

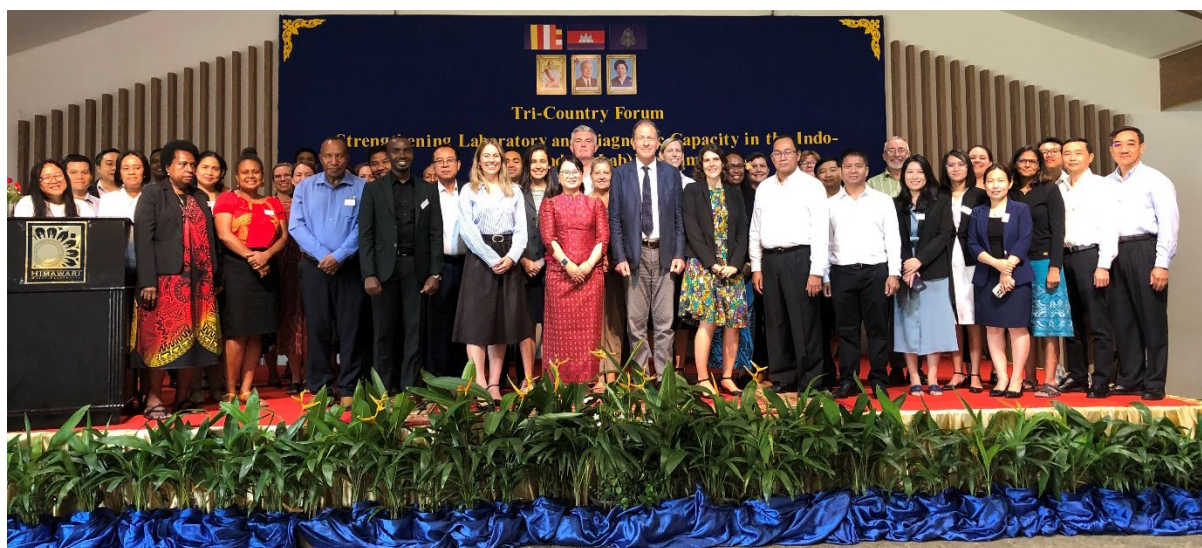


# WORKSHOP REPORT

Strengthening Laboratory and Diagnostic Capacity  
in the Indo-Pacific (IndoPacLab) Tri Country Forum  
24-25 October 2023

## TRI COUNTRY FORUM

The Strengthening Laboratory and Diagnostic Capacity in the Indo-Pacific (IndoPacLab) Program is a multi-year initiative supported by the Australian government and delivered by the IndoPacLab consortium and partners in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Papua New Guinea. This workshop convened program stakeholders from all three participating countries to strengthen networks, and to reflect and learn from activities and achievements across the program.



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## Tri Country Forum Overview

### *Background - about the IndoPacLab Program*

The Strengthening Laboratory and Diagnostic Capacity in the Indo-Pacific (IndoPacLab) Program is a multi-year initiative supported by the Australian government and delivered by the IndoPacLab consortium and partners in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Papua New Guinea. The program aims to strengthen laboratory functions for accurate, timely and scalable testing of COVID-19, HIV, TB and malaria. The program began in 2021/202, first supporting detailed laboratory strengthening needs assessments and action plan development in each country. Subsequently, the program has supported implementation of a range of tailored activities aligned to the identified country priorities and action plans.

### *Purpose of the IndoPacLab Tri Country Forum*

In October 2023 the program convened stakeholders from all three participating countries at a Tri Country Forum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, bringing together many stakeholders from the three program countries for the first time. The forum was designed to support one of the key intended outcomes of the IndoPacLab program (Intermediate Outcome 4.1 Strengthened laboratory networks). It sought to enhance laboratory networks and cross-country collaboration by delivering a multi-country event as a platform to share best practices, lessons learned and foster relationships. As the program is nearing completion - ending in mid-2024, the forum also provided a timely opportunity to reflect on successes and present achievements across the program.

The specific objectives of the forum included:

- To share achievements and learnings from IndoPacLab Program across countries
- To strengthen networks and enhance cross-country collaboration
- To identify opportunities for ongoing collaboration, including sharing information regarding existing cross-country laboratory networks and ongoing initiatives

### *Forum Attendees*

The forum was attended by 46 people. Attendees included staff members of consortium and partner organisations, Provincial, National Department of Health, and Ministry of Health representatives, laboratory and health sector stakeholders, and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade representatives. Each program country was well represented with a minimum of 7 people engaged with the program in each country present. 65% of attendees identified as female, 35% as male, and no attendees identified having a disability.

