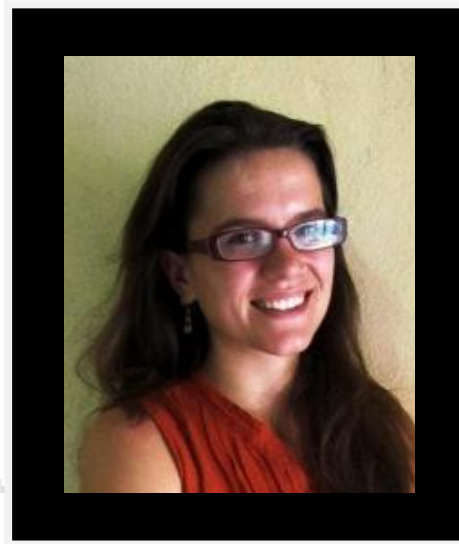


Rethinking Health and Peace: Providing Health Care in Post-War Burundi

What is the relationship between health and peace?

The sociomedical sciences help us understand how global health problems are influenced by social, political, economic, and psychological factors. Indeed, it is largely accepted by medical professionals today that large-scale social forces like poverty and gender inequality are two of the leading risks factors for HIV/AIDS. Likewise, the devastating impact of war on individual and public health is all too apparent.



Yet war, health, and peace exist within reciprocal relationships. In this talk, Alexandra Douglas speaks about her work as the program manager of the Friends Women's Association, a grassroots women's clinic in Kamenge, Burundi. Kamenge was one of Burundi's deadliest war zones during the 12-year civil war and still feels the effects of this violence today. The people of Kamenge face extreme poverty, the country's highest HIV/AIDS rate (16%), no healthcare, food insecurity, lack of potable water, and deep psychological trauma from the years of war. Alexandra argues that providing quality medical care in a location such as Kamenge requires both understanding the impact of war on community health *and* addressing the underlying causes of structural violence and inequality.

Alexandra then tells the story of the Friends Women's Association and its work to provide comprehensive community-based health care to women and their families, especially those women who are HIV-positive, to reinforce women's capacities to achieve their wellbeing, and to work towards the recovery of peace and health in Burundi.

About Alexandra Douglas

Alexandra Douglas is the program manager for the Friends Women's Association (FWA), a grassroots women's clinic focused on HIV/AIDS, sexual violence, and post-genocide trauma in Kamenge, Burundi. Alexandra came to FWA as an extended service volunteer of the African Great Lakes Initiative of the Friends Peace Teams after working in Washington D.C. with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Prior to that, she spent two years advocating with and doing research for sex workers and trafficked persons in Cochabamba, Bolivia, San Francisco, CA, and the Twin Cities, MN. Her work and passion are concentrated on the intersections between gender equality, community development, health access, and conflict.