

## **North American HIA Workshop Held**

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We are pleased to announce the success of the first ever North American HIA Practitioners' Workshop, held 24-26 September 2008 in Oakland, California, USA.

The workshop, which was attended by 20 participants from the USA, Canada, Jamaica and—surprisingly—Australia, focused on evolving the practice of HIA in the Americas and on identifying unique regional attributes.

Through individual presentations, break-out sessions and whole- group discussions, participants were able to a) develop a list of challenges that HIA practitioners face in the areas of values and principles, regulatory integration, and evidence and analytic methods; b) summarize key areas that needed attention; and c) develop a list of action items to move the field forward.

Notably, the use of PowerPoint was banned—a strategy that we highly recommend to other groups seeking to foster dialogue! Small groups are continuing to work on the identified issues, and will be reporting back to the whole group periodically. Overall, this was a very rewarding and rejuvenating experience. Many participants had commented that they felt isolated, as there are so few HIA practitioners in the Americas. One of the greatest successes of the workshop may have been the opportunity for collaboration and sharing that it fostered.

The workshop was organized by Marla Orenstein and Murray Lee (Habitat Health Impact Consulting, Canada); Rajiv Bhatia and Lili Farhang (San Francisco Department of Public Health, USA); Jonathan Heller (Human Impact Partners, USA); and Aaron Wernham (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, USA).

HIA practitioners who would like more details about the workshop or who wish to be informed about future events should contact [ame-lia@habitatcorp.com](mailto:ame-lia@habitatcorp.com).