10th International

AIDS Economics Network Pre- Conference (IAEN)

JULY 20-21, 2018

Academic Medical Centre

Amsterdam, Netherlands


# INTRODUCTION

The 10th International AIDS Economics Network (IAEN) pre-conference took place on July 20-21, 2018. It was hosted for the IAEN by the Joep Lange Institute (JLI) in Amsterdam ([www.joeplangeinstitute.org](http://www.joeplangeinstitute.org)).[[1]](#footnote-1) The sponsors of this meeting included Gilead Sciences, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNAIDS, the World Bank, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the Global Health Cost Consortium (GHCC).

The meeting was launched by the current President and Founder of the IAEN, Steven Forsythe. Dr. Forsythe noted that the IAEN is now 25 years old, which makes it older than either PEPFAR or the Global Fund. He noted also that the IAEN was launched from quite modest beginnings, with a mere handful of researchers declaring themselves to be “AIDS economists”. Currently the IAEN has over 7,500 members and is the main outlet for disseminating cutting edge research on issues related to AIDS and economics.

The theme of the pre-conference was “Sustainable AIDS Response: Results in the Era of Shrinking Donor Funding” and it preceded the International AIDS Conference held in Amsterdam from July 23-27, 2018. This two-day meeting considered practical solutions to financing the epidemic in the post-MDGs era. While there are several initiatives globally working towards solutions, the pre-conference served a special purpose in bringing together economic decision-makers, researchers and stakeholders.

The meeting included presentations of specially commissioned papers on key questions that explored innovative, country-led approaches for supporting affected countries and how to prioritize, sustain and lead their national investments in HIV and AIDS responses. Papers selected from an open call were presented in the plenary and as posters. There were two themed sessions organized by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the Global Health Cost Consortium (GHCC) (GHCC is based at the University of Washington and is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

Over the two days there were 97 participants who participated in the meeting. Six keynote speakers spoke over the two days. The meeting was able to invite senior figures from the AIDS response for keynote presentations, including Ambassador Birx (PEPFAR), Tim Martineau (UNAIDS), Ade Fakoya (Global Fund), Mark Dybul (Georgetown University), Michiel Heidenrijk (Joep Lange Institute) and Ambassador Lambert Grijns (the Dutch Government).

Out of 74 abstracts that were submitted to the IAEN globally, 36 presentations were made during the preconference. The main areas of focus included the economics of treatment (4 presentations), voluntary medical male circumcision (4 presentations), HIV testing and counselling (4 presentations) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (2 presentations). The IAEN co-sponsors generously provided financial resources to support 19 participants, most from the developing world. Nearly 60% of the technical presentations were by individuals from developing countries (21/36) and half of the presentations were made by women (18/36).

One output of this meeting will be a special issue of the African Journal of AIDS Research. This issue will be guest edited by Dr. Steven Forsythe of Avenir Health and the President of the IAEN and Dr. Iris Semini of UNAIDS. In addition, where permission is given, IAEN has uploaded presentations from the preconference to our website ([www.iaen.org](http://www.iaen.org)) and our LinkedIn Group (International AIDS Economics Network) so that individuals and organizations globally can review the latest research in the area of HIV/AIDS and economics.

The following brief report outlines the program over the two days and includes comments from the participants. The list of participants is in Annex 1. Rather than producing an extensive document that is read by relatively few people we are pointing interested parties to the IAEN website and will send out notices when the special issue is produced.

**Day 1 Friday, July 20, 2018**

**WELCOME**

* Michiel Heidenrijk , Executive Director Joep Lange Institute and Amsterdam Health & Technology Institute

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

* Ambassador Deborah Birx, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy
* Mark Dybul, Georgetown University Medical Center,
* Tim Martineau, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director

# **SESSION 1**

* **Nthabiseng Khoza**, National Department of Health, “Funding the NSP in South Africa: Assessing alignment of partners’ support to the National Strategy through past expenditure trend analysis”
* **Shepherd Nyamhuno**, University of South Africa, “Evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the HIV test and treat program in Zimbabwe”
* **Miranda Tao**, IHME, “The end of the golden age of HIV/AIDS funding? Trends in HIV/AIDS spending by financing source and spending category in 188 countries, 2000-2015”
* **Lyubov Teplitskaya**, HP+, “Advocating for Government Financing of Transitioning HIV Services in Indonesia through Improved Subnational Resource Needs Estimates”
* **Sithabiso Masuku**, HERO, “The Impact of dolutegravir in first-line adult ART on HIV transmission and cost of HIV in South Africa”

