



## **IDRC at the XVI International AIDS conference**

**August 13-18, 2006**

**Toronto, Canada**

### **Evaluation Report**

**Report by Nasreen Jessani**  
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## **BACKGROUND**

The XVI international AIDS conference (IAC) took place in Toronto 13-18 August 2006. Approximately 26,000 delegates including scientists, health care providers, political, community and business leaders, journalists, government, non-governmental and intergovernmental representatives, and people living with HIV/AIDS attended. The hosting of such a large international event in Canada was an opportunity not to be missed.

### **IDRC's objectives for participation at the IAC were as follows:**

- **To increase IDRC and partners' visibility**
- **To share results of IDRC-supported research**
  - **Fill a gap by situating the IDRC research approach within broader HIV/AIDS discussions**
- **To provide opportunities for IDRC partners to network and build alliances**
  - **Link with new stakeholders, researchers, advocacy groups, donors**
- **To provide a forum for substantive reflection and debate**
  - **Test ideas and move the agenda forward**

The objectives highlighted above were the driving force behind the decision to participate at IAC. IDRC's presence, though modest, was multi-faceted. Through the involvement of PBDD, SID and five programme initiatives (GEH, GGP, EcoHealth, Acacia and ICA), IDRC organised two satellite sessions: and financially supported another two through the EcoHealth PI. These satellite sessions were documented in a rapporteur report contracted to *The Conference Publishers* in order to capture the session proceedings and the dialogue that ensued. In addition, IDRC shared a booth with CIET and with Research Matters (RM) in the Global Village where much of the networking, exposure, and material dissemination occurred.

Several media materials were produced, including project-specific videos by research partners, all of which were screened during the film festival at the Global Village and the Canadian Pavilion. IDRC also created a webpage dedicated to HIV/AIDS supported research over the years. The site highlights projects from all Programme Initiatives at IDRC that are involved in HIV/AIDS related research. The web site was captured onto a CD-ROM for distribution at the conference.

Members of the media interviewed staff and partners alike, therefore enhancing IDRC and our partners' profiles. About twenty AMARC journalists attended the conference and produced several media clips as a result of funding by IDRC. A reception hosted by IDRC allowed for networking between researchers, staff, partners, journalists and other donors.

IDRC representation consisted of 16 staff that attended for varying durations. The delegation consisted of Brent Herbert-Copley, Christina Zarowsky, Renaud DePlaen, Nasreen Jessani, Jennifer Pepall, Emmanuelle Dany, Isabelle Bourgeault-Tasse, Francine Bouchard, Anne-Marie Schryer-Roy, Marie-Claude Martin, Danielle St-Pierre, Dominique Charron, Adam Graham, Catherine Kilelu, Kate Press and Gillian Stressman. Direct and indirect financing in the amount of \$215,500 supported the participation of approximately 40 partners at the conference (Panellists and AMARC journalists) and supporting activities.

## **EVALUATION OBJECTIVES**

Evaluation plans, unfortunately, were not incorporated into the planning phase. However, in order to ensure lessons were learned and documented, a post-conference evaluation strategy was developed.

The specific objectives were as follows:

- a) to gauge participant reflections on the conference, the satellite sessions, and interest in follow up activities
- b) to determine the relative successes and challenges of our participation
- c) to ascertain what worked and what didn't with respect to internal organisation, processes and logistics
- d) to learn from the experience and develop recommendations for future involvement

## **METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation data was collected using three different tools:

- a) Panellists were requested to submit evaluations ex post facto.
- b) Staff participated in an After-Action Review so as to capture reflections and thoughts on process
- c) The IDRC statistics generator was employed to determine website hits

This report highlights the reflections and lessons that precipitate from the participant evaluations and the After-Action Review (AAR). The report also includes the number of hits to the IDRC AIDS website since its creation as an indication of increased levels of awareness with respect to IDRC and the research we support.

## RESULTS FROM PANELLIST EVALUATIONS

Upon consultation with the Evaluation Unit, Nasreen Jessani sent an email to the IDRC partners that had served as panellists at the two IDRC organised satellite sessions for their reflections on value and content. We received seven out of twelve panellist responses (58%). These can be found in more detail in **ANNEX A: POST-CONFERENCE PANELLIST EVALUATION QUESTIONS**.

Panellist responses are summarised below by overarching themes that can serve to inform IDRC programming should similar opportunities to partake in large conferences arise in the future.

### Conference overall

The panellists (also referred to as “participants”) came to the conference with several objectives in mind. These ranged from learning about emerging technologies and experiences, to networking and fostering new partnerships. Research partners mentioned that it was an opportunity to see how other research compares, compliments or provides alternate perspectives to their own research.

The sentiment shared by almost all partners who responded was that while the IAC provided access to a wide variety of activities relating to HIV/AIDS at political, social, economical and medical levels, it was too large and overwhelming to allow for structured discussions and follow up with other researchers. An interesting note was that there seemed to be “*a lack of understanding between different lobby groups. It seems that many were preoccupied with their own problems, which on occasions were not as great as those in other parts of the world. There was an imbalance towards considering the problems in developed countries but this was not surprising considering it was being held in Canada.*”

Partners felt that the discourse of the conference was far too narrow and that there needed to be more attention paid to broader health systems – in particular to their impacts when making judgments of success. Participants were “*...surprised and disappointed by the pervasive biomedical approach to the epidemic, 25 years on. ...the prevalence of technology-driven approaches.*” In addition, sessions that reflect upon the wider health systems challenges need to be equipped with a panel of sound expertise. One participant noted his disappointment in that “*... many good things in the South African response to HIV/AIDS got less attention than the political ‘denialism’*”.

*“The conference was too Hollywood-ised and must have been a strange experience for many Africans.”*

*-Stuart Gillespie  
(EcoHealth partner)*

Respondents were asked to rank the extent to which their objectives were met upon attending the conference with “7” being <all objectives met> and “1” being <none>. The average score was 5.2 out of 7. (n=7 (4, 6, 5, 6, 5, 6, 4))

## Satellite sessions

IDRC organised two satellite sessions:

- a) Informing practice, creating public spaces: Research "On" and "For" ART Roll-Out in African Health Systems; and
- b) ARVs: From Magic Bullets to (Re)Thinking Systems.

Through EcoHealth, one satellite session and one concurrent session were financially supported:

- a) HIV/AIDS, Food and Nutrition Security - The RENEWAL Initiative in Eastern and Southern Africa; and
- b) HIV, Gender and Development: The Poverty, Malnutrition, Food Security Cycle (From Evidence to Action)

*"The IDRC session addressed a key issue which was otherwise neglected in the conference."  
-Stuart Gillespie  
(EcoHealth partner)*

The overall sentiment regarding the satellite sessions was positive. Panellists found that the sessions presented opportunities to explore the various issues and thematics from multiple perspectives.

