



STORYTELLER

PROFILE

I am a communications expert, writer and photographer, living in London. My focus, over nearly five decades, has been on gender, health and development issues. As an older person I aim to bring my skills and experience to the challenge of creating an age-friendly world.

EDUCATION

Manchester University, MSc Structure and organisation of Science and Technology, 1977.

University of Natal, Durban, BSc Hons, 1973.

REFERENCES

Myles Ritchie, Senior Health Advisor, Mott MacDonald (2008-2024).
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**Selected work available to view
on my [website](#).**

Lesley Lawson

COMMUNICATIONS

Between 2008 and 2022 I was Communications and Knowledge Manager for four successive health and HIV programmes in eastern and southern Africa. These were health system strengthening programmes, managed by Mott MacDonald and funded by UK Aid. Working part-time from a London base, I developed and managed websites, wrote stories, case studies, blogs and reports, and oversaw the creation of infographics and short films. As part of a small team, I was continually engaged in project strategy and evaluation. Working with governments and nongovernmental organisations, we supported an ongoing process of driving evidence into action.

I have also written project reports for UNAIDS and other agencies involved in the treatment and prevention of HIV. Books include: Working Women, a project to support the South African trade union women's movement in the 1980s; Side Effects, a narrative account of South Africa's HIV epidemic; and Quiet Moments, a self-published memoir.

PHOTOGRAPHY

During the 1980s I was active in the social documentary photography movement in South Africa, working largely for educational projects, trade unions and other civil society organisations.

My work has appeared in many group exhibitions and publications, the most recent of which is A World History of Women photographers, Thames and Hudson, 2022.

WORK ON AGEING

In 2023 I began research on issues around healthy ageing, with the idea of writing an A to Z aimed at my ageing peers. On discovering the wealth of available material I have begun publishing my writing as a [blog](#) which is available on my website. I am a member of the Islington branch of the University of the Third Age and am currently helping with photographs of iU3a activities for their new website.

Lesley Lawson

CURRICULUM VITAE, SEPTEMBER 2024

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Higher education:

- BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- MSc, Liberal Studies in Science, University of Manchester, UK.

Work summary:

- Knowledge and Communications Manager: Better Health Programme, South Africa BHPSA (part-time). UK funded health system strengthening programme managed by Mott MacDonald. Work included newsletters, case studies, human interest stories, infographics, animations, technical summaries, commentaries (2019 – 2022).
- Knowledge and Communications Manager: Evidence for HIV Prevention, EHPSA (part-time). DFID-funded programme supporting HIV prevention research in eastern and southern Africa managed by Mott MacDonald. Work included newsletters, articles, evidence briefs, reports, infographics, photography, website content and management, social media (2014 – 2018).
- Knowledge and Communications Manager: RRHF and SARRAH, DFID-funded health system strengthening programmes managed by Mott MacDonald (part time). Included articles, evidence briefs, reports, editing, film making, photography, website content and management (2008 – 2014).
- Consultant: writer, editor, multimedia, communications in HIV and health (2004-).

Earlier work: Freelance researcher, director, producer of television and educational films (1990-2001). Freelance photographer, writer and editor serving the NGO sector in South Africa (1980-1994). Writer, editor and photographer for the SACHED TRUST, a Johannesburg NGO specialising in distance education for out-of-school youth (1976-1984). Lecturer in Applied Science Department, Natal College for Advanced Technical Education, Durban, South Africa (1974).

HEALTH AND HIV (SELECTED)

- UNAIDS Fast Track Cities five-year report, 2023/4.
- Bid writing, Mott MacDonald, 2023/4.
- UNAIDS Country Summary Reports, 2020.
- Cities on the road to success. UNAIDS. August 2019.
- Fast-track cities, one-year report. UNAIDS. December 2018.
- The Health4Men Initiative. Report and five technical briefs. Anova Health Institute. September 2016.
- Leading the way. Botswana's Progress towards an HIV-free future. Best Practice publication for UNAIDS/GoB, June 2016.
- Changing Lives – how the SARRAH programme has supported health reform in South Africa. Film. 30 minutes. May 2014.
- Review of Treatment Action Campaign: Impact and effectiveness of advocacy and communications, 2010-2013. SARRAH. July 2013.
- Ending AIDS in Lesotho. Documentation of Lesotho Investment Case. TSF, December 2013.