### *Participant Country-focus Composition*

Focal Country	# Attended	%
Australia	3	7%
Cambodia	13	28%
Global	11	24%
Laos	7	15%
PNG	12	26%
Total Attendees	46	

### *Participant Gender Composition*

Female	Male
30 (65%)	16 (35%)

### *Participant Attendance Mode*

In person	Online
40	6

### *Forum Agenda*

The forum took place over 1.5 days and across three venues. The primary, formal first full day event was held on Tuesday 24 October at the Himawari Hotel. The forum began with an official opening and remarks from Ms Tegan Park, First Secretary - Development Cooperation, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT), Australian Government, Cambodia, and Assistant Professor Sovanthona Suy, Deputy Director General of Health of the Ministry of Health (MoH), Cambodia. A number of presentations and panel sessions were then presented throughout the day exploring different aspects within the program in depth. The day closed with social networking drinks overlooking the Mekong River. The second half-day began with a very engaging and relevant site visit to the National Reference Laboratory of Cambodia. This was followed by a presentation and discussion about regional laboratory networks, a final participant reflection session, and a closing lunch, all held at the Baitong Hotel. Links to the recordings and slide presentations from both days are provided within the body of this report.

### *Forum Feedback*

Overall participants provided positive feedback and enjoyed the forum. Feedback from the post event survey indicated that participants appreciated the opportunity to meet teams from other countries and learn about the program and broader context in those countries. Participants particularly appreciated the site visit to the NRL and learning about the LIMS roll out in Laos PDR. The forum also inspired action - 76% of post event survey respondents stated they had already taken an action following the forum and provided a range of examples including sharing information and ideas shared at the forum with their colleagues and networks at home. Some comments from feedback received have been included below.

*“Thank you for organising an excellent forum in Phnom Penh. It was fantastic to meet you and the rest of the members while in country, and I valued the face to face interactions. The experience was very much like meeting with friends after a long while!”*

*“Thanks for organising it all – was a great event!”*

*“Thank you for the team for organising this. It was great learning from everyone.”*

## List of Presentation Weblinks

Zoom recording and PowerPoint presentation weblinks.

- Day 1 Full day recording - [Zoom Recording Link](#) Passcode: FOFUAF=3
- IndoPacLab Program Country Overview – Cambodia - [IndoPacLab Cambodia Program Overview.pptx](#)
- IndoPacLab Program Country Overview - Lao PDR - [IndoPacLab Laos Country Program Overview.pptx](#)
- IndoPacLab Program Country Overview - Papua New Guinea - [IndoPacLab PNG Country Program Overview.pptx](#)
- Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Integrated Testing and Network Optimization to Improve Access (Cambodia focus) - [Optimization and network integration: benefits of DNO and PMTCT in Cambodia](#)
- Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Data Management, Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) (Lao PDR focus)
  - Slides/Recording: [Laboratory Information Management Systems Laos - What it is and Why it is Important](#)
  - Slides: [Laos LIMS Project Overview](#)
  - Slides/Recording: [Laos LIMS Demo](#)
- Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Sustainability & Ownership (PNG focus) - [Reflections on Sustainability and Ownership in PNG](#)
- Day 2 Part day recording - [Zoom Recording Link](#) Passcode: M8em#y9#
- Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Regional Laboratory Networks
  - Slides: [Presentation on Regional Public Health Laboratory Network \(RPHL\)](#)
  - Slides: [Presentation on Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network \(PPHSN\)](#)

## Forum Overview – Agenda, Presenters, Slide Links, Notes

### Day 1 Presentations

[Zoom Recording Link](#) Passcode: FOFUAF=3

#### **IndoPaLab Program Country Overview – Cambodia**

- Soleine Scotney, Country Director
- Slides: [IndoPaLab Cambodia Program Overview.pptx](#)

#### **IndoPaLab Program Country Overview - Lao PDR**

- Alexandra Tracy, Deputy Country Director, CHAI Lao PDR
- Slides: [IndoPaLab Laos Country Program Overview.pptx](#)

#### **IndoPaLab Program Country Overview - Papua New Guinea**

- Michaela Riddell, Consortium PNG Program Lead, Kirby Institute,
- Kabtronics Essayamo, Laboratory Manager, Provincial Health Authority, Gulf Province PNG
- Slides: [IndoPaLab PNG Country Program Overview.pptx](#)

#### **Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Integrated Testing and Network Optimization to Improve Access (Cambodia focus)**

- MCs: Emma Said and Ly Kim, CHAI Cambodia
- Presentation: Archana Beri, FIND (virtual)
- Moderator: A/Prof. Philip Cunningham, Kirby Institute & St Vincent's Hospital Sydney
- Panel: Dr. Bouaphanh Khamphaphongphane, NCLE Deputy Director, Lao PDR
- Panel: Dr. Narith Ratha (CENAT/MoH), Cambodia
- Slides: [Optimization and network integration: benefits of DNO and PMTCT in Cambodia](#)

#### **Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Data Management, Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) (Lao PDR focus)**