They did however mention that the low-turnout, which may have lended itself to a more intimate group for discussion, was rather disappointing. However, given the number and size and timing of competing activities, attendance at such an event is often hard to gauge. One recommendation is to perhaps **provide shorter and more succinct session titles that are not too long and ambiguous**. More focused topics would perhaps be one way of attracting researchers with a defined area of interest. Another recommendation is to **find other ways of increasing our satellite session profiles – better marketing, sponsoring the conference itself, enlisting media for increased coverage**. In light of this, an important question has been posed to IDRC: *"WHO had a plenary session on the AMLA programme, even though it has very little current reality, and its guidelines are far worse than the ones our IDRC funded project produced for South Africa. So how did they achieve this high profile, and is there a way in which IDRC could do something similar?"*

One participant suggested that supporting satellite sessions should be encouraged again in the future but perhaps *"... rather than holding Satellite sessions during a very busy LAC meeting, that a condition of support for IDRC-sponsored delegates is attendance at a full day meeting preferably before the LAC meeting with a whole day of presentations of IDRC supported work."* This would in turn allow for more in depth discussions between partners but also between IDRC and individual project colleagues. GGP had sponsored a project-planning workshop just prior to the conference on "The economics of HIV/AIDS" with their partners and asserted that it was very successful – discussions were pointed and participants were highly charged. GEH and EcoHealth also sponsored a workshop on "Research to Policy in Public Health" in advance of the ABRASCO conference and this too was highly recommended as a mode of convening like-minded partners prior to a large conference to allow for strategic planning and interaction. **Piggy-backing on large conferences with a pre-meeting workshop is therefore a strategy that should be incorporated in order to maximize the financial human resource and time investments when participating at large events.**

With respect to the rapporteuring, there was a high level of discontent. IDRC contracted *The Conference Publishers* to capture the essence of the satellite sessions. This included not just the emerging key points but also the highly valuable discussions that followed. Several participants were extremely disappointed, stressing that the main points were completely omitted or misrepresented. In one instance, the speakers were reversed. It is difficult to judge whether this was due to unclear requirements from IDRC or whether the rapporteurs assigned were unfamiliar with the subject area. Time constraints on the part of IDRC staff may have contributed to the potential of confusion or lack of clarity. **In the future it would be prudent to be much more explicit about what we require in terms of content and output from rapporteurs.** Even though the rapporteurs had copies of all the presentations, perhaps spending time with them prior to sessions as well as after would have assisted in managing expectations. **Ensuring that rapporteurs have a certain level of content or thematic expertise** will enhance the likelihood of more informed and relevant content capture.

### Cost-benefit

The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for IDRC to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, a number of questions were asked to be able to tease out the effects. Networking, a key objective of attendance at times, was not easily realized at the IAC but partners felt that they had connected with a few teams (and a media group) with whom they will pursue collaborations. If these prove fruitful then IDRC and partners alike will reap the rewards. An added benefit was that relations between partners and IDRC staff were enhanced as a result of being able to meet face to face. In terms of what partners had to forgo or sacrifice in order to partake in the meeting, the most highly quoted cost was *“increased work and stress in my day job.”* Sleep was another. Financial cost was not mentioned since our partners were supported by IDRC but the understanding of incurring financial expenses was recognized by one partner who appreciated the distances traveled and recommended that *“Canada (and Mexico for the next LAC conference) is expensive and distant from South ... This makes a lengthy trip, which is costly in terms of work, financial and time commitment... one should limit the number of team members who attend to those that will benefit the most from this exposure.”* Another participant who hopes that the conference will be held in Africa in the near future echoed the sentiment of distance.

### Logistics and Communication

*“ [I wish to express my] gratitude to the IDRC for supporting my visit and for the excellent hospitality and collegiality enjoyed. My attendance at the Toronto AIDS Congress will be a long-lasting memory, and continues to impact upon my thinking as I look towards the role of this institution in addressing the needs of Africa.”*

*-Eric Bateman  
(GEH Partner)*

All partners commended IDRC on its excellent work leading up to and during the conference. This ranged from the provision of key information, invitations and materials for the partners, to arranging their travel and accommodation. IDRC received congratulatory notes on satellite sessions that some described as the *“best at the whole conference”* and for an excellent dinner reception. Presenters appreciated the fact that they had minimal obligations and were free to attend sessions, activities and events of most interest and benefit to them.

## Next Steps

There were two main ideas that emerged with respect to follow up activities. One in the form of a joint publication and the other in terms of producing a forum that would allow researchers interested in collaborating to meet and discuss future ideas and plans. The suggestion is to organize or facilitate such a forum in South Africa in order to enable higher attendance of more researchers from South Africa as well as from other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa at a significantly reduced cost. Some areas of interest mentioned include management, guideline development, capacity development, particularly at doctor and nurse level, and methods of (economic) evaluation. Furthermore, “...*there may be an opportunity to bring together the IDRC funded work of Equinet and the Free State to develop the data collecting instruments for investigating ... development of tools that can help determine whether ART programmes are in a ‘virtuous’ or ‘vicious’ cycle.*” Not all partners were keen on a joint publication but would consider contributing if that were the chosen mode of follow up. Rather than a publication, one of the panelists has suggested that IDRC consider producing another inFocus book on health care system development that includes the Free State ART work.

An interesting suggestion from one of our partners was that given the unique perspective and programming brought by perhaps we should consider liaising with the organizers of IAC to shape the programme for the next conference. Remembering Stephen Lewis’ comments at the closing ceremony though, a key partner highlighted that large conferences should be avoided and more focus should be put on country-level research and action.

## RESULTS FROM THE AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

IDRC often engages in conferences. However, the extent of involvement and the resources required for that involvement vary considerably. In order to reflect on the *process* of involvement at the IAC – gauging commitment and drawing lessons learned – staff implicated in the execution of IDRC’s involvement at the IAC participated in an After Action Review (AAR). Allison Hewlitt from Bellanet facilitated the session.

The narrative and quotes captured from the AAR can be found in **Annex B: After-Action Review**

### Process related recommendations

#### 1) Establish priorities and start the planning process much earlier

Even though staff were aware of the upcoming conference, we did not really mobilize until about 6 months prior to the conference. Full engagement only began about 4 months prior as noted in Table B – Timeline. This had several implications with respect to level of participation: should we be present? To what extent do we engage? Who do we need to involve (within and outside of IDRC)? How best can we ensure that IDRC as well as partners receive opportunities to raise awareness of research and research support? How can we situate our work and that of our partners within broader conference discussions?

All these **questions needed to be addressed in advance in order to measure what the strategic entry points to the conference would/could have been as well as to allow for surprises**. However, given the short time span, IDRC and partners mobilized quickly and we ended up being involved in a variety of ways:

- organizing four satellite sessions,
- staffing a global village booth,
- hosting a reception,
- supporting AMARC journalists,
- contracting the Conference Publishers to capture the sessions,
- ensuring simultaneous translation,
- liaising with the Government of Canada for video screenings and official presence,
- networking with the media

In comparison to other organizations, IDRC’s presence was minimal. However, we must be cognizant of the fact that no matter how small or large the presence, the planning and logistical implications are always significant. It would be wise to **anticipate these opportunities and begin to engage proactively as opposed to reactively**. This leads to the next recommendation with respect to work-planning.