# **SESSION 2 Special Panel: Global Health Cost Consortium**

* **Carol Levin**, University of Washington, “Global Health Cost Consortium: improving the availability and use of HIV and TB cost data to support global health targets”
* **Anna Vassall**, LSHTM, “A Reference Case for Global Health Costing”
* **Drew Cameron**, University of California, Berkeley, “Drivers of Unit Cost Variation in Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Meta-Regression Analysis”
* **Carlos Pineda-Antunez**, INSP, “Filling in the Gaps: Analysis of VMMC Unit Costs Using Aggregated, Facility-Level Primary Data from Several Studies”
* **Sergio Bautista**, INSP “Analysis of VMMC unit cost variation and determinants using facility level, primary data from several studies”
* **Willyanne DeCormier Plosky**, Avenir Health, “How Much Does It Cost? Development of an HIV/TB Unit Cost Study Repository and UCost Tool”

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# **SESSION 3**

* **Damien de Walque**, The World Bank, “The post-intervention effects of conditional cash transfers for HIV/STI prevention: a randomized trial in rural Tanzania”
* **Lise Jamieson**, HERO/University of the Witwatersrand, “The impact of differential uptake by HIV risk group on the effect and cost-effectiveness of pre-exposure prophylaxis in young adults, adolescents, pregnant women and female sex workers in South Africa”
* **Iris Semini**, UNAIDS: “User fees and the AIDS Response – False economies and inequities”
* **Morris Edwards**, Ministry of Public Health of Guyana, “Sustaining the AIDS response in Guyana: Optimizing available resources for maximum impact”
* **Lyubov Teplitskaya**, HP+, “Innovative approaches for case-finding in the Central Asia Region: A cost-efficiency analysis of the peer-driven outreach (PDO), active case-finding (ACF), and prevention outreach model”

**Day 2 Saturday July 21, 2018**

# **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**Lambert Grijns,** Dutch Ambassador for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV/AIDS, “HIV Funding in Transition: Blessing or Burden? From Domestic Opportunities to Domestic Responsibilities”

**Michiel Heidenrijk,** Executive Director Joep Lange Institute, “HIV Transmission Elimination AMsterdam (H-team); a city-based approach”

**Ade Fakoya,** The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Sustainability: A Perspective from the Global Fund”

# **SESSION 4**

* **Gabriela Gomez**, LSHTM, “Reducing delivery systems bottlenecks: pre-exposure prophylaxis for female sex workers in South Africa”
* **Jason Ong**, LSHTM, “Men disliked lotteries for the promotion of voluntary medical male circumcision service: a discrete choice experiment of men in Tanzania”
* **Sergio Torres-Rueda**, LSHTM, “Discontinuing cotrimoxazole preventive therapy in ART-stable HIV-positive adults in Uganda: an economic evaluation”
* **Matthew Quaife**, LSHTM, “How do financial incentives to supply condomless sex among female sex workers in South Africa affect the potential impact of HIV prevention products?”
* **Anna Vassall,** LSHTM, “Incorporating constraints in resource allocation for infectious diseases: a case study of the cost-effectiveness of tuberculosis case finding in South Africa”

**SESSION 5**

* **Markus Haacker,** Harvard School of Public Health & UniversityCollege London, “Poverty as a Barrier in Access to Antiretroviral Therapy for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya”
* **Andrea Salas-Ortis**, INSP, “Optimizing resource allocation for HIV prevention programs: proof of concept of an analytical framework using data from Mexico”
* **Brooke Nichols**, University of the Witwatersrand and Boston University, “Prioritizing healthcare facilities for technical assistance to increase HIV treatment uptake: results from EQUIP Health”
* **Lyubov Teplitskaya**, HP+, “What Will It Take for Ghana to Achieve 90-90-90: Costing an Enhanced HIV Treatment Cascade”
* **Anthony Kinghorn**, University of the Witwatersrand, “Using information on ART costs and benefits to mobilise resources – comparing different methods and contexts”

# **SESSION 6**

* **Sindi Putri**, Indonesia AIDS Coalition, “Effective CSO-government engagement on domestic HIV budgets: Case examples from Indonesia”
* **Annie Haakenstad**, Harvard University, “How has domestic HIV/AIDS financing responded to declines in development assistance for HIV/AIDS?”
* **Charles Birungi**, Botswana (UNAIDS), “Long-term liabilities of HIV financing = debt sentence? The fiscal impact of HIV in Uganda”
* **Till Barnighausen**, Heidelberg University, “Costs and Service Delivery Modalities”
* **Tobias Rinke de Wit**, JLI, “Mobile healthcare exchange platforms to increase efficiency in HIV financing and treatment”