- MCs: Alexandra Tracy, Deputy Country Director, Bongkot (Kae) Soonthornsata, CHAI Laos
- Presentation: CHAI Laos team
- Presentation: Jessica Markby, Olukunle Akinwusi, FIND (virtual)
- Moderator: Alexandra Tracy, Deputy Country Director, CHAI Lao PDR
- Panel: Dr. Bouaphanh Khamphaphongphane, Deputy Director, NCLE Lao
- Panel: Zure Kombati, Provincial Lab Manager, Western Highlands, PNG
- Panel: Theresa Palou, Technical Officer – Lab Systems Strengthening NDOH/WHO, PNG
- Panel: Srikant Mohan, Program Manager, Diagnostics and Digital Health, CHAI Cambodia
- Slides/Recording: [Laboratory Information Management Systems Laos - What it is and Why it is Important](#)
- Slides: [Laos LIMS Project Overview](#)
- Slides/Recording: [Laos LIMS Demo](#)



**Thematic Presentation & Discussion – Sustainability & Ownership (PNG focus)**

MCs: Dr Seluia Mabone, Chief Pathologist, NDoH, PNG and Dr Pamela Toliman, Senior Scientific Officer, PNG Institute for Medical Research

- Co-Moderators and presenters: Dr Seluia Mabone, Chief Pathologist, NDoH, PNG with;
- Dr Pamela Toliman, Senior Scientific Officer, PNG Institute for Medical Research.
- Theresa Palou, Technical Officer – Lab Systems Strengthening NDOH/WHO, PNG
- Panel: Bongkot (Kae) Soonthornsata, CHAI Laos
- Slides: [Reflections on Sustainability and Ownership in PNG](#)
- Quote by Dr. Pamela Toliman: *“Strong policies are based on evidence and rooted in a strong local context”*- One forum participant noted this was a great description of how the IndoPaLab program and the forum were structured.

**Closing session - Reflections from Forum**

- MC: A/Prof. Philip Cunningham, Kirby Institute & St Vincent’s Hospital Sydney

Some reflections included:

- Several countries have highlighted the catalytical impact the IndoPaLab program has had and will have on future funding activities to leverage and continue this work sustainably following the conclusion of this IndoPaLab program next year.
- Some of the things we’ve seen presented today have shown that we now live in a technology rich environment, and we need to leverage this to make the best use of the data available to support laboratories and inform governments and funders of our work. For example, the amazing LIMS project in Lao PDR to see a pilot project with national impact and the future steps needed to optimise this LIMS...
- We’ve also gained a shared understanding of the value of quality and what is required to meet international standards with each country aspiring to the level required for accreditation.

## Day 2 Presentations

[Zoom Recording Link](#) Passcode: M8em#y9#

**Site Visit to National Reference Laboratory**

- Presentation by Dr. Darapheak in Bayon Hall, providing an overview of NIPH and to address the questions shared by delegates.

**Presentation & Discussion – Regional Laboratory Networks**

- MC/Presentation: Navin Karan, Co-leader, Public Health Cross-Cutting Discipline, Peter Doherty Institute
- Discussion: Dr. Chau Darapheak, Deputy Director and Laboratory Chief, NIPH Cambodia
- Slides: [Presentation on Regional Public Health Laboratory Network \(RPHL\)](#)
- Slides: [Presentation on Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network \(PPHSN\)](#)

Some reflections included;

- The advantages of being part of the IndoPaLab tri-country network include being able to share progress of each country towards ISO accreditation, building on SLMTA and other international programs which may be more siloed. This way we can see the steps and learn

from others who have walked that journey, gone through the same challenges and built the capabilities over the recent years.

- Being a part of IndoPaLab consortium has helped to understand how to practically incorporate strategic thinking first, to know the vision to reach and set the direction to get there. While IndoPaLab had different activity plans in each country, the initiatives from each country helps us all to understand how we could achieve the same outcome with flexibility to reflect our own needs.

### Reflections & Closing Session

- MC: Professor Leanne Robinson, Burnet Institute
- End of forum reflections were shared by Moderators and Attendees from each country.

Some reflections included;

- Being able to visit the Cambodian NIPH was valuable to see how practical steps can be taken to move towards ISO accreditation in the future with the possibility of mentoring from others in the IndoPaLab consortium.
- Hearing from other countries in the IndoPaLab consortium has built confidence and inspired representatives that a phased approach to building on quality management to approach accreditation does work – the Cambodian NIPH has recently done that, and we've been able to see some really practical ideas.
- The bottom-up approach to IndoPaLab starting with a needs assessment with broad teams/terms was helpful for everyone to have a shared idea of where we were starting and how to prioritise. This was a strength of the IndoPaLab project design.
- The existing RPHLN is an opportunity and a platform to continue the Tri-country partnership beyond IndoPaLab.
- Advocating regionally and celebrating achievements is important and often motivations for staff are different in high, middle and low- income countries.
- By being a consortium across 3 countries plus technical organisations in the region we were able to provide a menu of expertise that could be tailored to each setting based upon the IndoPaLab needs assessment and prioritisation activities.
- The Tri-country forum has allowed us to learn from each other, come and see Cambodia's national reference laboratory and was essential to guide next steps.
- Collectively, we can see more clearly the possibilities of regional networks of labs and where each country is on the strengthening pathway and the opportunities to provide mentorship roles. Recent experiences of walking this pathway in the region is often more relevant to countries in the first or second step of the pathway towards improvement.