## 2) Build dedicated time for conference planning into work-plans

While it is recognized that identifying opportunities to influence international conference agendas and/or to exhibit a large presence at conferences such as at WUF or WSIS often occurs two years in advance, it is often impossible to pre-determine what the content of sessions would be when research results alter significantly over that period of time. However, if indeed we see ourselves engaging more and more in such events, **the time required needs to be anticipated and built in to yearly work-plans for staff**. This also helps when planning travel and vacation schedules - an area that proved substantially difficult for the AIDS conference and hence affected logistics, efficiency and technical input.

However, the extent of the time required would depend on whether the planning and logistics are organized in-house. A discussion on the various options resulted in a recommendation with respect to devolution.

## 3) Reduce organizational burden on IDRC while maintaining strategic engagement

Involvement in such endeavours proves quite burdensome administratively. IDRC explored (unintentionally) two modes of organization. Two of the satellite sessions were financed and organized by IDRC and the other two were financed by IDRC but contracted out to partners to organize. The latter proved to be much more efficient and straightforward. Two organizations, ICAD and RENEWAL, ensured that the logistics and the content for the two IDRC sponsored sessions were taken care of. This included travel and accommodation for partners, collating presentations, communication and cohesion. IDRC staff were still critically involved in determining the content and material so as to ensure that objectives were met. Apart from that though, the process was relatively hands-off. **Shifting the responsibility from the Center to the partners** may be one way of approaching the situation. It allows for more energy to be directed at content as well as allows for more time to develop and support other areas within a conference within which we can partake.

If, however, this is not possible and that partners are either incapable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility, then the other option would be to **either engage a staff member solely dedicated to coordinating IDRC's presence** (eg in the case of WUF and WSIS) **or hire a consultant** (eg in the case of ABRASCO). For the IAC, Nasreen was requested to take on the coordination role while simultaneously juggling a full workload. This is neither ideal for the coordinator nor for IDRC due to limited time to execute the necessary arrangements for effective presence.

## Impact related recommendations

### 1) Capitalise on opportunities that permit greater IDRC and partner exposure

As is the case at all conferences, IDRC has a booth that showcases the organization and highlights projects pertinent to the conference. At the IAC, IDRC could not secure a site in the Canadian Pavilion and therefore shared a booth with CIET and Research Matters. The booth was in the highly frequented Global Village – an area that was open to the public and provided spaces for discussion, presentations, advocacy campaigns etc... In hindsight, IDRC was better positioned at the Global Village with respect to exposure than it would have been in the Canadian Pavilion. Though this was not anticipated, it was a welcome surprise and hence, suggests that it would be prudent for IDRC to **consider alternate options such as these in the future**.

Eligibility for the Global Village dictated NGO status. Therefore IDRC had to partner with CIET as well as Research Matters. The consequence was that a small booth (3m\*3m) had to be shared between three entities, which often meant a tight squeeze and limited display and networking space. Sharing a booth allowed IDRC to provide passers-by with a unique dimension of an organization – one that allowed visitors to see concrete projects and partners alongside the corporation funding them. Although the location was optimal, encouraging all kinds of participants to stop and learn, the small space for three entities made material display and networking a challenge. In the future, we should **explore the advantages of investing in a larger space**, whether shared or not, so as to allow for increased networking and exposure.

With respect to media, the time during the year (summer) as well as the many competing journalist interests impeded communication efforts. The recommendation to **approach the media even earlier, plan ahead and take vacation into account** should be heeded

The IDRC reception was timely and allowed our partners to highlight their research results and interactions with decision-makers. Inviting the AMARC journalists resulted in two IDRC partners being interviewed: Dominique Corti and Stuart Gillespie. The reception was open to other donors who had been invited, therefore providing a forum for strategic networking. What perhaps was a most welcome surprise was the appearance of Ted Menzies – parliamentary secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation. As with most conference receptions, the presence of political leaders provides IDRC and our partners to bring parliament's attention to the work that we support. The presence of Ted Menzies also reinforced the importance of IDRC's role in international development. **Hosting a reception is a tradition that should be continued** and structured in a way that allows for a social event to present prospects for new alliances.

### 2) Use a more diverse and aggressive communication and marketing strategy

In anticipation of the IAC, IDRC developed a communications and marketing strategy. A suite of promotional materials bearing the IDRC arrows “we are here” stamp were produced. This included a pamphlet highlighting all our activities, a CD ROM capturing the

AIDS website and an invitation to the reception. Briefs on IDRC history and current activities as well as videos of research supported were also produced for exhibition.

Several donors were contacted personally by the Partnership and Business Development Department (PBDD). Research partners not involved in the sessions were guided to the website ([www.idrc.ca/aids](http://www.idrc.ca/aids)), informed of the sessions and invited to the reception.

While these strategies and materials were diverse in and of themselves, we did not capitalize on other possible forums for marketing. Even though the videos were screened the Canadian Pavilion and at the Global Village, we depended heavily on the booth to serve as the primary vehicle of printed information dissemination. **Several of the materials could have been distributed in advance through distributions lists (Equinet and Af-AIDS) as well as at other highly frequented areas at the conference.** For instance, the desks outside the satellite rooms could have been used to display the materials and the pamphlets. We realized this only at the time of the third satellite session. Providing these materials at the desks would have allowed all those entering the room as well as those simply passing by the room to access IDRC information.

In addition, we could have **produced posters/flyers of each of the satellite sessions** for mounting in the various halls, lounges, stairwells etc... similar to those produced by other agencies.

**Highlighting the fact that all IDRC supported sessions had simultaneous translation would also be recommended** as this is a service that was not, and is not likely to be, provided by all organizers.

Having a famous personality moderate or speak at a session often guarantees a large turnout as witnessed at IAC and other conferences. This is recommended only *if* the value added and impact would be much greater and *if* it would enhance the session. Also, this has to be weighed against the time required to communicate and liaise with a notable personality.

In addition, several other competing simultaneous sessions, as well as the timing of the sessions made it difficult for participants to choose what to attend. For this reason, we need to ensure that more people are aware of sessions and speakers that we host. Unfortunately we had two satellite sessions that were scheduled for the same time – each of which drew about 40 participants. The third satellite session was on an evening from 6-8pm, which makes for a long day for most delegates but also drew about 40 participants. The EcoHealth sponsored concurrent session was actually a session that was part of the main conference agenda and was moderated by Stephen Lewis thereby attracting over 500 people.

## WEBSITE STATISTICS

One way of tracking increased interest in IDRC's HIV/AIDS programming was to monitor the number of hits on the new webpages: [www.idrc.ca/aids](http://www.idrc.ca/aids) and [www.crdi.ca/sida](http://www.crdi.ca/sida). The IDRC statistics generator summarises the number of hits to the main page (and its subtopics) by day and by month. The calculator also indicates how many of the hits are from new computer IP addresses as well as the language of access (ie whether the English or French pages were perused).