# **SESSION 7**

* **Katharina Hauck**, Imperial College, “Costs of two Rounds of Home-based HIV Testing and Counselling in Zambia: Evidence from the HPTN 071(PopART) study”
* **Gavin George**, University of KwaZulu-Natal, “Wealth and age-disparate sex: An examination of the socio-economic profiles of men in age-disparate partnerships with young women in South Africa”
* **Linda Sande**, Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome trust Clinical Research Programme, “Exploring the drivers of User Costs as a barrier to accessing HIV Testing from Rural Malawi”
* **Damien de Walque**, The World Bank, “The impact of performance-based financing on the delivery of HIV testing, prevention of mother to child transmission and antiretroviral delivery in the Cameroon health system”
* **Lawrence Mwenge**, Zambart, “Comparison of HIV self-testing (HIVST) distribution models in Zambia: potential for impact and sustainability”

**Conclusion**

The 10th IAEN meeting was successful in bringing economic themes to the IAS conference. All scholarship recipients were funded to attend both the preconference and the main IAS conference (many of these economists had presentations at both meetings ).

There are two parts to reporting on a meeting such as this pre-conference. The first is administrative: how was the organization, did we attract the right participants, did the meeting stick to the schedule, was the meeting on budget? The second is on content and impact: were the presentations relevant, what were the key messages, was it interesting, did we develop capacity, and how will we ensure continuity?

The meeting was certainly successful on the first metric. This was due in no small part to the hard work of the staff of the JLI and Nick Zebryk, who was employed as the point person for the conference organization. In the run up to the conference the organizing committee of Steven Forsythe, Iris Semini, Alan Whiteside, Robert Greener, Nick Zebryk, Inez de Ridder and Jacques van der Gaag, met virtually once a week for months. The process of sending the abstracts for scoring and collating the scores was handled by Nick Zebryk. All financial issues were monitored and managed by the IAEN Treasurer, John Stover.

We believe the conference also met the metrics for content. The papers were interesting and some ground breaking. Partnering with the Global Health Cost Consortium and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine raised the profile of the meeting. The key note speakers are leaders in the field and their participation endorsed the meeting as well as sharing valuable insights with the delegates. With regard to impact, the availability of the majority of presentations on the website and the plans to produce a journal special issue will ensure the papers and ideas have continued uptake.

Perhaps the most important questions relate to the next steps. The IAEN functions as an information sharing hub and capacity development organization. In order for this to continue we need to develop and fund a three year workplan as we better position the IAEN to further develop the capacity of economists from developing countries.

We note that IAEN officers and council members are all volunteers and we need to consider succession and new members. Finally this meeting would not have been possible without the generous support of the sponsors, including Gilead Sciences, UNAIDS, the World Bank, LSHTM, GHCC.

Quotes from Participants

“I thought the preconference was good. I couldn’t stay for all of it but I liked the fact that there was much more on costing of prevention and of specific issues for key populations. I’m no expert on methods but from talks with other delegates there seemed to be a lot of interest in the costing consortium’s reference case so I’ll look into that when I’m back home.”

“This was my first time at an IAEN conference, and I have to say that it was such an experience. It was a pleasure to get to know what other health economists are doing around the world, as sometimes we have so much to share. Besides all the different knowledge learnt, I have to say that it is a magnificent space and opportunity, as a community, to influence policy process at the highest level. Congratulations, and thank you for the opportunity!”

“I think the meeting was very informative and it is great that we had two great keynote speakers and some very good discussions on a range of key topics. I think the meeting shall be further advertised and perhaps to be held on the IAS site for future meetings so that more could join. Overall I really enjoyed it and look forward to IAEN future meetings.”