## Acknowledgments

Our thanks and acknowledgement go to our sponsor, the forum working group, the wider IndoPaLab Program consortium member organisations, and partners in Papua New Guinea and Laos PDR.

We would also like to share our appreciation to all the presenters, moderators, and especially the Kirby Institute and CHAI Cambodia country team for their support to the event.



The Tri Country Forum was supported through the IndoPaLab Program. The IndoPaLab Program is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under the Australia Government’s contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It is implemented by the IndoPaLab Consortium and partners in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Laos PDR.

The IndoPaLab Program Consortium member organisations include:



UNSW  
Kirby Institute



IndoPaLab Program Partners in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Laos PDR include:



**មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលជាតិកំចាត់រោគ របេង និង បាច់សិន**  
National Center for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control (CENAT)



The IndoPaLab Program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is implemented by the IndoPaLab Consortium.

## Annexes

### Presenter Biographies

24 October 2023

#### Opening Welcome Remarks

**Asst. Professor Sovanthida Suy**



Assistant Professor Sovanthida Suy. Deputy Director General of Health of the Ministry of Health (MoH), Cambodia.

**Program role:** Cambodian Ministry of Health Representative

**Organization:** Ministry of Health (MoH), Cambodia  
**Position:** Deputy Director General of Health

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**Tegan Park**



Ms Tegan Park, First Secretary - Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy Phnom Penh

**Program role:** Program Sponsor Representative

**Organization:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia  
**Position:** First Secretary - Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy Phnom Penh

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**Professor John Kaldor**



John Kaldor is a NHMRC Senior Principal Research Fellow and UNSW Scientia Professor. He holds a doctorate in Biostatistics from the University of California, Berkeley, and began his research career at the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France. For over 30 years he has built and led internationally recognised research programs at UNSW on the epidemiology and prevention of infectious diseases.

His research has covered a wide range of projects, including the development and implementation of public health surveillance systems, investigations of infection-related cancer, cohort and cross-sectional investigations of risk factors for infectious disease transmission, and interventional trials of disease prevention strategies.

**Program role:** Executive Steering Committee Chair; Academic Lead

**Organization:** Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney  
**Position:** Professor and Program Head, Global Health Program  
**Email address:** [jkaldor@kirby.unsw.edu.au](mailto:jkaldor@kirby.unsw.edu.au)

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## Country Program Overviews

### IndoPaLab Program Country Overview – Cambodia

#### Soleine Scotney



Soleine Scotney is CHAI's Country Director for Cambodia since October 2020. Her team provides support to the Royal Government of Cambodia's Ministry of Health to improve health outcomes across ten health programs, covering infectious diseases, MNCH, and hospital systems. Soleine is also a member of the Technical Review Panel of Gavi, named by the Gavi Board.

Previously, Soleine was Associate Director for Vaccines Markets at CHAI, leading CHAI's team which works globally to achieve affordable prices and adequate vaccine supply for Low- and Middle-Income countries. This work involved working closely with Developing Country Vaccine Manufacturers (primarily based in Asia), global partners (BMGF, UNICEF, GAVI, WHO, etc.) and collaborating with Ministries of Health in LMICs towards vaccine access. Prior to this role, Soleine supported over 20 new vaccine introductions in Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Cameroon, Uganda, Lesotho, in collaboration with Ministries of Health and in-country partners as CHAI's Senior Manager for Immunization Systems. She led CHAI's involvement in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and in the Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Global Leadership team.

Prior to CHAI, Soleine worked at The Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and malaria in Geneva, and previously spent four years as a healthcare consultant for the Boston Consulting Group in Paris and in London, where she worked as an advisor to public and private clients. She holds a Double Masters' in International Political Economy and in Finance from the London School of Economics & Sciences Po Paris, obtained with distinction.

**Program role:** Country  
Program Lead Cambodia

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia

**Position:** Country Director

**Email address:** [sscotney@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:sscotney@clintonhealthaccess.org)

## IndoPaLab Program Country Overview – Lao PDR

### Alexandra Tracy



Alexandra Tracy is the Deputy Country Director for CHAI in Laos. She is a public health manager and advisor with proven ability to leverage data to make high-impact decisions. She began her career in actuarial healthcare consulting before transitioning to public health, with a focus on strategic planning, costing, and financing. She has been a technical advisor to multinational private institutions, international financing organizations, and governments to address rising costs, increase efficiency, broaden access to care and improve quality of service delivery.