A quick glance at the Statistics Generator on December 4, 2006 indicates that the most traffic on the website, not surprisingly, occurred during the month of August with the IDRC-AIDS page and its subtopics being viewed 49,286 times. 3,171 new visitors accessed the site during this month. Due to technical glitches in the IDRC system, August statistics are absent from the graphs shown in Annex C: Website Statistics.

Date	Page Views	Unique Visitors
2006-12	1447	85
2006-11	32661	1078
2006-10	24434	994
2006-09	10582	457
2006-08	<b>49286</b>	<b>3171</b>
2006-07	5841	514
2006-06	269	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>124520</b>	<b>6303</b>

A total of 6,303 visitors have accessed the website a total of 124,520 times within a five-month period ie: from the time of the launch: July 24, 2006 to the date of this report: December 4, 2006

## **ANNEX A: POST-CONFERENCE PANELLIST EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

### **Letter to Panellists/participants**

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you all returned safe and sound to your respective homes after the AIDS conference. It was a pleasure meeting many of you for the first time. May I take this opportunity to thank you all for agreeing to participate in our satellite sessions and share your knowledge and experience with us, with each other, and with other participants at the conference. I have received extremely positive feedback from those who were at the session and would like to relay this to all of you - for some these were the best sessions they attended in all 6 days at the conference. Congratulations~!

Now that the conference is over, perhaps you have had time to reflect on some of the information that was shared, the structure of the conference and the added value to your individual work. As you know, IDRC is always keen on follow up and assessment of events that we partake in. May I ask you to take your time and provide us with in-depth informative responses to the **5** questions posed below by **SEPTEMBER 22, 2006** so as to provide us with your thoughts, reflections and guidance for future IDRC presence at such events. As researchers you all know how important the evaluation aspects are so I thank you in advance for providing us with your feedback and ideas for further collaboration.

#### 1) **OBJECTIVES:**

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

2) **REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a)** THE CONFERENCE OVERALL (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

**b)** THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

**c)** IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

For each we would like your honest feedback - both positive and negative - as this will help us tailor our activities at such conferences in the future.

3) **FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

- Aspects to change:
- Aspects to keep the same:

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

5) **OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

Please feel free to respond WITHIN this email and return to me by **SEPT 22**. I also want to inform you that almost all of your presentations are now on the website and there are photos too!! Feel free to visit the site at [www.idrc.ca/aids](http://www.idrc.ca/aids) and let us know if you would like to update, add, or change any of your information.

Sincerely,

Nasreen Jessani

## Responses

### A. Panelist on “Informing practices.....”

#### 1) OBJECTIVES:

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

1. *To assess the global response to HIV AIDS, including comparing approaches and results from other countries; the different role players, their importance and respective contributions. As this was my first AIDS congress, I learned a great deal about the political, economic and medical trends in this very challenging field.*
2. *I wished to meet with other researchers, particularly those involved in community-based rollout projects, capacity building and medical education in particular.*
3. *I want the opportunity to meet more members of the funding bodies including the IDRC with a view to future funding possibilities and the priorities of each funder.*
4. *I needed to see how our research rated compared to other initiatives and projects.*
5. *I wanted to gauge political will and health international movements, particularly in relation to South Africa and the weak leadership displayed in our region.*
6. *I was keen to learn of other initiatives and work being undertaken by our research partners funded by the IDRC.*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

1. *My objectives were met to a score of 5. The large number of concurrent sessions made it impossible to assimilate all that one wanted and therefore a score of 7 is in my view not possible.*
2. *Regarding meeting other IDRC sponsored researchers, this was fulfilled to a scale of 4. A limitation was the fact that each of us were preoccupied with the vast amount on display, and therefore could not spend enough time on sharing our own work and networking. However introductions were made and contacts built which may lead to further collaboration.*

2) REFLECTIONS: Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*What worked well for me was having access to the very wide range of activities relating to HIV AIDS at a political, economical, social and medical level. I tried to sample something of each of these and found them very helpful. Although the Plenary sessions were the highlight for me, I also enjoyed exposure in the global village, seeing the efforts that were being made by various action and lobby groups. What I enjoyed least was having to decide which sessions to miss and the large scale of the conference venue which made it difficult in getting from one session to another. Generally however, the sessions were well conducted and informative.*

*Although there was repetition, in most instances it was useful to hear the perspectives of the many different participants even when their views were similar. I was surprised by the amount of energy demonstrated by participants, and was humbled by the excellence and sacrificial efforts of many in their areas of operation. I viewed the political hype as necessary because of the magnitude of the problem, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where I live. I was disappointed to realise again how inadequate the response to HIV AIDS has been in South Africa, beginning with the leadership, particularly as one reflected on and was exposed to the strides made in other low income countries.*

*What surprised me was the range of approaches from delegates to address rights issues and what they felt their government and the national community should be doing.*

*At times I was disappointed at the lack of understanding between different lobby groups. It seems that many were preoccupied with their own problems which on occasions were not as great as those in other parts of the world. There was an imbalance towards considering the problems in developed countries but this was not surprising considering it was being held in Canada. However, I commend the Canadians on their graciousness and inclusiveness as hosts of the conference and I pondered what it will be like in a more politicized developing country.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*I found the sessions interesting and coherent. There might perhaps have been over-ambitious in seeking to span broad topics and involve different disciplines. However, this also led to richness. This might have resulted in some diffuseness of discussion and limited conclusions from the sessions. However, it was very valuable for participants to be able to share their work in this forum as well as on the main congress platform. The short presentations with lots of time for discussion was very successful and enjoyable. The attendance was disappointing but is perhaps understandable in the light of the large number of activities. The rather long and general titles of the session might have confused potential attendees.*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*The preparation by the IDRC was excellent and very helpful. This includes invitations, outlines of the talks and the materials circulated before and during the conference.*

**3) FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

· Aspects to change: *In the future I would recommend rather than holding Satellite sessions during a very busy LAC meeting, that a condition of support for IDRC-sponsored delegates is attendance at a full day meeting preferably before the LAC meeting with a whole day of presentations of IDRC supported work. This would ensure that all researchers have an opportunity to present and hear one another's work. This would in my view be a reasonable expectation of IDRC-sponsored delegates.*

· Aspects to keep the same: *The Satellite Symposia should be repeated, but with more focus in order to attract researchers with a defined area of interest.*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*It is too early to say which of the networking opportunities will prove to be the best. However, meeting IDRC personnel with whom I had only corresponded was very valuable and will improve communication. I have also met a number of researchers with whom we might collaborate.*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*Canada (and Mexico for the next IAC conference) is expensive and distant from South Africa and therefore involve approximately three or four days travel. This makes a lengthy trip, which is costly in terms of work, financial and time commitment. I therefore think that one should limit the number of team members who attend to those that will benefit the most from this exposure.*

