersectionality perspectives open new spaces for Muslim LGBTQI persons to claim their rights.
- (QtE): What should the role of researchers/activists in the global North be in effecting change?

**Malu Moreno** (Argentina) studied Political Science at the University of Buenos Aires and did a Masters program in Gender and Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Embodying a feminist critique to traditional parliamentary practices and trying to engage *and* destabilize party politics logics was one of the most exciting challenges of her professional life. Currently she works at the Buenos Aires City Judicial Branch, at Gender in Justice Watch, which aims to destabilize judiciary oppressive practices based on gender and sexuality. She also teaches graduate students and engages in research about sexual politics, social movements, feminist theory and activism, state regulation of gender, and sexual hierarchies.

- (RoTR): Academic research and theoretical work allow us to present issues related to sexuality as legitimate objects of public policies.
- (QtE): How can we design strategies to make radical sexual demands and complex theoretical developments understandable for non-specialists without excessive simplification?

**Mikee Nunez-Inton** (Philippines) graduated with a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communication and worked as an Instructor at the University of the Philippines Manila while working on her Masters degree in Communication. She is currently an assistant professor at the Communication Research Department of the College of Mass Communication of the University of the Philippines Diliman. As a transgender woman, her areas of research interest include theories on gender, sexuality, queer theory, media representations of gender, and localizing global discourses on gender and sexuality. She is also a member of the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines, which serves as a support group for transgender Filipinas and also advocates for education on sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and AIDS.

- (RoTR): How do we reconcile the rift between endemic gendered labels (identities) and Western ways of thought in a political sphere that is heavily influenced by these Western Discourses?
- (QtE): What is the role of the media in shaping our gendered identities and what is its potential for effecting a change in the way our culture and society thinks about gender?

**Elsa Oliveira** (South Africa) is a visiting researcher at the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Elsa completed her MA in Forced Migration at ACMS in 2011. During this time, Elsa co-coordinated a participatory photo project, [‘Working the City’](#) to explore the ways in which urban space impact self-representation in the lives of migrant women sex workers. Elsa is currently coordinating two participatory photo research studies with migrant women and transgender sex workers that will be conducted at various sites in South Africa. Elsa is interested in utilizing social science research, specifically visual studies, as a tool to promote social justice. Her areas of focus are in gender, sexuality, migration, visual methodologies, and urban health. Elsa plans to begin her doctoral studies in 2013.

- (RoTR): For me research is always about engaging in interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks (e.g post modern feminist theory) in order to explore the complex lived experiences of migrant sex workers.
- (QtE): What is the role of language (e.g LGBT(I), man/woman) when working in non-Western spaces?

**Marcelo Perilo** (Brazil) is currently living in São Paulo, where he is working and studying. He has an undergraduate degree in Social Communications, a Masters degree in Social Anthropology, and will start a PhD in Social Anthropology this year. In his academic and professional career he has worked with issues related to sexuality and likes to learn more about different ways to apply this knowledge for social transformation. He was also an activist in the LGBT movement in Goiania, the capital town of a hinterland state in Brazil.

- (RoTR): I have worked with issues such as youth, sociability, social change and public policies for the LGBT population. How can we relate sexuality to other axes of power such as gender, race, class, generation and nationality to think about theory and social chances?
- (QtE): How can we stimulate the interactions between different types of political organizations (those that operate on a local or

global scale) to stimulate the production of knowledge and social transformations?

**Tarek Salem** (Egypt) works in Nazra for Feminist Studies in Cairo. Tarek defines himself as a queer human rights activist engaged in issues of gender, sexuality, feminism and LGBTIQ rights. He also published a book in Arabic documenting the Egyptian revolution from feminist and queer perspectives.

- (RoTR): We need research and theory to mainstream sexuality and feminist policies and move beyond service provision as to create community leadership.
- (QtE): How can we avoid pinkwashing and move beyond identity politics?

**Ryan Thorenson** is a JD candidate at Yale Law School. He completed his undergraduate degree in Government and Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Harvard University, then read for the DPhil in Anthropology at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. His published work has focused on transnational LGBTI advocacy, the Yogyakarta Principles and the development of soft law on sexuality, and LGBTI movements in Southern Africa and the Philippines. His research interests include feminist, postcolonial, and queer theory, development anthropology, law, gender and sexuality, social movements, and transnational advocacy networks. He is currently working on a project on the concept of morality in regional and international human rights adjudication.

- (RoTR): Research and theory allows me to identify unexplored areas of tension or possibility and challenges me to help think through both the empirical and normative consequences of the work I do.
- (QtE): What are the alternatives to rights-based approaches? Is it helpful to mobilize law in the service of alternative sexualities?

**Joseph Achille Tiedjou** (Cameroon) – is a Phd student in social anthropology, at the University of Douala Cameroon. His MA thesis

was focused on the representation of homosexualities in contemporary Cameroon. Beyond his academic interest in the field of same sex conduct in Cameroon, since 2008 he has worked with the Association for the Defense of Homosexuals (ADEFHO), a civil society organization working to defend people who have been arrested and/or detained for homosexuality across Cameroon and to advocate for the decriminalization of homosexuality in that Western African country. He has been a part of many research teams on LGBTI human rights violations and MSM practices related to HIV/AIDS.

- (RoTR): Research and theory allows us to understand the implications of the relative novelty of addressing the homophobic bias of the the law and of public space in Cameroon.
- (QtE): What is the entry point for change in a context of criminalization of same sex relations?

**Eugenia Lopez Uribe** (Mexico) is currently the executive director of the Mexican women's rights organization *Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud A.C.* She is a feminist who has worked on sexual and reproductive rights of women and youth in rural and urban marginalized areas for more than 20 years. She holds an M.A. in Social and Political Studies from the National University (UNAM). She has worked with different institutions of the Ministry of Health, NGO's from the feminist and SRHR movements, such as The Population Council and Ipas México, academies such as the *Colegio de México* and *Instituto Mora*, and international agencies such as UNFPA and the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning.