**Program role:** Country Program Lead Lao PDR

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia

**Position:** Deputy Country Director, Lao PDR

**Email address:** [atracy@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:atracy@clintonhealthaccess.org)

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## IndoPaLab Program Country Overview – Papua New Guinea

### Dr Michaela Riddell



Dr Michaela Riddell is a Public Health Epidemiologist with expertise in laboratory diagnosis, large community-based surveys for infectious diseases (particularly vaccine preventable diseases and viruses) and chronic diseases (particularly diabetes and hypertension). She is a technical consultant for laboratory capacity building particularly in resource poor countries (PNG, Pacific, India), and past Vice President/Treasurer of the Australasian Epidemiological Association.

**Program role:** Country Program Lead PNG

**Organization:** Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney and Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research

**Position:** IndoPaLab Program PNG Coordinator

**Email address:** [mriddell@kirby.unsw.edu.au](mailto:mriddell@kirby.unsw.edu.au)

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### Kabtronics Esayamo



Kabtronics Esayamo is a Lab Manager with Kerema Provincial Hospital in Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea. For the past 20 years, he has served as the Lab Manager of the provincial hospital laboratory and also coordinated the laboratory services in the province.

**Program role:** PNG Delegate

**Organization:** Gulf Provincial Health Authority

**Position:** Laboratory Manager/Coordinator Pathology Services

**Email address:** [kabtronicesayamo@gmail.com](mailto:kabtronicesayamo@gmail.com)

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## Thematic Presentations

### Thematic Presentation Discussion 1 - Integrated Testing and Network Optimization to Improve Access

#### Moderator

##### Associate Professor Philip Cunningham



Associate Professor Philip Cunningham OAM is the Chief Scientist at the NSW State Reference Laboratory for HIV at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and is the Deputy Director of Research & Chief Operating Officer for the St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research. As a qualified lead auditor, he has implemented laboratory quality management programs in resource constrained settings in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific for more than 20 years. His research interests include testing strategies for acute HIV infection, public health surveillance of target priority populations for HIV and STI improving uptake and to increase demand for testing including near patient testing. He has consulted widely for WHO and US CDC for HIV diagnostics including HIV drug resistance. He is a visiting senior research fellow and conjoint Associate Professor at the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales.

**Program role:** Executive Steering Committee Member

**Organization:** Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney & St Vincent's Hospital Sydney

**Position:** Program advisor & technical consultant

**Email address:** [philip.cunningham@svha.org.au](mailto:philip.cunningham@svha.org.au)

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#### Presenters and Panel Members

##### Emma Said



Emma Said is an Associate for Laboratory System Strengthening program in Cambodia. She holds double master's in development economics and public policy. She has over five years' experience working in global health and international development. Emma has a vaccines background working on COVID-19 vaccine allocation with the COVAX Facility and has led the Diagnostic Network Optimization exercise since January 2023 with the CHAI Cambodia office.

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative, Cambodia

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia

**Position:** Diagnostic System Strengthening Associate, Cambodia

**Email:** [esaid@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:esaid@clintonhealthaccess.org)

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### Ly Kim



Ly Kim is a Senior Associate for the Laboratory Systems Strengthening program in Cambodia. She received her master's degree in biotechnology from Flinders University, Australia. Ly has 10-year experience working in laboratory with research organization and private sector. She brings experience in laboratory testing, experimental design, and data analysis and coordination.

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative, Cambodia

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia  
**Position:** Senior Associate, Diagnostic System Strengthening  
**Email:** [lkim@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:lkim@clintonhealthaccess.org)

### Archana Beri



Dr Beri is an expert in Public Health Development, Health Diplomacy and Health Management.

She is a Clinical Microbiologist trained in infectious diseases, laboratory medicine (Molecular Diagnostics, Virology and Clinical Pathology), hospital & laboratory quality systems, with expertise in clinical research, public health development and health diplomacy.

(Source: Linked In)

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative, Virtual Presentation

**Organization:** FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics  
**Position:** Medical Officer

### Dr Bouaphanh Khamphongphane



Dr Khamphongphane is the Deputy Director of the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. She is also a supervisor of the Laos Field Epidemiology Training program and the ASEAN-Australia Health Security Fellowship. During the early days of COVID-19 outbreak, she supervised rapid response teams in provinces to look for suspect cases and worked closely with WHO to conduct COVID-19 testing.

Hear more about Dr Khamphongphane's work during the COVID-19 response in her interview on the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security

[Podcast 'Contain This' \(Episode 23\)](#)

**Program role:** NCLE Lao Representative - Country Counterpart

**Organization:** National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) Lao PDR  
**Position:** Deputy Director of the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology in the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
**Email address:** [bkhamphongphane@gmail.com](mailto:bkhamphongphane@gmail.com)



**Dr Pheng Sok Eng**

Dr. Pheng Sokheng is the Deputy with the National Centre for Tuberculosis Control (CENAT)

**Program role:** CENAT  
Cambodia Representative –  
Country Counterpart

**Organization:** National Centre for Tuberculosis Control (CENAT)  
**Position:** Deputy Director

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**Thematic Session 2 – Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS)**

**Moderator**

**Alexandra Tracy**



Alexandra Tracy is the Deputy Country Director for CHAI in Laos. She is a public health manager and advisor with proven ability to leverage data to make high-impact decisions. She began her career in actuarial healthcare consulting before transitioning to public health, with a focus on strategic planning, costing, and financing. She has been a technical advisor to multinational private institutions, international financing organizations, and governments to address rising costs, increase efficiency, broaden access to care and improve quality of service delivery.