**4) FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*My personal interest in follow-up would be to schedule time with other IDRC supported researchers (and other researchers if possible) addressing the areas that we are addressing as a research team. These should be held in South Africa to enable more of our researchers to attend, and to reduce cost. Our specific areas of interest are in management, guideline development, capacity development, particularly at doctor and nurse level, and methods of evaluation. The latter includes economic evaluation. I would like us to discuss our work with provinces and countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa that have adopted other approaches, or would perhaps benefit from our work, and we from theirs. I do not have a strong personal interest in a joint-publication, but would be happy to participate should one be considered useful.*

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

**5) OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

*I have no other specific comments other than gratitude to the IDRC for supporting my visit and for the excellent hospitality and collegiality enjoyed. My attendance at the Toronto AIDS Congress will be a long-lasting memory, and continues to impact upon my thinking as I look towards the role of this institution in addressing the needs of Africa.*

## **B. Panelist on “ARVs: Magic Bullets...”**

### **1) OBJECTIVES:**

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*My main objectives were to observe the extent to which health systems issues were being reflected amongst the HIV/AIDS community. It was also a prompt to further develop the work begun with IDRC funding on the interface between ART programmes and health systems development.*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

6

**2) REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*I enjoyed the energy present at the conference. It appeared to have been well organized. However, the discourse of the conference as a whole was far too narrow. There has to be more attention paid to broader health systems issues as well as to the macro-economic determinants of AIDS (and health systems functioning). When there were health systems issues discussed, they were often done by people with little real health systems expertise? One example was a session on human resources, which failed to provide a coherent set of recommendations related to the HR crisis.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*I thought it worked well, but there may have been too many presentations and not enough time for discussion. I was disappointed by the relatively small number of attendees and by the fact that most of the audience was of a similar viewpoint. It would have been nice to have some time with IDRC about any potential follow up to the ideas generated. Specifically, there is a chance to see if the work being done in the Free State can help generate answers to the set of questions I presented in my talk (about whether the ART programme is part of a vicious or virtuous cycle)..*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*It was good apart from my side trip to Hamilton!*

**3) FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

*I would start planning participation now. And given the perspective brought by IDRC and some of its programmes, I would suggest that it try and engage with the organizers of LAC now to shape the programme for the next conference.*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*Nothing really emerged from the IDRC session, but I made two good connections through being at the conference. One with a media group based in Africa; and the other with a couple of individuals involved in LAC.*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*Chilling out time and more stress in my day job!*

**4) FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*... I am trying to move beyond making the arguments about the pitfalls of rapid ART expansion towards the development of tools that can help determine whether ART programmes are in a 'virtuous' or 'vicious' cycle. ... it would be useful to ask the PALSAPlus / Free State programme if they have the data / evidence to allow an assessment of whether the FS programme is in a virtuous or vicious cycle. I suspect that in spite of the excellent data being generated, it may not be possible to have a data-led discussion of the four tensions described in my talk. It was also noticeable that in the Toronto sessions on the 'success' of country-wide ART scaling up, there was no mention of health systems impacts or about other essential health services when making the judgment of 'success'. Anyway, it seems that there may be an opportunity to bring together the IDRC funded work of Equinet and the Free State to develop the data collecting instruments for investigating this. What do you think?*

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*No specific suggestions*

**5) OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

**C. Panelist on “ARVS: From Magic Bullets...” and “ HIV?AIDS, Food and Nutrition Security”**

1) **OBJECTIVES:**

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*To disseminate key findings of RENEWAL and other IFPRI research, and to learn from and interact with other researchers from the "AIDS community". the IDRC session addressed a key issue which was otherwise neglected in the conference.*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

5

2) **REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*RENEWAL's profile was well represented in several key sessions. Good networking opportunity and chance to catch up with partners and donors. I was surprised and disappointed by the pervasive biomedical approach to the epidemic, 25 years on. And by the prevalence of technology-driven approaches. The conference was too Hollywood-ised and must have been a strange experience for many Africans.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*The ARV session covered important ground...the CIET presentation was excellent, others were a bit patchy*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*IDRC was well organised though it was a little difficult to meet the parallel demands of the IAC and IDRC. We were under pressure getting ourselves organized to meet the IAC demands when we had to respond to additional demands from IDRC e.g. for language interpretation. But overall IDRC did a great job, including the excellent reception which was a great idea.*

3) **FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

a) If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

*see below*

b) What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*As mentioned, with the AIDS community*

c) what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*sleep*

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

a) Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*It is part of our work, so we will continue -- but now with a stronger interaction with the AIDS community than before.*

b) provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*We have already started to interact with CIET following the IDRC session and hopefully will collaborate next year.*

5) **OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

*I tend to agree with Stephen Lewis that we should not have such a massive conference again for a while, but focus on regional and country-level research and action.*

## D. Panelist on “ARVS: From Magic Bullets...”

### 1) OBJECTIVES:

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*Main one was to publicize our work. Second was to reconnect with idrc colleagues and my own colleagues*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

6

2) **REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a)** THE CONFERENCE OVERALL (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*Worked well and positive surprises: logistics were impressive*

*Worked badly, disappointing, enjoyed least: I think the conference is so huge that it is impossible to use it as a networking and new idea finding venue.*

**b)** THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*I think these worked very well, and I would not change them much. I think one issue worth figuring out is how to make their profile higher- eg, who had a plenary session on the AMLA programme, even though it has very little current reality, and its guidelines are far worse than the ones our idrc funded project produced for South Africa. So how did they achieve this high profile, and is there a way in which idrc could do something similar- eg- if idrc sponsored the conference, would that help? Also worth noting that there was little or no media coverage of the idrc sessions that I saw-(of course, I only read one or two newspapers, so I probably missed it) - not sure how to solve that problem.*

**c)** IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*No improvements needed.*

3) **FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

*I think it was well conceived and well organised. I wouldn't change anything.*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*ironically perhaps- it was within my project- time to speak to max bachmann, to the free state health services people, and to idrc people.*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*work!*

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*I could not lead this, but I do think that there is room for an idrc 'book' on health care system development- at least the free state project and the tehip project- this may not be an aids specific output, though.*

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*I will be in South Africa in December, and could join or contribute to a meeting on this topic.*

5) **OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

**UTA LEHMANN (not present)**

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

*As I said, we are supposed to have a closing workshop/ mini-conference as part of our grant. This would be one option to organize a follow-up around. Another option would be to not have the workshop but instead to bring out a publication focusing on some of the issues related to research, policy and practice; stakeholder involvement, etc. or actual research results. We should discuss what would be best and how.*

## **E. Panelist on “Informing Practice...”**

### **1) OBJECTIVES:**

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*To present CIET research at various sessions to promote dissemination of findings, engage in discussion around the implications of the findings and to learn of what other researchers are doing that might add insight into the type of work we are doing. To promote CIET's work at the global village. To collect information on research findings relevant to CIET HIV prevention review.*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

5

**2) REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*a) Worked well - The range of networking opportunities available to both delegates and the open public via the global village. The inclusive nature of delegates attending the conference allowed very radically different groups to co-attend, and perhaps event engage one another, to promote partnerships. What didn't - the sheer size of the conference meant difficulties in getting to sessions occurring immediately after.*

*b) Enjoyed most - networking opportunities, and exposure to work done in other parts of world. Enjoyed least - limited opportunity to attend actual conference, and the few session I attended appear dominated by US-based researchers.*

*c) The dominance of the research platform by US-based researchers. I found this particularly surprising for research occurring on and by Africans.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*a) These were excellent - offered perspectives not easily attained during the rest of the conference. People honoured their speaking times.*

*b) Enjoyed most - Tuesday session on systems was very interesting and stimulating. Excellent set of speakers. Enjoyed least - Sunday afternoon's session ended abruptly with the next room occupants pushing us into the adjacent hallway.*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

For each we would like your honest feedback - both positive and negative - as this will help us tailor our activities at such conferences in the future.