- (RoTR): Research informs our actions and priorities for them to be based on evidence. Operative research with the participation of the groups that we are reaching out to or trying to engage with is critical.
- (QtE): How can we strengthen the research methodologies and abilities of activists and social leaders in order to consolidate their political agenda on the basis of evidence?

**Ting-Ting Wei** (China) was the executive producer and director of the *Vagina Monologues* in Wuhan, in 2007 and 2009. In 2011, she moved



to Beijing and joined Beijing Gender Health Institute, as a project director. She is also the public relations manager of Queer Comrades as well as a trainer and Wuhan coordinator of LaLa Stories (a digital storytelling workshop). She is also the founder of the Bianbian Group that applies queer and feminist theory to address the situation of minorities, especially the most marginalized groups in China.

- (RoTR): Research shows reality while theory offers the perspective to understand and make a movement more rooted.
- (QtE): I would like to learn more about feminism/queer theory and the lesbian movement in order to better understand how to influence policy with the help of theory and research.

**Wei Wei** (China) with a dissertation that documented the recent mobilization of the gay community in Mainland China, Wei Wei earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Loyola University Chicago in 2006. Currently he is an associate professor of sociology at East China Normal University, Shanghai, and continues teaching and doing research on gender/sexuality, urban queer spaces, and HIV/AIDS. Self-identified as an academia-based activist, he is committed to liberal education as a major means to promote social change on sexuality matters. Wei's dissertation was finally published in 2012 in mainland China titled *Going Public: The Production and Transformation of Queer Spaces in Contemporary Chengdu, China*. As one of the pioneering works on LGBT politics in the country, the book has been well received by both the academic circle and the LGBT communities.

- (RoTR): When we engage with theoretical advancement we can use current research to better articulate global and local queer theory. Research is key to feed expertise-based activism.
- (QtE): How can we better understand approaches and practices of advocating for sexual rights? How can we build the coalition between activism on sexuality matters and other social movements?

## **DAY 2 – Tuesday, March 19, 2013**

### **A troubled political frontline: the Brazilian House of Representatives – Jean Wyllys**

On the morning of the second day of the training the Brazilian House representative **Jean Wyllys** shared his experience about being a gay left wing parliamentarian.



**Jean Wyllys was elected as a Congressman for the Socialism and Liberty Party of Rio de Janeiro (PSOL-RJ) for the 2011-2014 term. Jean is a writer with three books published, a columnist for the Charter Capital, and an avid supporter of movements that promote the rights of the LGBT community, black women, and other groups that have historically been marginalized. Jean has also taken action to combat homophobia, religious intolerance and fundamentalism, discrimination against practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions, slave labor, sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and violence against women. In 2012 he received the Judiciary Merit award from the Superior Labor Tribunal (TST) and was voted the best parliamentary member by the *Congresso em Foco* magazine.**

Jean provided a first hand account of the situation in the Brazilian political and parliamentary context characterized today by major setbacks that result from the growing presence of dogmatic Evangelical voices at the Congress level now encompassing a group of approximately 70 congressmen and congresswomen whose influence has decidedly expanded since the 2010 general elections, in addition to joining forces with other conservative congressional groups such as agro-business and Catholic parliamentarians. Jean's parliamentary work is systematically hindered and attacked by these forces as it prioritizes frontline agendas such as same sex marriage, gender identity recognition, abortion rights, and the legalization of prostitution.

Jean has also pointed to the fact that the influence of these fundamentalist forces is not restricted to the Congress but it is now also affecting a wide range of public policy domains. He mentioned that the week before the dissemination of information about HIV prevention for adolescents in the public school system had been censored and suspended, this episode repeating a pattern that has occurred twice since 2011. His analysis of why this type of censorship is becoming so frequent identifies fundamentalists' sexual doctrines as

the main factor, because religious dogmatic doctrines, in particular Evangelical, usually consider sexuality education as a form of pornography, being offered to adolescents, which in their view threatens the traditional family. He called attention to the paradox and risk implied in censoring information of HIV prevention when epidemiological data shows that in Brazil today young men that have sex with men still have higher rates of infection.

He has also briefly described his proposal of law reform in relation to prostitution, which is aimed at decriminalizing brothels and the work of agents of commercial sex as a way forward towards the full recognition of the provision of sexual services as a form of work that must be regulated by civil and labor laws and not by criminal justice. He also mentioned that another law provision he is presenting in the current legislature refers to the right of trans persons to obtain new birth certificates and social identity documents as well as access medical procedures of bodily modification and sex reassignment without the necessity of a psychiatric diagnosis. The de-pathologizing approach of the law Jean is proposing was inspired by the law approved in Argentina in 2012.

Jean also spoke of the personal and private implications of being the first openly gay federal parliamentarian in Brazil that struggles to advance LGBTQI rights. Among other difficulties he has been the target of internet disseminated life threats. The systematic regressions at play in Brazilian sexual politics must be understood in connection with powerful economic interests and other expressions of political conservatism. To illustrate this connection he called attention to the fact that Evangelical churches today control a wide range of key media vehicles, including the second biggest television broadcasting network. He also told the training participants that in 2012 a new version of the Bible was distributed in Congress: the agro-Bible in which the various books are separated by short chapters on agricultural techniques and agro-business. The publication bluntly reflects the close association between the Evangelical group, landowners, and agro entrepreneurs at the Congressional level.

Having in mind the transnational scope of the SPW training, the composition of the group and the persistent reminders throughout the training, that it is important to always link sexual matters and the



political economy it is not excessive to remind, perhaps, that agro – exports, especially to China, is one main factor beneath Brazilian growth in recent years, and that the transplantation of Brazilian agricultural techniques and bio-techniques is one key item in the current African export portfolio.

Jean described the importance of sexuality research to him, as much in his personal life as in his political life. He was introduced to queer theory while completing a master degree in cultural studies and he cites Foucault as an important influence on his own reflections about political arguments and actions. Jean asserted that the knowledge that comes from sexuality research helps to confront fundamentalist discourses. He also cited some specific academic research, Judith Butler and Sonia Correa, who contributed to the elaboration process of the gender identity project.





