

## International Women's Conference

### Women's Leadership in Health – Workshop 2

#### Women, Aids and Leadership

This powerful session led by Claire Shakya from DFID with Dr Alice Welbourn of the International Community of Women living with Aids (ICW) and Winnie Sseruma from Christian Aid.

Dr Welbourn used this quote from Martin Luther King to illustrate the importance of speaking out about HIV/AIDs:

*“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter”*

Whilst HIV/Aids affects both women and men, women are more vulnerable biologically, economically and socially. As well as being more likely to contract HIV (14 women for every 10 men in sub-saharan Africa) women are impacted in other ways e.g. as primary carers within the family or looking after orphaned grandchildren, this impacts on their ability to earn money or grow food leading to further poverty and risk.

Gender norms play a large part in this devastating epidemic and public health initiatives such as ante-natal testing can make things worse for women. The stigma of HIV/AIDs can be as devastating as the disease.

The ICW, Christian Aid and DFID are promoting educational campaigns and workshops to increase women's economic independence e.g. by combining micro-finance and education and by educating men and developing different models of masculinity. For more information visit [www.icw.org](http://www.icw.org) or <http://womenandaids.unaids.org>