- Creating Hope, the story of MTCT-Plus. Narrative account of the world's first multi-country HIV treatment programme, ICAP, 2011.
- Rapporteur, UNAIDS, 2008: Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, Conveners Meeting, Geneva, May 2008; First meeting of 2031 Programmatic Response Cluster, Geneva, May 2008; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, Expert Panel, Geneva, April, 2008.
- Task shifting. Researcher/writer for World Health Organisation (WHO/HIV), concept papers, journal articles, 2006-2007.
- Treat, Train, Retain – AIDS and health workforce initiative. Researcher/writer for WHO/HIV. Four background papers for Consultation in Geneva, May 2006. Rapporteur for Consultation.
- Consultant, UK Department for International Development (DFID) Global AIDS Policy team (January – March 2005; August – November 2005).
- HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: The status and impact of the three diseases (researcher/writer, with Hein Marais) The Global Fund, Geneva March 2005.
- 2004 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic. UNAIDS, Geneva, July 2004) – Contributing researcher/writer, sections on prevention, vulnerable groups, orphans, emergencies, gender and youth.
- Living Proof. Community Action on AIDS. International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Brighton, July 2004 (10-year anniversary report).

PUBLICATIONS, (SELECTED)

- Quiet moments in the Struggle. eBook. BLURB, April 2019.
- Side Effects. The story of AIDS in South Africa. Juta/Double Storey, Cape Town, February 2008.
- Working women - a portrait of South Africa's black women workers. Photographs and text. (SACHED/ Ravan Press, 1985. Pluto Press, 1986) (Book)

Articles and photographs have been published in many South African publications such as Leadership, Millennium, Mail & Guardian, Sash, Learn and Teach, Sunday Times Magazine.

The illustrated article, Crying on the Hard Shoulder (Millennium, V 17, 1999) received the Mondi Award for Essays/Non-fiction in 1999. Side Effects was long listed for the Alan Paton award in 2009.

Photography has been reviewed and included in the following recent publications.

- A World History of Women Photographers. Thames and Hudson, 2022.
- Rise and Fall of Apartheid. Okwui Enwezor, Rory Bester. ICP, Delmonico, Prestel. 2013.
- Photography and Africa. Erin Haney. Reaktion books, 2010.
- Defiant Images. Photography and apartheid South Africa. Darren Newbury, 2009, UNISA Press.
- Women by Women. 50 years of women's photography in South Africa. Edited by Robin Comley, George Hallett and Neo Ntsoma (Wits University Press, 2006)

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- Defiant Visions (Apexart, New York, 2023).
- Between the states of emergency (Mandela Foundation, Johannesburg, 2015-2016).
- Rise and Fall of Apartheid. (ICP, New York; Munich; Johannesburg 2013-2015).
- Through a lens darkly (Six portfolios by South African photographers, SA National Gallery, 1993).
- Schwarz Weiss (Group exhibition, Berlin, 1991).
- The Hidden Camera (Group exhibition, Amsterdam, 1987).
- Nichts wurd uns trennen (Group exhibition, Germany, 1984/5).
- The Cordoned Heart (Group exhibition, Cape Town, New York, London 1984-1986).
- Culture and resistance (Group exhibition, Gaborone, 1982).
- Survivors. Solo exhibition (Market theatre, Johannesburg, 1982).

FILM AND TELEVISION (SELECTED)

- Changing Lives. How the SARRAH programme has supported health reform in South Africa. (SARRAH, 30 minutes). Director, producer, 2014.
- 6000 a day...an account of a catastrophe foretold. A history of the AIDS pandemic. 52-minute documentary for Arte, Consultant, 2001
- Living on the line. 90-minute documentary for Channel 4. Presenter Jon Snow. Winner of Lifestyle Award at the 2000 One World Broadcasting Trust Award ceremony. Associate producer and shoot photographer, 2000.
- Apartheid's children. 38 minutes, Dispatches, Channel 4.]Winner of UNICEF award at the 1999 One World Broadcasting Trust Award ceremony.Producer, 1999.
- Mashayabhuqe, AIDS hits everyone. 52- minute documentary for etv, South Africa. Director, 1996.
- God Bless Africa. Three-part history of the Christian missionaries in SA for SABC. 52 minutes each. Director, 1994
- Roots of Struggle. Episode 1 of ANC history. Made for ANC Publicity and Information, later broadcast on MNet, SABC, 52mins. 1994