## Conceptual frames and sexual political realities: how can they be articulated?

### Biopolitics, Sexuality and Political Change: Rethinking the Uganda Case - **Rosalind Petchesky**

Ros Petchesky conceptually examined the emblematic case of the sexual politics scenario in Uganda and how a proposed bill criminalizing non-heterosexual relations has taken on a life of its own even though it is not an actual law.

**Rosalind Petchesky** (USA, City University of New York) is Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, where she currently serves as Deputy Executive Officer of the Political Science Program. She has written or co-authored many publications on issues of reproductive and sexual health and rights, gender and economic justice, and critical feminist perspectives on human rights. Her books include *Abortion and Woman's Choice*, *Negotiating Reproductive Rights*, *Global Prescriptions: Gendering Health and Human Rights*, and *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights* (with Sonia Corrêa and Richard Parker).

Professor Petchesky has worked with a wide range of transnational organizations, such as the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG), which she founded, in the 1990s; Reproductive Health Matters (based in London); Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (based in Istanbul); the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID); and Sexuality Policy Watch. As part of these groups, she has engaged in social movement campaigns, United Nations conferences, World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and Mumbai, and meetings of the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS). In 1995 she was awarded a MacArthur ("genius") Fellowship. Her other activities include classical piano, *muy thai* kickboxing, and being a doting grandma to Anna and Jack.



Ros began her presentation by retracing the story of how a local Uganda tabloid (Red Peppers) published names, pictures, and addresses of homosexuals who in reaction filed a suit against the editors. David Kato one of the lead defendants was brutally killed shortly after the court ruled that the publication of personal details was a violation of privacy. She situated this episode in the broader political contest in which since 2009 a bill further criminalizing homosexuality is being considered that includes the possibility of capital punishment in cases of same sex relations that result in HIV transmission. These circumstances have provoked the intervention of international human rights organizations along with threats on the part of European governments to suspend development aid to Uganda. Her analysis focused principally on the construction and implications of these interventions and threats that are illustrations of Northern based homonationalism. She also suggested that pressures made through aid conditionality could have simply been “hot air” because Uganda receives development funding from other sources, especially China, but also because Northern countries would never break ties with one of their privileged trading and military partners in East Africa. For example, Uganda has 3200 troops positioned in Somalia in the context of the inter-state agreement for the “War on terror”.

Her analysis was framed in terms of the intersectionality of economic, geo-strategic, and historical threads in sexuality and gender politics. Ros discussed Foucault's notion of bio-politics and how the body becomes an object of governmentality to regulate and exploit life to render docility or impose "normality". She also brought up how new communications technologies are allowing for new forms of connectivity that in turn create new sexual identities and transnational alliances. The downside to this new economy based on interconnectivity is that it is also deeply imbricated with new forms of neoliberal power. She examined how all these processes evolve as religious dogmatism and other forms of conservative are now also increasingly transnational.

The situation of Uganda sharply illustrates these trends today as it is a site of a visible and vocal LGBTQI movement, but also a target of Evangelical Neocolonialism, as teams of American Christian right wing preachers, such as Scott Lively, make it a target in which to systematically preach about family values and the abomination of homosexuality. She raised the hypothesis that Uganda may be becoming a model or laboratory for transnational Evangelical neo-colonial interventions that encompass the creation of local networks, direct connections with politicians and the use of information technology and media. On the bright side, so to speak, she reminded us that Scott Lively is now subject to a lawsuit in the US filed by a US based organization, the Center for Constitutional Justice, on behalf of Ugandan organizations. This initiative is very relevant because it takes the problem back to the US, instead of continuing to focus on Uganda as a crisis of the "others".

She encouraged people to examine the geo-political and macroeconomic context to map out the utility of the law pending approval, not just for the Uganda state and local conservative and dogmatic forces, but also for US Evangelicals and US foreign policy. The "sexuality crisis" in Uganda must be placed on the larger checkerboard of Africa as a locus of rivalry amongst world powers to assert their geopolitical influence. The Chinese provide a great deal of development assistance in the form of roads, energy, dams, and railways to various African nations. Both the US and Europe are concerned about losing ground in their economic rivalry with China on

the continent, especially as foreign bids for newly discovered oil reserves are now being offered.

Yet this global – continental mapping must also be combined with a finer analysis that examines how sexual politics are being used in Uganda as a decoy to divert parliamentary debates in ways that allow President Museveni to pursue his own macroeconomic interests and monopolize trade and economic policies. Sexual politics creates a smoke screen that obscures the domestic economic crisis, unemployment, food insecurity, and sexual violence.

### **Political Subjects or Powerless Victims? Medicalization, Judicialization and Victimization in Sexual Politics - *Mario Pecheny***

Mario Pecheny in his lecture explored the possibilities and limits of political frameworks and conceptual challenges at work in discourses on rights and sexuality in liberal democracies in his lecture.





**Mario Pecheny (Argentina)** has a PhD in Political Science from the University of Paris III. Currently, he is Professor of Political Science and Sociology of Health at the University of Buenos Aires. He is also a Researcher at the National Council of Science and Technology (CONICET) at the Institute Gino Germani, in Argentina. He has been a visiting scholar and professor at the CEDES and CENEP (Buenos Aires), University of San Martín (San Martín, Argentina), Columbia University (New York), University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), University of Paris III, Monmouth College (New Jersey), the University of Cape Town (South Africa), the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, and the University of Utah (Salt Lake City).

He has extensively conducted research and published on health (HIV and AIDS, reproductive health, chronic illnesses, and drug use), sexuality, human rights and politics in Latin America and other regions. He published the following books: *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America* (edited with Javier Corrales, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), *Discutir Alfonsín* (edited with Roberto Gargarella and María Victoria Murillo, Siglo XXI, 2010), *Todo Sexo es Político* (edited with Carlos Figari and Daniel Jones, Del Zorzal, 2008), *Estudio Nacional sobre la Situación Social de las Personas Viviendo con VIH en la Argentina* (with Hernan Manzelli, UBATEC, 2008), *Argentina: Sexualidad y Derechos Humanos* (with Monica Petracci, CEDES-CLAM, 2007), *La dinámica de la Democracia* (with Sergio Emiliozzi and Martín Unzué, Prometeo, 2007), among others.