**Program role:** Country  
Program Lead Lao PDR

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia  
**Position:** Deputy Country Director, Lao PDR  
**Email address:** [atracy@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:atracy@clintonhealthaccess.org)

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**Presenters and Panel Members**

**Dr Jessica Markby**



Dr Markby (PhD, MPH) has 17 years of experience in laboratory system strengthening programs and research/ access to appropriate diagnostics technologies in the African and Asia Pacific regions. Dr Markby is Program Manager at FIND, the global alliance for Diagnostics overseeing a portfolio of access projects in the Asia Pacific region.

**Program role:** Consortium  
member, Virtual Presentation

**Organization:** Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND)  
**Position:** Program Manager, Asia Ppacific  
**Email address:** [jessica.markby@finddx.org](mailto:jessica.markby@finddx.org)

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**Olukunle Akinwusi**



Olukunle Akinwusi is a computer scientist & technology advocate, with qualitative skills for rapid design, implementation and roll-out of mobile/web based/standalone high impact technology platforms. His domain knowledge revolves around Mobile/Web Technologies, Data Mining (DM) and Analytics, Machine learning (ML) & High-Performance Computing (HPC). (Source: Linked In)

**Program role:** Consortium member, Virtual Presentation

**Organization:** Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND)  
**Position:** Technical Officer, Digital Access

**Dr Bouaphanh Khamphongphane**



Dr Khamphongphane is the Deputy Director of the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. She is also a supervisor of the Laos Field Epidemiology Training program and the ASEAN-Australia Health Security Fellowship. During the early days of COVID-19 outbreak, she supervised rapid response teams in provinces to look for suspect cases and worked closely with WHO to conduct COVID-19 testing.

Hear more about Dr Khamphongphane's work during the COVID-19 response in her interview on the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security

[Podcast 'Contain This' \(Episode 23\)](#)

**Program role:** NCLE Lao Representative - Country Counterpart

**Organization:** National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) Lao PDR

**Position:** Deputy Director of the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

**Email address:** [bkhamphongphane@gmail.com](mailto:bkhamphongphane@gmail.com)

**Ms. Boy Chansopheap**



Ms Boy Chansopheap is an official staff of the Bureau of Medical Laboratory Services (BMLS). She is a Pharmacist and Biologist by profession with over 18 years of experience in the field of medical biology and pharmacy. She received training in biochemistry and biomolecular in Brest, France and holds a degree in Pharmacy from Phnom Penh University and a Master's degree in Healthcare Administration from Nagoya, Japan. Before joining BMLS in 2017, Ms. Chansopheap worked as Health Officer at Bureau of Pharmacy & Food Safety, Kandal Health Department.

**Program role:** BMLS Cambodia Representative

**Organization:** Bureau of Medical Laboratory Services (BMLS), MOH

**Position:** Official Staff, BMLS

**Email address:** [sopheapchb@gmail.com](mailto:sopheapchb@gmail.com)

**Dr Zure Kombati**



Zure began his professional career in 1983 as a Medical Laboratory Technician at the Mt Hagen General Hospital in Papua New Guinea (PNG) after completing his Certificate in Medical Laboratory Technology course at the College of Allied Health Sciences in 1982. Between 1989 and 1993 he completed his Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at the University of Tasmania, Australia. He was employed by Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research, Goroka, PNG as a Junior Research Technical Officer intern and in 1994 registered as an Australian medical laboratory scientist. He resigned in 1995 to take up the Laboratory Manager role at the Mt Hagen General Hospital, PNG. In 1998, he took study leave from the hospital to take up PhD studies at the James Cook University, Townsville, Australia. He was awarded PhD in 2021 and following this he returned to Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital to continue his role as the Laboratory Manager.

He has also held supervisory and management positions in laboratory for many years and has been extensively involved in research with collaborating partner institutions in PNG and Australia. Over the years he has been involved STI/HIV Aids research and currently with Cervical Cancer HPV research, co-authoring ten peer review international journal in last journal three years. His research in cervical cancer in Mt Hagen leads to setting up of the first full clinic for screening, testing and treatment of HPV in PNG.

**Program role:** PNG Delegate

**Organization:** Mount Hagen Provincial Hospital, PNG

**Position:** Laboratory Manager

**Email address:** [zure.kombati1234@gmail.com](mailto:zure.kombati1234@gmail.com)

**Thematic Presentation Discussion 3 - Sustainability & Ownership**

**Moderators & Co-Presenters**

**Dr Seluia Mabone**



Dr Seluia Mabone is the Chief Pathologist of the Papua New Guinea National Department of Health.