*(a) what worked well and what didn't, Worked well - travel and accommodation assistance enabled a number of delegates to attend conference who otherwise would not have been able to.*

*What didn't - the late notice that IDRC was going to cover costs for presenters. I had booked a ticket (paid by CIET) much earlier in anticipation of contending with 25,000 other delegates. I would not have done so if I had known that the possibility existed. The same for the TTC passes - I would not have purchased one, if I had know IDRC would be purchasing these for us.*

*b) what you enjoyed most - Ample preparation of travel information packs and session packs for IDRC session speakers. Pre-session meeting allowed presenters an opportunity to give input to the design of the session. This was great, and thoughtful. Least, - It would have been great if some one confirmed the presence of ppt slides on the presentation computer immediately before the session.*

*c) what surprised you and what disappointed you – I think the four IDRC sessions could have been promoted more widely. I received invitation/press release notes via Af-AIDS distribution list for a number of other satellite sessions. This might have promoted attendance of what was really an excellent set of sessions.*

**3) FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

· Aspects to change: *Further promotion of satellite sessions. Perhaps run sessions sponsored jointly with other donor agencies in an effort to promote networking opportunities, cross pollination and potential opportunity to diversify researchers' donor contacts.*

· Aspects to keep the same: *Development of thoughtful and relevant themes to the conference, to promote organized discussions on issues that might not have occurred at the conference.*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*Global village booth was a great node for networking at the conference. Satellite sessions allowed researchers to begin interacting on a variety of issues from the 'I've done my research. Now what?' stage - this is terribly meaningful and useful collective contemplation, in a predominately supportive discussion environment.*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*CIET paid for several conference registrations prior to the early registration deadline (15 May), before knowing IDRC was interested in covering this cost. There was also no opportunity to be reimbursed for tickets purchased prior to IDRC's offer. This is unfortunate as the earlier booked tickets would probably have been cheaper than the ones booked by IDRC while availability was limited.*

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*A very rich and interesting line of discussion emerged during the two sessions I attended, a lot of which was not captured by the rapporteur's notes. I think my interest in follow up will be around documenting and conveying that, particularly because it appears difficult to find in much of the 'mainstream' products from the conference.*

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*Perhaps electronic discussion forum.*

5) **OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

*Just - well done to IDRC in developing and organizing the sessions (and the logistics of presenters to attend, etc). They were really terrific.*

*Thanks you also to IDRC for the opportunity to share a booth at the Global Village. This worked out exceedingly well for CIET, we very much appreciated your logistical and administrative support with the booth itself, and it was a pleasure staffing it with you all.*

## F. Panelist on “Informing Practice...”

### 1) **OBJECTIVES:**

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*I wanted to present some of our research findings in the Free State and to learn from the many researchers from across the world and the many great speakers. I also wanted to learn as much as possible about VCT and what might be done to increase the uptake of VCT. Flowing from the current work of Centre for Health Systems Research & Development on ARV roll-out, an urgent new problem has been identified: as many as 60% of TB patients in the Free State refuse VCT. Why is this? How can VCT take-up be increased? This type of problem was abundantly addressed at the conference – the abstract CD contains more than three hundred studies on VCT.*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

6

2) **REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*What worked well?*

*The venue, the programme, the media exposure, the important speakers.*

*What didn't?*

*I thought science (as opposed to activism) would feature more prominently.*

*What I enjoyed most?*

*Stephen Lewis's final speech.*

*What I enjoyed least?*

*The South African TAC representative's speech at the closing ceremony.*

*What surprised me?*

*The wide usage of Stata as an analytic programme.*

*What disappointed me?*

*I was disappointed that the many good things in the South African response to HIV/AIDS got less attention than the political 'denialism'.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*What worked well?*

*Short presentations. Lots of time for questions and debate – good interaction.*

*What didn't?*

*I'm trying, but I cannot think of anything.*

*What I enjoyed most?*

*Listening to accomplished researchers/authors in person.*

*What I enjoyed least?*

*Nothing.*

*What surprised me?*

*The interest in the Free State.*

*What disappointed me?*

*Nothing.*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*What worked well?*

*Travel, accommodation, notices and programmes – the whole information package. Presenters had minimal obligations and were free to attend the conference activities they could most benefit from.*

*What didn't?*

*My luggage did not arrive until three days after – but that is not IDRC's fault.*

<i>What I enjoyed most?</i>	<i>The very interesting post-presentations discussions.</i>
<i>What I enjoyed least?</i>	<i>Nothing.</i>
<i>What surprised me?</i>	<i>The interest in the Free State.</i>
<i>What disappointed me?</i>	<i>Nothing.</i>

For each we would like your honest feedback - both positive and negative - as this will help us tailor our activities at such conferences in the future.

3) **FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

- Aspects to change: *Venue in Africa*
- Aspects to keep the same: *Small number of presenters and small venues/ audiences. Conference Publishers' documentation of papers.*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*I am currently reading the abstracts on VCT and will take up contact with some of the concerned researchers during a scholarship in Belgium (October to December 2006).*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*Only time, but it was worthwhile.*

4) **FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*I am keen to participate in the publication we talked about.*

**b)** provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*I am on a scholarship in Belgium from 23 September 2006 to 15 December 2006.*

5) **OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

*None.*

## G. Panelist on “ARVs: From Magic Bullet...”

### 1) OBJECTIVES:

**a)** What were your objectives in coming to the International AIDS Conference (IAC) and participating in this session?

*information sharing, stay in touch with debates*

**b)** On a scale of 1 to 7, please rate the extent to which the event met your objectives? (1 being NONE of the expectations being met, 7 being ALL)

*4 - i did not have great expectations.*

2) **REFLECTIONS:** Could you please provide us with a brief account of your reflections on

**a) THE CONFERENCE OVERALL**(a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*a) The americanisation of the AIDS epidemic seems to be advancing well. the disproportionate North-South input was shameless.*

*b) I found the overspill television monitors the best part, allowing me to attend a half dozen sessions "simultaneously".*

*c) with however many thousand research items on show, only a very tiny proportion actually added something.*

**b) THE IDRC SATELLITE SESSIONS** (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

*a) i'd agree with many of the attendees that these were a positive note in a sea of negative ones*

*b) Sharing info and hearing what colleagues in other projects are thinking.*

*c) The rapporteuring was dreadful, verging on the fraudulent. Beats me how they can charge IDRC for that.*

**c) IDRC ORGANISED LOGISTICS AND MATERIALS** provided to you both prior to and at the conference (a) what worked well and what didn't, b) what you enjoyed most and least, c) what surprised you and what disappointed you)

For each we would like your honest feedback - both positive and negative - as this will help us tailor our activities at such conferences in the future.