Mario began by retracing the paths through which health and human rights political and mobilization frames gained a lot of ground in Latin America over the last two to three decades to address sexuality issues and claims. In a first moment, health and human rights claims in relation to sexuality developed as distinct demands pushed for by separate movements: the HIV/AIDS movement and the LGBTIQI movement. As time went by these struggles were synchronized as complementary streams of contestations for justice and well-being.



Later on, a politics of identity started to prevail that, in his view, quite often implies in de-politicization.

He also examined how in these complex political processes research and evidence has played an important role in enhancing new cultural perceptions and political change. In doing so he noted that quantitative, in particular biomedical, data tends to have more political impact, as exemplified quite sharply by HIV/AIDS. Social science data constructed on the basis of narratives may be less powerful in policy arenas, in particular when engaging in dialogues with state actors.

In his view there are three key topics that lie at the intersection of research and political change in the realm of sexuality that raise more than a few challenges when considering the limits and possibilities of social and political change. These topics were: instrumentalism, representation, and victimization. To illustrate instrumentalism he used the example of focusing on maternal mortality to call for legal abortion, as opposed to claiming abortion rights as an end in and of itself. He reminded that one main caveat of this instrumental strategy is that when maternal mortality rates fall, the argument in favor of abortion can be lost. In speaking of the critical dimensions of representation he recalled that all political representation is performative and explored the dilemmas increasingly experienced in sexual politics in relation to who can or cannot speak of what, since men cannot speak for women, gays for lesbians, or cisgender persons for trans persons. On the other hand, he reminded us that conceptual and political views are not always and necessarily embodied. Furthermore, in the complex dynamics of representation in sexual politics the questions about who can speak are always to be paired with the question about who can be heard.

Finally, he emphasized how sexual politics is also deeply embedded in a victimization logic that relies on a rhetoric of deserving and innocent subjects who can claim rights and prerogatives that obfuscate or even erase the possibility of those who may be seen as non-deserving to claim their rights. In Pecheny's view, the attachment to this logic requires subjects to become or to be self-constructed as victims in order to get state recognition. In choosing that path the subjects of sexual politics quite often give up their agency, or their potential identity as empowered subjects.

Both Rosalind and Mario's presentations triggered quite an intense conversation. The following selected questions, without pretending to provide an exhaustive and detailed description of the conversation, do however give a flavor of the subsequent insights and interrogations:

### ***Debate - On the Uganda case***

**Dawn** - How do we decide what to foreground and background? What if we turn the tables and instead of making Uganda the point of entry we make the US the point of entry as a case study. The role of US activists in this space also needs interrogation.

**Debolina** - In the human rights council where I was active I often find myself in a room where my only ally in relation to sexual rights was the US. It is very difficult for civil society to engage with UN processes and maintain an awareness of situating their discourse within the current political scenarios at country levels, as the one analyzed by Ros in relation to Uganda.

**Hakima** - The Scott Lively case can either be framed in terms of US activists "helping Africans" or else as a genuine act of solidarity where two allies are fighting on different planes towards the same goal of deriding evangelical forces. The distance between these two interpretations is not politically irrelevant.

**Jamison** - The Uganda case makes me think if the law should be the center of our attention? I think we need to refocus on making laws that already exist actually work. I also want to complicate the idea that Evangelicals act on passive victims to gain support. We need to think about why people are so receptive to their ideas.

### ***Debate - On sexual politics and victimization in particular***

**Akshay** - Both discussions inspire me to ask: What do we mean by doing politics and what is politicizing? Does politicization only refer to state instruments or legislation reform? Is there politics before and beyond the "state"?

**Malu** – One main problem with the logic of victimization is that it positions policy-makers as rescuers. Being rescuers is much easier for them as it exonerates them from the responsibility for changing structural injustices.

**Tarek** – We must remind ourselves perhaps that sometimes victim rhetoric is all you have to use. For example, all we could concretely do in Tahrir Square was to document the disproportional number of arrests among young, poor, trans, sex workers using medical language to document the victimization of LGBT people in Egypt.

**Debolina** – I want to object to the view that the most discursively deprived people tend to use the victim rhetoric more easily. My research with sex workers in India demonstrates that they do resort to victimization as a political resource. There is a major slippery slope in the use of this type of language that is directly related to the fact that it is often the easiest way to get legitimacy in the eyes of the state.

**Elsa** – In addition to the appeal of victimization in the political domain, it is important to also recall that research plays a key role in perpetuating a focus on victims and in the same manner donors' agendas are crucial in understanding why it is so difficult to detach oneself from victimization rhetoric. I can give you an example of the International Organization on Migration that funds research not to find out what they do not know, but to demonstrate what they want to see. It is also quite clear that the predominant trafficking discourse has opened the door to much more funding and political attention for sex work, while at the same time implying a whole range of collateral effects.

## **Day 3 - Wednesday, March, 20, 2013**

### **Other frontlines - Vivek Divan**

In the morning on the third day of the training Vivek Divan gave two presentations. The first described and analyzed the processes leading up to and the outcomes of the Global Commission on HIV/AIDS and the Law. The second was an in depth retelling of the winding and complex political dynamics preceding the 2009 Delhi High Court decision that struck down article 377 – the sodomy law – from the Indian Penal Code.

**Vivek Divan** (USA/India) is currently the Policy Specialist for Key Populations and Access to Justice at UNDP's HIV, Health and Development Group in New York, USA. He is a lawyer from Mumbai, India and has worked extensively on issues of LGBT rights, HIV, access to justice, law and human rights in India and globally. As Coordinator of the Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit in India from 2000 to 2007 he oversaw and was involved in the legal aid, advocacy, research, capacity-building and legal literacy work of the Unit. He was centrally involved in the public interest litigation related to Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, India's anti-sodomy law, including legal research and strategy and extensive community mobilization around the case. Until recently he served on the Secretariat for the Global Commission on HIV and the Law and as a member of its Technical Advisory Group. He also served on the International Advisory Board of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission from 2000 to 2012. Vivek received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law from National Law School of India University in Bangalore, India and his Masters in Law from Cornell University in the US.