Photo source: [PNG Diagnostic Pathology Labs](#)

**Program role:** IndoPacLab PNG Working Group Chair, PNG Delegate

**Organization:** Papua New Guinea National Department of Health

**Position:** Chief Pathologist

**Email address:** [seluia.mabone@gmail.com](mailto:seluia.mabone@gmail.com)

**Dr Pamela Toliman**



Dr Toliman is part of a scientific team at the PNG IMR that developed PNG's in-country testing capacity for COVID-19 and advised policymakers of what was needed to effectively respond to COVID-19. At the same time, she is doing post-doctoral research into COVID-19 transmission in the population.

Dr Toliman initially specialized on sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Her first research was on the effectiveness of standard treatments for gonorrhoea in PNG, in light of an increase in antibiotic resistance. For her master's, from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), she studied co-infections in those who are HIV positive. Her research provided an insight into the most common diseases that affect those living with HIV and identified the fact that people were being diagnosed as HIV positive at a late stage, which had a major impact on prognosis. In 2016, she received the Australia Award's Allison Sudradjat Prize in recognition of her outstanding qualities as a scholar and emerging leader.

Later, Dr Toliman began investigating cervical cancer screening, for which she obtained a PhD from the Kirby Institute of the University of New South Wales in 2020. Concurrently, she participated in the Australia Award Women's Leadership Initiative. Dr Toliman researched whether a rapid human papillomavirus (HPV) test could reduce cervical cancer rates by detecting strains of HPV and seeing women with high-risk strains referred for further treatment. Her aim is to establish a national screening programme and she has been trialling a system whereby women can take a test and have the result within an hour.

**Program role:** PNG Delegate

**Organization:** Papua New Guinea Institute for Medical Research (PNGIMR)

**Position:** Medical Researcher

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**Panel Members**

**Bongkot (Kae) Soonthornsata**



Bongkot Soonthornsata is a Senior Technical Associate for Laboratory Systems Strengthening Program for CHAI in Lao PDR. She was trained in Health Sciences, specifically in control and prevention of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases with more than ten years' experience as a technical coordinator and as a research fellow. She engages with relevant Ministry of Health in Laos and supported the implementation of COVID-19 rapid diagnostic testing, bidirectional TB-COVID19 screening, and training of staff at sub-national levels.

Prior to CHAI, Bongkot worked as a technical coordinator participating in the control and prevention of malaria and dengue in several endemic countries, including in the Greater Mekong Subregion. She also brings extensive experience working with multiple and diverse stakeholders ranging from policymakers and academia institutions to public health personnel and village health volunteers.

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative, Lao PDR

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative  
**Position:** Senior Technical Associate, Lab Systems  
**Email address:** [bsoonthornsata@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:bsoonthornsata@clintonhealthaccess.org)

**Theresa Palou**



Ms. Theresa Palou has more than 20 years of experience in laboratory system strengthening programs in her capacity as EHP Provincial Laboratory Manager, Highlands Regional Laboratory Coordinator with CHAI and Technical Laboratory Officer with World Health Organization.

She has supported in many occasions the Central Public Health Laboratory in the development and finalization of the National Laboratory Policy, regional capacity building of molecular (rt-PCR) testing for COVID 19, Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) and viral load testing and annual laboratory managers meeting. She has also had training in SLIPTA – Laboratory Quality Management System.

She holds a Bachelor Degree in Medical Laboratory Science from James Cook University with Post Graduate Diploma in Microbiology, and Bachelors Degree in Strategic Management from Divine Word University and working towards completion of Masters in Public Health.

**Program role:** PNG Delegate

**Organization:** PNG National Department of Health/World Health Organisation  
**Position:** Technical Officer – Laboratory Programs  
**Email address:** [paloujtheresa@gmail.com](mailto:paloujtheresa@gmail.com)



### Srikant Mohan



**Program, role:** Consortium member Representative, Cambodia

Srikant is a Program Manager for Diagnostic System Strengthening, CHAI Cambodia. He holds a Master's in public health for Development from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He has over 7-years' experience working in global public health programs, and technology for development for government and international organization. He brings experience in partnership development, program design, data/dashboard application and diagnostic implementation.

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative Cambodia

**Position:** Program Manager- Diagnostics and Digital Health

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## Reflection Session and Closing Remarks

### Moderator

**Associate Professor Philip Cunningham**



**Program role:** Executive Steering Committee Member

Associate Professor Philip Cunningham OAM is the Chief Scientist at the NSW State Reference Laboratory for HIV at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and is the Deputy Director of Research & Chief Operating Officer for the St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research. As a qualified lead auditor, he has implemented laboratory quality management programs in resource constrained settings in South East Asia and the Western Pacific for more than 20 years. His research interests include testing strategies for acute HIV infection, public health surveillance of target priority populations for HIV and STI improving uptake and to increase demand for testing including near patient testing. He has consulted widely for WHO and US CDC for HIV diagnostics including HIV drug resistance. He is a visiting senior research fellow and conjoint Associate Professor at the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales.

