Activists emphasise skills, networks

The Community Rendez-Vous got under way Friday evening with a recap of the issues activists brought to the table at the XI International Conference on AIDS in Vancouver.

Andrew Johnson, Vice-Chair of the Community Planning Committee and the Community Liaison Coordinator for the Vancouver conference, reported briefly on the outcomes of that conference, emphasising the four themes of human rights, social research and evaluation, community development, and treatment. Kamanee Hapugalle, Director of Alliance Sri Lanka, noted that "Vancouver made us realize that we're not one world at all."

"The community fora created meaning at that conference,» she said. "I realised I was in a group that really mattered. It made the 36-hour journey worthwhile."

"While I was nagged in Vancouver by the feeling that the enormous amount of money spent on the conference could have been put to better use," Hapugalle said, "I realized that only we can ensure that the money is well spent. It's what we bring back to our home countries – the skills, knowledge, linkages, and the friendships that support us to respond more effectively in our day-to-day work."

"Activists from the developing world remind the conference that the real problem is not more and better medications," explained Ezio Tavora dos Santos Filho of Brazil. "People need safe water to drink, adequate housing, and enough food to eat before they can begin to think about treating this disease. This Conference depends on us – if we don't move, nothing will happen."

Community Programming Coordinator Margaret Duckett noted that a team of rapporteurs would synthesise resolutions from the community symposia for presentation at Thursday evening's closing session.

A delegate benefits from on-site email training by a Conference volunteer.

IAS rewards Young Investigators

At the Closing Ceremony Friday, International AIDS Society President Mark Wainberg will present the Young Investigator Award to four authors and one community activist, all aged 35 years or under, to acknowledge their outstanding contributions to HIV/AIDS research and advocacy.

Each of the winners will receive a diploma, as well as a US$500 grant to put towards their work.

In Track A, Rupert Kaul of the University of Nairobi receives the award for his research on the role of mucosal immune factors in HIV-1 susceptibility. His work involved study of virus-specific IgA in a group of highly-exposed, HIV-1 seronegative commercial sex workers in the Pumwani slum of Nairobi.

The Track B award goes to Wafaie Fawzi of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, USA, for a trial that identified multivitamin supplementation as an affordable method of improving pregnancy outcomes and raising T-cell counts among HIV-infected women in developing countries.

In Track C, Ephantus Njagi of the University of Nairobi is acknowledged for showing that peer intervention strategies can lead to a sustained increase in condom use by commercial sex workers. The programme dramatically reduced the incidence of gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV-1 among a group Nairobi sex workers, while preventing thousands of secondary STIs.

In Track D, Craig R. Waldo of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, University of California at San Francisco, studied the link between self-acceptance of gay identity and the likelihood of sexual risk-taking. His award-winning study found that men who accept their sexuality take fewer risks and enjoy better psychological health.

The Community Person Award goes to Ezio Tavora dos Santos Filho, Executive Director of Grupo Para Vida in Brazil, in recognition of his tireless efforts to promote treatment access in Brazil and across the developing world.

Programme Update

Parents of HIV-positive children are invited to meet at 18:00 today at Office B, near the community village. Contact: Marlene Diaz.

Monday, June 29
Oral Sessions

In Session A11, Barbara Felber will speak on Distinct nucleoplasmic transport mechanisms and their role for HIV/SIV propagation.

In Session C13, Pinto Costa will present the paper on sex education and HIV/STD prevention for adolescents. Priscilla Mataure will present the paper on baseline evaluation of a school-based peer education programme.

In Session D11, Marguerita Lightfoot will present the paper entitled Picking Up the Pieces.

In Session B13, Ria Koeck will present the paper on compliance with universal precautions. Patrick Lenzin will present the paper on humour in AIDS care.

In Session C14, G.P. Poumerol will present the paper on antibiotic resistance in gonococci in the WHO Western Pacific Region.

In Session C15, Peter Young will discuss challenges to the pharmaceutical industry.

In Session C16, Hlar Htut Lwin will present the paper on HIV/AIDS prevention among migrant workers in Myanmar.

In Session D13, Welzer-Lang will present the paper on men, sex and HIV.

In Session B16, Miwa Ishihara will present the paper on bridges from hospital to home.

In Session B17, L.K. Wathen will present the paper on interim analysis of plasma viral burden reductions. Stefano Vella will present the paper on a randomised study of ritonavir and indinavir.

On Tuesday, please note that the Minister of Health for Senegal, Assane Diop, will speak in Session D26, Funding and Policy.

Community Symposia

In Session CS2 at 17:30, Amyen Ramadan will speak in place of Tariq Ramadan. There will be no representative of the Jewish faith on the panel.

In Session CS3 at 17:30, Bev Greet will discuss the topic of To Work or Not to Work.

Interpretación simultánea

Los delegados de habla española y francesa tendrán acceso a interpretación simultánea en todas las sesiones celebradas en la Arena y en el Salón 1. Ese servicio es cortesía de la Agence de francophonie.

Services de traduction simultanée

Nous aimerions informer les délégués francophones et hispanophones que des services de traduction simultanée sont disponibles pour toutes les séances qui ont lieu dans l'Aréna ou dans le Hall 1. Ces services sont offerts grâce à une subvention de l'Agence de francophonie.