## The Global Commission on HIV/Aids and the Law



In analyzing the process and outcomes of the Global Commission on HIV jointly coordinated by UNDP and UNAIDS, Vivek started off by saying that, in his view, in 2010 the time was ripe for an initiative such as the Global Commission to materialize. This was because there was an environment of supportive leadership within the United Nations, including the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillai who had expressed strong positions on rights-based approaches to HIV and LGBT related aspects, juxtaposed with the negative public health effects of a spate of punitive measures that prevail in relation to same sex relations, prostitution, drug use and more recently HIV/AIDS transmission. The commission is composed of 15 eminent leaders and supported by a technical advisory group.

Its work was based on the systematic review of existing research and data and a participatory process of seven regional dialogues that took



place involving local policy-makers and affected communities. While the scientific database and literature review was critical to inform the final report, the Regional Dialogues also generated substantial evidence on the impact of legal environments on HIV and laid the foundation for civil society to catalyze country action. The experience indicates that are many ways to collect consistent evidence for policy purposes and that well designed consultation processes are one of them.

The key messages the commission report conveyed are: 1) bad laws are fueling HIV, resulting in human rights violations, costing lives, and limiting effectiveness of HIV and health investments; and 2) good laws and practices that protect human rights and build on public health evidence already exist and strengthen the global AIDS response, and they must be replicated.

**Some key questions triggered by the presentation were:**

**Eugenia** – In my view it is problematic that the report omits so many issues of sexual and reproductive health for women. It also reflects a gap between technical documents and real action in UN processes. Do high-level meetings really accomplish anything or create structural changes?

**Malu** – What are the mechanisms set in place for the follow-up of the Commission recommendations? Why weren't any ministers of finance or people in charge of budgets invited?

**Jamison** – Does the Commission work suggest that it is possible to make the work of social scientists visible to the UN (not just economists, lawyers, epidemiologists)?

**Rachel, Richard, & Sonia** – One main question arising in relation to the Commission outcomes is if it is possible to get UN country offices to follow up on its recommendations more effectively? Some countries even today and despite the Commission recommendations, for instance, will not cooperate or provide any support to sex workers. In many countries, such as Brazil, the report has not been translated or properly disseminated.

## The Indian battle against 377



In presenting the case study of the long juridical trajectory that led to the Delhi High Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of Article 377 of the India Penal Code that criminalized same sex relations between men, Vivek discussed the history and context of the case as well as the strategies utilized in the battle that involved community outreach, mobilization, and coalition building to promote consensus and encourage ownership of the process. It was an entirely community funded project with many lawyers serving pro bono.

The NGO Lawyers Collective took the lead in organizing but genuinely tried to make it a collective effort that strategically engaged all relevant stakeholders such as the women's movement, children's rights groups, trade unions, NGOs focused on HIV, community voices, mental health experts, and public health specialists. Inevitably, some people (lesbians, trans, khotis, hijras, etc.) felt left out while others objected to the approach saying that changing laws would not affect harassment in the streets, which was their main problem. The Indian

debates illustrate how complex and multilayered the relationship between social change and legal change is and that it cannot be fully understood without retracing longer historical cycles.

The visibility of gay people has dramatically changed since the early 1990's when few people were openly gay in India and only a couple of national LGBT meetings had taken place. The first large LGBT meeting took place in 2000 when a discussion about contesting Law 377 was already underway. Then in 2001, outreach workers geared towards MSM who were distributing condoms in Luckno were arrested. Charges were filed against them under Law 377 even though no sexual act was involved. The episode fueled the debate to and accelerated the juridical procedures to present the petition. The whole process involved the complex and unstable dynamics of coalition building within the wider sexual politics communities that, in various moments, were at risk of collapsing. The petition and social mobilizing it triggered has inevitably provoked conservative reactions in the most varied quarters: Hindu nationalists and religious leaders, Christian voices and even secular positions. During the judgment, the Central government of India itself expressed opposing views on 377 raising moral concerns in respect to homosexuality, while the Ministry of Health supported the argument of the petition.

Vivek also discussed why the decision to go directly to Court was made. This direction was taken because in assessing the political scenario it was clear that there were no possible paths through the Parliament or even by gaining support from the Executive branch and there was no time to be lost. The Lawyers Collective opted for the Delhi High Court strategically, as this road left the space open for an appeal to the Supreme Court in case the petition was rejected. The petition asked for the law be to 'read down', instead of stricken off the record entirely, so that the article could still be used to prosecute sexual abuse of children. The petition was framed on the basis of an argument around HIV prevention with a focus on MSM and conscientiously elected not to include the terms "gay" or "homosexual".

The petition was initially filed in 2001 and the judgment finally came out in 2009, which means it took eight full years of work. The High Court's judgment emphasized the right to health and spoke of

constitutional morality, a concept borrowed from an earlier South African case. But the central premise of the judgment was the principle of equality. The judgment was, however contested and the Delhi Court decision will now have to be confirmed or struck down by the Supreme Court. Although the juridical arguments used in the first judgment are to be appraised, it is important to bear in mind that the Supreme Court, while sustaining the decision may go back to the argument of the “right to privacy” that, in the view of a wide range of actors, is considered problematic because it is limiting.

In terms of how research and theorizing played a role in the process, Vivek mentioned the relevance of a series of trainings on juridical arguments and jurisprudence provided to Indian judges by judges or ex –judges from the Supreme Courts of South Africa who also disclosed their sexual orientation during the training. It is not inconsequential that the judges who ended up hearing the case had participated in one of these workshops. The media and TV have also played a key role in the case. Editorials and articles were published, TV debates were held and space was given to celebrities to support the petition, even though they had to be cautious because courts in India generally do not appreciate media exposure. Vivek appeared in one of these television debates speaking as a gay lawyer and challenged a Catholic bishop’s view that LGBTQI people are “diseased and deviant”.

### **Some key questions triggered by the presentation were:**

**Tamara** – Compared to this case all I can think of is how, in contrast, things are so bad in Venezuela, where courts won’t even touch anything related to sexuality.

