



The Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies, UC San Diego

Facing political backlash: lessons learned from an intervention project and the social response to AIDS in Brazil

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3 PM, Deutz Room, Copley Building,

Institute of the Americas Complex, UC San Diego

Brazil has been internationally recognized for its successful response to HIV/AIDS. Its human rights based approach included a broad prevention program focused on condom use, universal access to testing, and subsequent care and treatment to all Brazilians since early 1990s. Unexpectedly, Brazil has now an emblematic case of backlash. The current challenges in the national and international political context evoke a broader reflection about how to develop and sustain responses to HIV driven by community needs and guaranteed through state responsibility. This presentation will describe key elements of the historical response to HIV/AIDS, and the more recent sociopolitical shifts in, for example, promoting sexuality education in schools. I will present results of an intervention-study in six cities that tested the acceptability and effects of a Multicultural Human Rights approach. The study showed that high school students initiate sexual activity at about 15 years old, 17% reported a homosexual experience, independent of their reported religiosity. Sexual violence is significant and prevention knowledge is insufficient. The acceptability of this project showed that at the local level, communities (students, parents and teachers) may not reflect national political leadership that defends the prohibition of gender and sexuality education in schools.



Vera Paiva is a Professor of the University of São Paulo (Social Psychology and Preventive Medicine departments). She has co-coordinated the Interdisciplinary Group for AIDS Prevention at USP since 1991, and has been a consultant to different United Nations bodies on HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health promotion. She served as a representative of civil society at the National Human Rights Commission of Brazil. (cepesp.fgv.br/en). Currently, she is a Visiting Scholar at CILAS, UC San Diego.

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