

# Gender & Women's Studies Colloquium Spring 2018

Thursday, February 22  
3:45 pm  
3401 Sterling Hall



## Nancy Kendall

Professor of Educational  
Policy Studies  
University of Wisconsin – Madison

### **“Is Girls’ Education Dangerous? Girl-Focused Education and Sexual Health Interventions in International Development”**

Over the past three decades, governments and international development organizations have largely converged around the argument that promoting girls’ education is both an essential equity issue, and also a smart investment for the girl, her family, her country, and the world. More-educated girls are expected to accomplish/embody a broad range of development goals, from having smaller families, to staying HIV-free, to being better protectors of the environment, to being more productive farmers, to being better mothers. This understanding of girls’ education has been rightly critiqued for placing responsibility for “saving the world” on marginalized girls themselves, and for being incorrect in its estimations of the actual effects of schooling on, for example, pregnancy rates. This presentation turns to a different line of critique I think needs to be leveled against current girls’ international development efforts: their impact on sexual health and contraceptive discourses and practices among international development organizations, particularly the U.S., and countries that have aligned with the U.S. to silence and criminalize discussion about and active support for free and safe contraception, abortion, and sexual and reproductive health information. Working through the case of girls’ education support in Malawi, the presentation will explore the intended and unintended consequences of substituting support for girls’ right to education in favor of support for girls’ contraceptive and reproductive health rights. In so doing, it questions the developmentalist fairy tales underlying current accounts of the “power of girls’ education”, and the particular morality politics that support for girls’ education entails in some countries.

Sponsored by the  
Center for Research on Gender and Women  
For more information call 263-2053, or email [crgw@lets.wisc.edu](mailto:crgw@lets.wisc.edu)  
[crgw.gws.wisc.edu](http://crgw.gws.wisc.edu)

Wheelchair accessible, free, and open to the public.

CENTER FOR RESEARCH  
ON GENDER & WOMEN