**Agniva** – Although the politics of 377 was rich and expressed democratic elements it also implied a few elitist elements. It was centered in Delhi. If urban privileged people were consistently consulted, community members from other locations or even trans people were not really involved. Despite this limitation the abolition of 377 has generated a pan-Indian movement against criminalization in other countries where there are Indian communities and similar laws are on place and the decision has been translated into 12 local languages.

**Richard** – How did the framing of HIV as the driver play out and what was the role of research?

**Vivek** – We needed to use research as evidence to demonstrate that Law 377 has deleterious effects in relation to HIV prevention and also human rights violations. Apart from jurisprudence, we used testimonials from mental health experts and historians, and Vikram Seth came out and then wrote a public letter co-signed by Amartya Sen. We also used lots of affidavits of people oppressed by the law which will also be especially important for the Supreme Court hearing.

**Stephanie** – In Trinidad, a movement has also started to reform the Sexual Offenses Act, which was started by Colin Robinson and the arguments are being couched in terms of discrimination. Yet the movement is not fully addressing lesbian claims or the migration law that also prohibits homosexuals to visit the country. The argument used is that moving in that direction could provoke backlashes and likewise that neither lesbians nor visitors are targeted. In relation to that it is important to acknowledge that a law can be destructive even if it is not used.

**Debolina** – My concern with the 377 victory is that people started singing the national anthem after the reading down of the law. I asked myself if this could not be interpreted as a symptom of homonationalism?

## **The Argentinean gender identity law and Trans issues ate the regional and international human rights system**

The afternoon of the third day was divided up between the case of the Argentinean gender identity law analyzed by Emiliano Litardo and the evolution of debates around LGBT rights and, in particular the rights of trans people, in the Inter-American and the United Nations Human Rights Systems presented by Tamara Adrian.



## The Argentinean gender identity law - **Emiliano Litardo**

**Emiliano Litardo** (Argentina) received his law degree from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) Law School. He conducts research on sexual rights and human rights at the Ambrosio L. Gioja Institute in the Faculty of Law. He is an Assistant Professor for classes such as "Law as technologies of gender" and "The bodies of law," both directed by Dr. Paula Viturro, Faculty of Law (UBA). As a legal activist he has participated on the National Front for the Gender Identity Law, as an editor for Project 8126, and as a co-author of the recently passed Law on Gender Identity in Argentina, Law 26743. Emiliano analyzed processes leading to the approval of the law as one of the policy frontline emblematic cases discussed during the training.





Emiliano Litardo presented the Argentinean gender-identity law, approved in 2012 that enables persons to change their name and gender in official documents such as birth certificates and to receive required health care without a psychiatric diagnosis. He was involved in the process as an activist and as a lawyer and cited the use of non-traditional tools like creative activism, strategic alliances, to empower and reconstruct the essentialist gender and sex classification system in which laws are embedded.

In terms of activism, the Argentinean trans movement sought a new political frame that did not rely on victimization, avoided the gender binary, and opened up the conceptual possibility for the law to recognize the “shifting nature of identities”. The aim was to define through law a social policy that does not rely on genetics to define gender, and drawing from feminist principles, repoliticizes trans people that have been historically marginalized and excluded from full citizenship as empowered subjects. The law does not abandon the sex classification system (official documents still requires a self assigned “sex”), but it has nevertheless destabilized cultural constructions of gender.

**Some key questions triggered by the presentation were:**

**Wei Wei** - To what extent were you influenced by the horizontalism movement of the past few years? To what extent were you supported openly by the left, women's groups, student movement or the labor movement?

**Mikee** - How is the law operationalized? Who decides who gets to change their documents? If a person decides they no longer want be transgender can they change back? The current debate about the DSM diagnosis - most transwomen in the Phillipines do not support it, but many transmen do because it legitimizes their existence and means they are real.

**Marcelo** - What is "creative activism"? Emiliano answered: It is going beyond legalism, pushing for broader principles. Using social media and television interventions to emphasize the positive joyful aspects of trans\* life instead of negative images. Also, broad outreach to get the support of unions, academic and student sectors.





## Trans issues at the regional and international human rights system - **Tamara Adrian**



**Tamara Adrian** (Venezuela) is a lawyer who graduated from the Andrés Bello Catholic University. She further obtained a Doctorate degree in Law and a Diploma in Comparative Law from the Paris Institute of Comparative Law. As a transsexual lesbian woman, she has constantly been involved in promoting the recognition and protection of the civil and human rights of lesbian, gays, transsexual, transgender and intersexual people. She is the author of the drafted Gender Identity Law, a Civil Partnership Law, and a Non Discrimination Law and a Civil Registry Law and an active participant in many of the lead legal movements in the country concerning gender and sexual diversity issues. She has proposed successful amendments to the Venezuelan constitution in 2007 about LGBTI rights, that were further reproduced in the Ecuadorian and in the Bolivian constitutions as of 2008 and 2009.

Tamara summarized debates about transsexual rights at the level of regional and international human rights systems. She emphasized the need for “hard data” and “extensive research” as fundamental to petitions related to equal rights and affirmative actions to overcome discriminatory laws or public policies and to modify public perception. She gave various examples of the intersections of activism and research in the Yogyakarta Principles, American Organization of Human Rights, UN General Assembly, Commission of Human Rights, and World Health Organization explaining how activism and research are both prerequisites for social change.

One main element of the current scenario is that the un-holly alliance –made up of the Vatican, Russia, China, Africa, Iran, and other countries – uses the rhetoric of “social and cultural divergences” and “traditional cultural values” in order to fight against the “universality” of human rights. In her view the human rights debates around LGBT issues, including trans rights, are at a crucial crossroads because the fundamentalists have joined together at this level and without “strong scientific evidence” the fight against these regressive forces will be very difficult.

### **Some key questions triggered by the presentation were:**

**Sonia & Ros** – Reminded that the un-Holly Alliance has been in place since the 1990’s, even though its composition may have changed. They also expressed their skepticism about how useful research evidence is in countering dogmatic religious actors because their basis of reasoning is entirely in faith and not scientific doubt or empirical proof. In fact it is interesting to remind perhaps that these actors know very well how to use sexuality research and theory against rights. One example was the distorted transcription of Anne-Fausto Sterling’s paper on five genders that appeared in leaflets distributed by the Christian right wing in the preparatory process for Beijing in 1995 to contest the use of the term gender in a UN document.