*a) fine*

*b) ?*

*c) no big surprises. perhaps more caution about the rapporteuring would have changed the product.*

3) **FUTURE PLANNING:** The question of cost/benefit and added value of participating in such large events inevitably gets asked. In order for us to gauge the utility of IDRC (and

our partners) participating at an event such as the IAC, it would be useful to know your thoughts with respect to the following questions:

**a)** If you were to work with IDRC on an event like IAC again, what would you want to see changed? What should stay the same?

· Aspects to change: *rapporteur*. IDRC could have produced and disseminated a very useful text. With the current "writeup" this is very very unlikely.

· Aspects to keep the same: *broadly this is a useful way to get people in touch..*

**b)** What were the most helpful networking opportunities emerging from the session and the IAC overall?

*The cocktail was well timed and effective.*

**c)** what were the costs (non-financial) to you? ie...what did you have to forgo/sacrifice/endure in order to attend the meeting?

*Usual*

**4) FOLLOW UP:** What are your goals following on from the IAC? Several of you have indicated a strong interest in some kind of follow up - both in terms of a joint publication, as well as a potential strategy/proposal planning meeting.

**a)** Could you please indicate your personal interest in continuing with some kind of follow up from the conference.

*At the meeting, i was quite keen to join in to a follow-up publication. I believe this has been solidly nixed by the rapporteur.*

**b)** Provide some suggestions as to how we can pursue this channel. (ie are there any meetings in South Africa for example that you will be attending in the coming months that we can piggyback on to convene a planning meeting for all of you so as to enable further dialogue for potential research in this area? Can we explore the possibility of an electronic discussion forum between the panelists to commence thinking about publication - the what next? Any other ideas?)

*Not really.*

**5) OTHER:** Please take a moment to mention anything else that you would like to share with us (and other partners) that is not captured in the questions above.

*Thanks for your efforts and concern*

## ANNEX B: AFTER-ACTION REVIEW SUMMARY

<b>Name of Event:</b>	AIDS 2006 After Action Review
<b>Date of Event:</b>	29 September 2006
<b>One or two sentences giving the background / scope to the experience:</b>	A review of the timeline, planning and logistics around the 2006 International Conference on AIDS in Toronto. IDRC was involved in the AIDS conference by way of its satellite presentations, booth in the Global Village and IDRC research partners' reception.
<b>Key Players - individual(s) who called the AAR:</b>	Nasreen Jessani, seconded by Brent Herbert-Copley
<b>Team Owner of the Learning:</b>	GEH, PBDD, Communications, Ecohealth
<b>Key Players/AAR Participants</b>	Brent Herbert-Copley, Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé, Emmanuelle Dany, Christina Zarowsky, Adam Graham, Nasreen Jessani, Danièle Saint-Pierre, Renaud de Plaen, Francine Bouchard, Jennifer Pepall, Martha Melesse
<b>AAR Facilitator:</b>	Allison Hewlitt
<b>Key Words: (maximum of 10 that would enable future users to re-find this learning)</b>	HIV/AIDS, governance, ecohealth, review, workplan, conference, communications, coordination, repeat, strategy, Toronto
<b>Key Dates: (the years that the learning was acquired)</b>	January 2006 through to September 2006

### Narrative Notes

The AAR started out with a review of the discussion points, which included the following:

- 1) What did we set out to do? What *actually happened*?
- 2) What worked? What didn't work so well?
- 3) What recommendations would (and should) we make to ensure that we do better next time?

Jennifer expanded on some of the original objectives for IDRC's participation in the conference:

- 1) Share results of IDRC-supported research

- 2) Promote opportunities for IDRC partners to network and build alliances
- 3) Raise awareness of IDRC

Renaud raised one further element from Ecohealth’s perspective to make a fourth objective:

- 4) Situate Ecohealth / IDRC research approach within the broader discussions around HIV/AIDS

Most other participants gave recognition that this objective fits within the other PIs (GEH, GGP, ICA), although perhaps implicit, objectives. Danièle added that the first and third points also contain embedded partnership objectives. Nasreen reviewed the conference timeline (See Table B) and reviewed points in the process where there were particular challenges to overcome. Some discussion ensued around the actual starting point for discussions on IDRC participation in the Toronto conference and it was recognized that, in fact, these discussions first arose around the time of the 2004 Bangkok conference as well as the “Economics of HIV/AIDS” workshop. Further discussions revealed that certain elements, such as the planned donor dialogue, were hampered by staff holidays at CIDA. Moreover, the last-minute feeling was also attributable to the Government of Canada’s unclear handling of both its own involvement in the conference as well as its plan to make a major funding announcement during the conference, which was subsequently cancelled.

Toward the end of the AAR, there was some discussion around reporting back to SMC and some further discussion on how best to share results with the rest of the staff with a view to presenting our accomplishments at the conference. There was a suggestion that the Rio Congress on Public Health and AIDS 2006 could be combined when making such a presentation.

**Table A – Quotes Captured from Discussions**

<b>Specific Actionable Recommendations (SARs)</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
Espace plus grand pour notre kiosque	« Il y avait juste 10pi par 10pi : ce n’était pas suffisamment d’espace. Si on partage une kiosque avec nos partenaires, on a besoin de double d’espace, à 20pi par 20pi » (FB)
Hire a conference coordinator (WUF) or relieve staff of other duties (WSIS)	“Speaking as a conference coordinator, as in WUF, it may be a good idea to hire someone specifically the (conference coordinator) role or relieve the coordinator of his / her other duties” (NJ)

Specific Actionable Recommendations (SARs)	Quotes
<p>Start the planning process much earlier</p>	<p>“Ensure the full support to the coordinator of the conference” (RDP)</p> <p>“Don’t assume we can have a modest presence in an event like this” (BHC)</p> <p>« Plan early... au premier .. quels sont les conférences de priorités? On peut décider en avant et on peut prévoir et choisir les conférences. On pourrait former un comité des représentants qui sont intéressés quand c’est un grand événement » (DSP)</p> <p>“Even if we had said we wouldn’t be at the conference, we probably would have scrambled something together” (BHC)</p> <p>“Minimum presence certainly does not mean minimum work. Be prepared for surprises!” (MM)</p>
<p>Build dedicated time into conference planning within our work plan</p>	<p>“If we are supposed to be on the leading edge, we cannot decide two years in advance what our sessions will be” (CZ)</p>
<p>Determine and establish collective timelines for all staff attending and / or working on the conference.</p>	<p>“Trying to build a <i>critical path</i> is essential. It involves building a timeline that you can begin from day one of planning to the day of the event. It is useful to organize elements, so that everyone on the team has their own tasks and so that we’re not all overloaded with tasks” (ED)</p>
<p>Plan early to get on an official conference program rather than satellite meetings</p> <p>To approach the media even earlier, plan ahead and take AL into account in this process.</p>	<p>“I think Ecohealth’s approach worked well, to have the partners on panels” (RDP)</p> <p>“For me what was problematic was working out schedules to talk with people to get all my facts straight – the plan should have been organized earlier and because people were on holiday, it made it more difficult to arrange.” (IBT)</p>