# **APPENDIX A**

IAEN pre-conference list of attendees

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Email** |
| Ade | Fakoya |  |
| Alan | Whiteside | awhiteside@balsillieschool.ca |
| Andrea | Salas Ortiz | andrea.s@cisidat.org.mx |
| Angel | Algarin |  |
| Anna | Theuvenet |  |
| Anna | Vassall | Anna.Vassall@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Annie | Haakenstad | ahaakenstad@gmail.com  |
| Anthony | Kinghorn | anthony.kinghorn@gmail.com |
| Arjun | Vasan | arjun.vasan@treasury.gov |
| Brooke | Nichols | brooken@bu.edu |
| Carlos | Pineda-Antunez | carlos.pineda@cisidat.org.mx |
| Carol | D'Souza | carol.dsouza@theglobalfund.org |
| Carol | Levin | clevin@uw.edu  |
| Charles | Birungi | BirungiC@unaids.org |
| Charles | Pill | seapill@gmail.com |
| Collin | Mangenah | cmangenah1@gmail.com |
| Damien | De Walque | ddewalque@worldbank.org |
| Daniella | Brals | daniella.brals@gmail.com |
| Danielle | Parsons | Danielle@apmghealth.com  |
| Darryl | O'Donnell | Darryl.O'Donnell@afao.org.au |
| Dave | Burrows | db042042@gmail.com |
| Debora | Brix |  |
| Deepak | Mattur | MatturD@unaids.org |
| Diego | Cerecero | diego.cerecero@uabc.edu.mx |
| Ditte | Walhof |  |
| Don | Baxter | don.baxter@afao.org.au  |
| Drew | Cameron | drew.cameron@berkeley.edu |
| Elizabeth | Ohadi | eohadi@rti.org |
| Emma | Clarke | emmaclarke12@gmail.com  |
| Erik | Lamontagne | lamontagnee@unaids.org |
| Eurica | Palmer | eurica7@outlook.com |
| Fern | Terris-Prestholt | Fern.terris-prestholt@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Francesca | Elwen | francesca.elwen@gmail.com |
| Gabriel | Undelikwo |  |
| Gabriela | Gomez | gabriela.gomez@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Gavin | George | georgeg@ukzn.ac.za  |
| Geoff | Garnett |  |
| Gesine | Meyer-Rath | gesine@bu.edu  |
| Heather | Ingold | ingoldh@who.int |
| Hilmonsyah | Pajilt |  |
| Inez | de Ridder |  |
| Iris | Semini | seminii@unaids.org  |
| Ishdeep | Kohli | ishdeep@yahoo.com  |
| Jacques | Van der Gaag | jvdgaag1@gmail.com |
| Jacqui | Miot | jmiot@heroza.org |
| Jason | Ong | jason.ong@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Jeffrey | Sturchio |  |
| John | Stover | JStover@AvenirHealth.org  |
| Joost | Lina | j.lina@joeplangeinstitute.org |
| Jose Antonio | Izazola Licea | izazolaj@unaids.org |
| Katharina | Hauck | k.hauck@imperial.ac.uk |
| Katharine | Kripke | kkripke@avenirhealth.org |
| Lambert | Grijns |  |
| Lawrence | Long | lclong@bu.edu  |
| Lawrence | Mwenge | Lawrence@zambart.org.zm |
| Linda | Sande | linda.sande@lshtm.ac.uk  |
| Lise | Jamieson | ljamieson@heroza.org |
| Lyubov | Teplitskaya | Lyubov.teplitskaya@thepalladiumgroup.com |
| Maja | Esveld |  |
| Marc | d'Elbee | marc.delbee@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Marjorie | Opuni | opuniakml@gmail.com |
| Mark | Dybul |  |
| Markus | Haacker | mhaacker@hsph.harvard.edu |
| Matthew | Quaife | matthew.quaife@lshtm.ac.uk  |
| Mead | Over | mover@cgdev.org |
| Melissa | Kanias |  |
| Michael | Ruffner |  |
| Michiel | Heidenrijk |  |
| Miranda | Tao | ttc1994@uw.edu |
| Mit | Philips | mitphilips@hotmail.com |
| Morris | Edwards | moredwards@gmail.com  |
| Muhammad | Slamet |  |
| Nick | Zebryk | nzebryk@balsillieschool.ca |
| Nthabiseng | Khoza | nkhoza00@gmail.com |
| Nuri | Ahmed | nurilign.ahmed@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Pascale | Leroueil | lerouepr@umich.edu |
| Peggy | Van Leeuwen |  |
| Rebecca | Gupta-Lawrence | rebecca.gupta-lawrence@afao.org.au |
| Richard | Amenyah | amenyahr@unaids.org |
| Robert | Greener | ragreener@gmail.com |
| Roger | McLean | rmcleanuwi@yahoo.com |
| Sandra | Gip |  |
| Sedona | Sweeney |  |
| Sergio | Bautista-Arredondo | sbautista@insp.mx |
| Sergio | Torres-Rueda | Sergio.torresrueda@lshtm.ac.uk |
| Shannon | Larsen | shannon.larsen@gatesfoundation.org |
| Shepherd | Nyamhuno | snyamhuno@gmail.com |
| Shufang | Zhang | shufang.zhang@theglobalfund.org |
| Sindi | Putri | sindi@iac.or.id  |
| Sithabiso | Masuku | smasuku@heroza.org  |
| Sydney | Rosen | sbrosen@bu.edu |
| Till | Barnighausen | till.baernighausen@uni-heidelberg.de |
| Tim | Martineau |  |
| Tobias | Rinke de Wit | t.rinkedewit@pharmaccess.org |
| Tomas | Lievens | evana.archer@opml.co.uk |
| Valentina | Cambiano | v.cambiano@ucl.ac.uk |
| Willyanne | DeCormier Plosky | wdecormier@avenirhealth.org |

1. Dr. Joep Lange was a prominent Dutch doctor, scientist and activist. He was a pioneer in his academic field and ahead of his time in his drive to convert science into action. He was killed in the Malaysian airlines flight, shot down in over Ukraine in 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)