**Eugenia** – Research evidence is useful vis-à-vis groups that are already partly persuaded. But from my experience what really matters in these spaces is politics, the political presence of voices that may





contest religious dogmatism and directly battle with them for state positions. In UN processes, our political presence is much more than scientific papers and research findings. It is the number of people that matter. In other words, it is politics.

**Dawn** – One problem or challenge we face in these spaces is that we remain caught up within the confines of SOGI & rights issues, when we need to be elsewhere in the negotiations among states. We needed to be in the conversations about the Durban conference on racism. We should be working in development, trade, economics because this is where the states' main interests are.

## DAY 4 – Thursday, March 21, 2013

### Reflecting on what has been learned



On Thursday Ros Petchesky presented a recapturing of seven themes, questions and challenges that had either been presented or had emerged during the first three days.

- **Politics** – What do we mean by “politics,” the “political,” “politicization” & “depoliticization”? Components: Power relations and conflict (what counts as power? When is conflict productive or counter-productive?) Visibility in public space (who counts as visible? What is “public”?) Resistance (what forms most effective for political change?) Spatial frameworks (official/state institutions and sites, UN & other

IGOs, popular gatherings, “lateral” processes, etc.) Friends & enemies (how to identify them? In which contexts?)

- **Representation** – Who is entitled to speak for whom? Who represents “civil society” in national or international contexts? To what extent should legal or legislative campaigns attempt to be inclusive or consultative, how, and of whom? Is it important to ask not only who can speak but also who can be heard? When is performative representation (being there) critical? Do we have models or best practices of democratic political change?
- **Language and Political Framings** – Is there a dominant discourse on sexuality? How should activists in the global south address, adapt, ignore or counter unfamiliar or non-indigenous discourse and terminology coming from the global north? How to develop locally appropriate language? Do terms mean the same thing in different contexts? Is sexuality a universal epistemological and ontological category or historically and geographically specific? How can we vernacularize the language of “rights” or make our language “sexier”?

How to move beyond the “victim”-“agent” binary, especially with regard to sex workers? What is the appeal of victimization rhetoric, and how do doctors, therapists, researchers, politicians, and feminists contribute to perpetuating this rhetorical framing? Does “victim” stance win greater recognition from donors, policy-makers, and conservative forces?

- **Law and Its Limits** – How can we use the law and human rights approaches most effectively? What are the limits of legal strategies, especially with regard to defining identity categories? What are the problems posed by criminal law, and why has there been a pervasive turn to criminalization (punitive approaches) by both conservative and some LGBT and feminist groups? What is the relationship between legal change and social change? Does one precede the other, or is there a dialectical or mutually reinforcing dynamic here?
- **Homonationalism & Aid Conditionality** – Why are northern governments like U.S. and U.K. invoking strong policies of support for LGBT rights and threatening punitive actions, such as withholding foreign aid, against countries that pass homophobic laws? How should

sexual rights activists respond? Are these expressions of support friendly or insidious, or are their political meanings context-specific (situational)? Can we avoid traps of homonationalist diplomacy or cooptation through multi-issue approaches and broad coalitions that link SOGI and SRHR issues to development, employment, countering racism and militarization?

- **Gender and Sexuality** – What is the relationship—distinctions and overlaps—between them? Are campaigns and strategies that divide them a practical necessity or a political compromise? Why are people so receptive to fundamentalist discourses about them? Why are we ourselves often still trapped in a gender-binary discourse? Should we be moving to different language—away from “gender identity” to “gender expression” or “condition”?
- **Uses of Research, Data and Evidence** – Where and why do research, evidence, and theory matter and for whom? What counts as evidence? For whom should we be producing research—governments? Policy-makers? Donors? Our own communities? What are the difficulties and discontents of participatory research? Why do some kinds of evidence (e.g., biomedical) seem to carry more weight than others? Is the importance of research strategic or situational? Should we devote more time to telling our own narratives, documenting and assessing our political work? How should we be countering fundamentalist positions? Is it important to defend sexual and gender rights, not only with empirical evidence but also with normative arguments?

### How does media use or fail to use research in sexuality? - *Claudia Antunes*

Claudia Antunes is Brazilian and has worked in journalism for the last thirty years. She began her career at the TV Manchete and Jornal do Brasil newspaper. In Folha de São Paulo, one of the main Brazilian newspapers, she was the international editor for a number of years and later on the chief reporter in Rio de Janeiro. Today, Claudia works for the monthly magazine Piauí.



This session revolved around the participation of the Brazilian journalist Claudia Antunes who listed a few obstacles that she identified in relation to sexuality in the media.

The first she acknowledged is that the large majority of people working in the media do not have enough knowledge about sexuality. Furthermore, at least in the case of Brazil and the media companies she has worked with, journalists tend to have “liberal” positions in relation to sexual matters, liberal in the sense that everyone is free to make decisions about their own sexuality in the domain of their private life. As a result, they mistakenly tend to think that everybody in society shares that notion and sometimes they are surprised to learn that that this is not the case. This also implies that the journalist and the media at large tend to report on sexuality related violations in other places, in particular Africa, Asia or Islamic countries and somehow resist recognizing that similar situations also occur in Brazil. Furthermore the agenda of the mainstream media is often pre-determined by editors and today individual reporters and journalists do not have not much room to exercise their autonomy.



On the other hand researchers and activist do not always have the necessary expertise to deal with the media.

Despite these many constraints, Claudia considers that alternative media outlets and social media in particular is rapidly transforming these conditions. To illustrate she mentioned the case of the election of a racist, sexist and homophobic pastor to the Commission on Human Rights and Minorities of the House of Representatives that took place a couple of weeks before. It did not capture the attention of the mainstream media for almost two weeks, but the mobilization against the pastor intensified quickly on Facebook leading the major news papers and even TV channels to finally pick up the issue and conduct an in depth analysis of the factors that influenced his election.