Specific Actionable Recommendations (SARs)	Quotes
<p>Articulate and discuss corporate and programming partners' objectives and how these can be achieved.</p> <p>Coordinate the travel and leave schedules of lead POs</p> <p>Devolve logistics to partners - one recipient per panel.</p>	<p>“How do corporate strategies influence our programming goals?” (CZ)</p> <p>“It started as PI or activity related priority... and then it became more of a centre-wide activity... it came in through our partners and only then did it become a corporate priority... what was evident was the shift from the PI-level to the corporate level” (RDP)</p> <p>“We need to think of the <i>moment fort</i> : it's never a small thing and we need to build it into regular programming whether or not there is a one degree relevance to either PI or corporate. It becomes one element in a continuum” (CZ)</p> <p>“Shifting some responsibility from the centre onto the partners is one of the ways to reduce the organizational burden” (RDP)</p>

**Table B – Timeline**

<p><b>2004</b> July <a href="#">Bangkok XV AIDS Conference</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original idea to have a presence at the Toronto AIDS conference</li> </ul>
<p><b>2005</b> October Economics and AIDS Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further pre-planning stage on IDRC's role in Toronto 2006</li> <li>• Didn't see IDRC participation in AIDS 2006 to be as strong as WSIS or WUF – one reason why planning was not started as early as it could have been</li> </ul>
<p><b>2006</b> January</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Canada approaches IDRC</li> </ul>
<p>February</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications convenes internal IDRC meeting</li> </ul>
<p>March</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEH, Ecohealth &amp; Acacia commit to satellites</li> <li>• Request from AMARC</li> <li>• RM and CIET Global Village application</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two satellites submitted</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satellites accepted</li> <li>• Two more Ecohealth-supported sessions noted (RENEWAL and ICAD)</li> <li>• Nasreen appointed coordinator</li> <li>• Decision to fund AMARC journalists</li> <li>• Global Village application accepted</li> <li>• Emma approached for hotel bookings / reception room logistics</li> <li>• RSP (EPIK 103875) approved for 145k</li> <li>• News of no space for IDRC booth at Canadian Pavilion and decision to join RM/CIET booth</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant travel arrangements begin</li> <li>• GHRI declines invitation to host reception – IDRC to take lead</li> <li>• Media relations begin</li> <li>• Official translation work and promotional material design begins</li> <li>• CIDA and IDRC consider donor dialogue</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian resources on HIV/AIDS for Government of Canada CD ROM submitted</li> <li>• Videos / DVDs for screening area submitted</li> <li>• PBDD approached by Rohinton to consider a donor dialogue at IAC</li> <li>• News about GGP Project planning workshop and IAEN prior to conference</li> <li>• News about ICA involvement in conference</li> <li>• Decision not to have a donor’s dialogue but invite donors to reception</li> <li>• <a href="#">IDRC AIDS 2006 website</a> goes live</li> <li>• Decision to capture conference proceedings by way of the <a href="#">Conference Publishers</a></li> <li>• HIV and IDRC CD complete and sent to production</li> <li>• News: Health Canada no longer facilitating translation and IDRC left to coordinate the translation details</li> <li>• Reception logistics finalized</li> <li>• First document shipment to Toronto</li> <li>• DVDs for film screenings submitted</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Canada pre-departure briefing</li> <li>• IDRC pre-departure briefing</li> <li>• Final document shipment to Toronto</li> <li>• Foiled London bombings – IDRC partners need rerouting or ticket cancellation</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAEN Meeting – GGP</li> <li>• IDRC staff arrive in Toronto</li> <li>• Conference begins with pre-session briefing for partners</li> <li>• <a href="#">Two satellite sessions</a></li> <li>• News: confusion around the <a href="#">Government of Canada’s announceables</a></li> <li>• IDRC Reception</li> <li>• Last satellite reception</li> <li>• Government of Canada reception</li> <li>• End of conference</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After Action Review</li> </ul>

## ANNEX C: WEBSITE STATISTICS

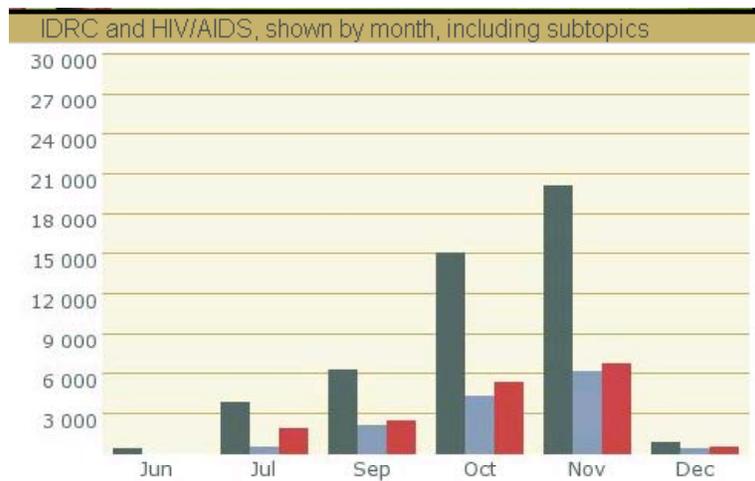
The following information captures statistics from 24 July 2006 when the websites ([www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca) and [www.crdi.ca/sida](http://www.crdi.ca/sida)) was launched to Dec 4, 2006 when this report was finalised

Date	Page Views	Unique Visitors
2006-12, English	728	54
2006-12, Spanish	258	15
2006-12, French	461	33
2006-11, English	20001	638
2006-11, Spanish	6030	184
2006-11, French	6630	483
2006-10, English	14929	677
2006-10, Spanish	4265	184
2006-10, French	5240	375
2006-09, English	6222	330
2006-09, Spanish	2039	89
2006-09, French	2321	158
2006-07, English	3706	409
2006-07, Spanish	353	65
2006-07, French	1782	136
2006-06, English	269	4

Table showing number of hits to the IDRC AIDS website and subtopics: aggregated by number of page views and unique visitors per month and the language of access.

August statistics are:

	PageViews	Unique hits
<b>Eng</b>	28,271	2,403
<b>Spa</b>	7,369	454
<b>Fr</b>	13,646	995



Graph showing number of hits to the IDRC AIDS website and subtopics. Graph denotes monthly access and language of use



Graph showing number of hits to the IDRC AIDS website and subtopics. Graph denotes unique visitors accessing the site and language of use