

Women's Empowerment: What do Men have to do with it?

This panel co-organised by **Pathways of Women's Empowerment** and **BRIDGE** (based at the Institute of Development Studies)

Summary: This session is in talk show format and brings together a fiery group of feminists (both men and women) who want to talk about how we build links between men and women working for gender justice. The Dakar collective met at a conference on 'Politicizing Masculinities' in Dakar, Senegal in 2007.

Presenters: Henry Armas, Mbuyiselo Botha, Andrea Cornwall

Moderator: Samia Rahim.

Pathways of Women's Empowerment is an international research consortium funded by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID). Co-ordinated by the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, UK, the consortium is collectively run by six partners: BRAC University, Bangladesh; the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA), Ghana; Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK; the Nucleus for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies (NEIM) at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil; the Social Research Centre (SRC) at the American University in Cairo; and UNIFEM, who in turn work with partners within their regions. Our research seeks to ground emerging understandings of empowerment in women's everyday lives, trace the trajectories of policies affecting women's empowerment and explore promising stories of change to find out what works and why to advance gender justice and equality for all.

BRIDGE supports gender advocacy and mainstreaming efforts of policymakers and practitioners by bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and diverse gender information. BRIDGE was set up in 1992 as a specialised gender and development research and information service within the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), United Kingdom (UK). This was on the initiative of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) Working Party on Gender Equality (now the Gendernet). BRIDGE is one of a family of knowledge services from IDS.

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development - gender



Presenters/Moderator Bios:

Henry P. Armas is an Attorney with experience in human rights and development, with an emphasis on citizen participation, health, participatory education and gender. He is a founder member of GRUPAL – The Working Group for Participation in Peru – and a researcher in the Unit of Rights and Health at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru. Currently he is a Candidate to the M.A. in Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies - ISS in The Netherlands. He is a member of the Advisory Committees of BRIDGE and the Sexuality and Development project (Institute of Development Studies, UK). He has participated in different programmes in IDS, University of Sussex, Harvard University and Oñati University.

Mbuyiselo Botha joined Sonke in July 2008 as a One Man Can Coordinator. He worked extensively as the dissemination officer for the International Red Cross based in South Africa in the 80s. He was a founder member of the South African Men's Forum and is currently the secretary general of the Forum where he deals with issues of advocacy, training and community based structure building. Mbuyiselo's involvement with the forum has spanned from the dawn of democracy to date. He is also a member of the national steering committee for the planning of the annual activities for the 16 Days of activism against violence against women and children campaign. Mbuyiselo writes a weekly column called man to man talk for the national newspaper the Sunday Sun and is a frequent radio and television commentator on issues relating to the abuse of women and children in South Africa.

Andrea Cornwall is a Professorial Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, where she directs the DFID-funded Research Programme Consortium Pathways of Women's Empowerment. She has worked on issues of gender in development for many years. Recent publications include *Feminisms and Development: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges* (with Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead, Zed Books, 2007) and *The Politics of Rights: Dilemmas for Feminist Praxis* (with Maxine Molyneux, Routledge, 2008).

Samia Rahim is a researcher and women's and sexual rights activist. Her interests lie in exploring the politics around gender and sexuality as they intersect with race, class, ethnicity, abilities, religion, citizenship and culture. Committed to social justice, she wishes to investigate the shifting experiences of power and privilege, specifically in relation to expressions of self and identity. Samia studied Computer Science for her undergraduate degree in the US. She is currently working as a Research and Communications Officer at the Pathways of Women's Empowerment Research Programme in Dhaka. At Pathways, she has conducted research on women's engagement with religion and how it shapes their sense of femininity and self, and is now exploring how fantasy and pleasures are experienced by women through watching television.