## Day 5 – Friday, March 22

### Concluding exercises

The final stage of the training was designed for participants to discuss in small groups emblematic cases focusing on how theory, research and change is articulated or disconnected in their own experiences. These collective discussions were synthesized and presented in the Power Points and short texts compiled in the Training Resource Folder posted on the hot site.

Eventually the emblematic cases exercise will be revised and published in another format.



## Annex: Other people involved in the Training

### *Training Coordinators*

**Sonia Corrêa** (Brazil) completed her undergraduate studies in Architecture and a post-grad in Anthropology in the early 1970's. Since then she has been involved in research and advocacy activities related to gender equality, health and sexuality. Between 1992 and 2009 she was the research and advocacy coordinator for sexual and reproductive health and rights at DAWN – Development Alternatives with Women for a new Era – a Global South feminist network. In this capacity, she closely followed a series of United Nations negotiations that directly impacted gender and sexuality related matters: the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD – Cairo 1994), the IV World Conference on Women (IV WCW –Beijing, 1995) and also the five and ten years year review processes of these conferences. Since 2002 with Richard Parker, I co-chair Sexuality Policy Watch (SPW), a global forum comprised of researchers and activists engaged in the analyses of global trends in sexuality related policy and politics and in 2006 that is sponsoring the training. In 2006, I have also co-chaired the expert meeting that finalized the Yogyakarta Principles. I have lectured in various academic institutions and extensively published in Portuguese and English. The list of her writings includes, among other, *Population and Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives from the South* (Zed Books, 1994) and *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights* co-authored with Richard Parker and Rosalind Petchesky (Routledge, 2008).

**Richard Parker** (Brazil/USA) is Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and Anthropology and Director of the Center for the Study of Culture, Politics and Health at Columbia University, Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Global Public Health*, as well as Director and President of ABIA, the Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association. Together with Sonia Corrêa, he serves as Co-Chair of Sexuality Policy Watch (SPW). He is the author of more than 200 publications on various aspects of sexuality, HIV and AIDS, health and human rights.

## *Logistical team*

**Alana Kolundzija** (Brazil/USA) has an MPH from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Her studies have converged on the political and socioeconomic factors that shape health worldwide especially in relation to gender and reproductive health and she is particularly interested in applying a human rights approach to address the underlying structural forces that shape sexual health. She has been working at the Center for the Study of Culture, Politics, and Health and Sexuality Policy Watch since 2010. Alana is also involved with a large-scale research project that is analyzing potential genetic contributions to sexual orientation in males.

**Jandira Queiroz** (Brazil) is a queer activist for social justice and sexual rights, active within LGBT and feminist social movements globally. She's a journalist and has worked with various international non-governmental organizations for human, social, economic and environmental rights. Since 2008, she lives in Rio, where she spent three years working with Sexuality Policy Watch, has been a consultant to a number of campaigns and organizations for LGBT rights in Latin America and beyond, and more recently took part in PRA research project about how the U.S. Christian Right have been inciting homophobia across the globe. Currently, she's working as advisor to the Brazilian National Rapporteur for the Right to Sexual and Reproductive Rights. She is also one of the directors of NAMI - Feminist Network of Urban Art and is part of Akahatá, a Latin America working group formed by activists for sexual rights from a human rights perspective.

**Marina Maria** (Brazil, Sexuality Policy Watch) is a Journalist and concluded a Master degree in Communication, Information and Health, at Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She has different professional experiences in social research and institutional communication activities including: communication and public relations consultancies using multi-platform tools; production and revision of newsletters, blogs, reports etc.; civil society organization project coordinator and consultant; website and social network management;



research development; public policy analysis; advocacy for human rights, diversity and accessibility. She is also an activist for human rights.

### ***Photo and video documentation***

**Vagner Almeida** (Brazil/USA, Columbia University) is currently a Staff Associate in the Program on Gender, Sexuality and Sexual Health in Latino Communities and Cultures in the Center for Gender, Sexuality and Health in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. He is also Project Coordinator (Youth & Sexual Diversity) at Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association (ABIA, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), activist, writer, theatre director, actor, theatre critic, and video director. His work has focused on the social and cultural construction of gender and sexuality, the social aspect of HIV/AIDS, and the relationship between social inequality, health and disease.

### ***Other participants***

**Akshay Khanna** (India) is a Member of the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). S/he works on the intersections of anthropology, activism and development praxis and is a Founder Member of Prism, a Delhi-based queer activist collective, and has worked as a Human Rights Lawyer, focusing on issues arising out of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and contributed to drafting the law against domestic violence in India.

**Horacio Sívori** (Brazil/Argentina) is an Anthropologist, trained in Argentina and Brazil. He has conducted field research and published on gay sociality, sexual rights and AIDS activism. His current research looks at LGBT rights activism in Argentina and Brazil. He is a Postdoctoral fellow at IMS/UERJ, the institute for Social Medicine, State University of Rio de Janeiro, and Regional Coordinator for the Latin American Centre on Sexuality and Human Rights.



**Jaya Sharma** (India) is a queer, feminist activist based in Delhi, India. She is a founding member of PRISM, a forum which seeks to raise awareness related to same sex sexualities that fall outside the heterosexual norm, and to interrogate the norm itself. Her work has primarily involved engaging with other progressive groups and movements towards enabling them to recognize and respond to queer issues as an intrinsic part of their agenda. She is also a founding member of Niranta, a women's NGO working on issues of gender and education. Jaya has been a part of the women's movement in India for the past two decades.

**Rachel Thomas** (USA) is a senior program officer with the Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP), part of the Open Society Foundations' Public Health Program. She has worked with SHARP since 2005 to promote human rights-based approaches to advancing the health of people who are marginalized because of their sexual practices or gender identity. Her work includes projects to document and reduce human rights abuses experienced by sex workers from police and in health care settings, building the evidence base for law and policy reform related to sex work, and strengthening the capacity of and opportunities for sex worker groups and leaders to advocate on their own behalf. Prior to joining the Open Society Foundations, Rachel worked as a consultant with the World Bank's Health, Nutrition, and Population Division in Washington, D.C., and with Women's Campaign International in Philadelphia. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Turkmenistan. Thomas holds an MA in International Development from American University, with a concentration in Public Health.