



**Bronwen Gillespie**

# Making sense of micronutrients Mothers' views from Guatemala and Peru

**Peru and Guatemala** face high rates of child malnutrition, especially in rural predominantly indigenous areas. Multi-sector nutrition strategies are in various phases of implementation, which include the widespread distribution of multi-micronutrient supplements (sprinkles) through public health services. Based on fieldwork with rural mothers in the Ch'orti' region of Guatemala and the Quechua-speaking Andes in Peru, this seminar will focus on local response to supplementation programs, for which lack of adherence is an on-going concern. It will be argued that sprinkles are not rejected on cultural grounds, as oft assumed by public health practitioners, but rather limited by conditions of poverty, mediated by women's relationship with the state, and how these programs feed into their existing fears and desires for their families. Many women face a limited degree of decision-making space. Their experiences invite us to raise questions regarding the potential for these mother-centred programs as well as for the underlying medicalised approach to food scarcity.

**Bronwen Gillespie** has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Sussex. Her research draws on Quechua-speaking women's experience as recipients of state programmes and services in the rural Andes to explore contradictions in public health and social policy. Recent publications include 'Negotiating nutrition: Sprinkles and the state in the Peruvian Andes' in *Women's Studies International Forum*. She has extensive NGO experience in the areas of public health, nutrition and rural development, primarily in Latin America. Most recent projects have included work on refugees' access to public health services in Europe, gender equity actions in Cuba and perceptions surrounding nutrition programs in Guatemala, as an independent consultant.

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12 – 13:30

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