**Organization:** Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney

**Position:** Program advisor & technical consultant

**Email address:** [philip.cunningham@svha.org.au](mailto:philip.cunningham@svha.org.au)

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- Forum Day 2 -

NRL Site Visit

**Dr. Chau Darapheak**



Dr. Chau Darapheak is currently a Head of Laboratory Bureau at the National Institute of Public Health and lecturer in the School of Public Health. In 1998, he graduated with a medical doctor degree from the University of Health Sciences, Phnom Penh. He successfully graduated with a master's degree in public health from the National Public Health Institute, Japan in 2007 and a Philosophy Doctor in Health Promotion and International Health from Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan in 2013. In addition to his academic backgrounds, he has had experience working with various public health areas as including provincial immunization program officer, basic health service delivery supervisor, disease surveillance and outbreak investigation team leader, and laboratory quality management system coordinator. He is now lecturing some courses of the Computer Application by using the Hinari, PubMed and Literature Reviews, Hospital Management in Emergency and Disaster, and Hospital Waste Management and Infection Control. He is also the country focal point for the Regional Public Health Laboratory Network. (Source: [NIPH](#))

**Program role:** NIPH Cambodia Representative

**Organization:** National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) Cambodia  
**Position:** Head of Laboratory Bureau  
**Email address:** [cpheak18@gmail.com](mailto:cpheak18@gmail.com)

**Maria Rosezoil Rioja**



Maria Rosezoil "Rose" Rioja is a Senior Technical Advisor in CHAI's Global Laboratory Services Team. She holds a BSc. and a Master's degree specialised in Medical Laboratory Science. She brings over 15 years of experience in laboratory diagnosis and program implementation. She specialized in laboratory systems strengthening across diseases particularly on HIV/TB Integration, Integrated Sample Transportation, In-service trainings, Data Management and Connectivity solutions and Quality Management Systems. She is a cross-cutting lab technical expert and supported work across CHAI labs program in 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. She was involved in the TB/HIV integration operational research and POC testing implementation. Rose is based in Cambodia and support the Southeast Asia region and PNG. She also provides technical assistance to the Regional Public Health Laboratory Network.

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative

**Organization:** Clinton Health Access Initiative  
**Position:** Senior Technical Advisor, Global Diagnostic Team  
**Email address:** [mrioja@clintonhealthaccess.org](mailto:mrioja@clintonhealthaccess.org)

## Regional Laboratories Networks Session

### Navin Karan



Navin Karan is a Senior Medical Scientist, and Training and Capacity Manager for the Victorian Infectious Diseases Laboratory (VIDRL). He is currently a co-lead of the Public Health Cross Cutting Discipline at the Doherty Institute and an Honorary Fellow at the Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Melbourne (UoM). Navin is also the member of the Centre for Pathogen Genomics Training working group, and VIDRL's Global Health advisory group. He has extensive experience working with developing nations, strengthening laboratory systems to improve diagnostic and public health services through provision of technical training and advise to regional agencies, partner organisations and country Ministries of Health.

His area of work has included consultancies in medical laboratory education, capacity building and training, laboratory quality management and accreditation, external quality assurance programmes, emerging infectious diseases, clinical microbiology and antimicrobial resistance, TB/HIV, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, transfusion transmitted infections, molecular infectious diseases testing and turn-key container laboratories in the context of global and regional health. Navin is an expert advisor on laboratory systems and capacity building for the Asia-Pacific region.

**Program role:** Consortium member Representative

**Organization:** Doherty Institute

**Position:** Training and Capacity Manager

**Email address:** [navin.karan@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:navin.karan@unimelb.edu.au)

### Dr. Chau Darapheak



Dr. Chau Darapheak is currently a Head of Laboratory Bureau at the National Institute of Public Health and lecturer in the School of Public Health. In 1998, he graduated with a medical doctor degree from the University of Health Sciences, Phnom Penh. He successfully graduated with a master's degree in public health from the National Public Health Institute, Japan in 2007 and a Philosophy Doctor in Health Promotion and International Health from Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan in 2013. In addition to his academic backgrounds, he has had experience working with various public health areas as including provincial immunization program officer, basic health service delivery supervisor, disease surveillance and outbreak investigation team leader, and laboratory quality management system coordinator. He is now lecturing some courses of the Computer Application by using the Hinari, PubMed and Literature Reviews, Hospital Management in Emergency and Disaster, and Hospital Waste Management and Infection Control. He is also the country focal point for the Regional Public Health Laboratory Network. Source: [NIPH](#)

**Program role:** NIPH Cambodia Representative

**Organization:** National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) Cambodia

**Position:** Head of Laboratory Bureau

**Email address:** [cpheak18@gmail.com](mailto:cpheak18@gmail.com)

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## Reflection Session and Closing Remarks

### Professor Leanne Robinson



Professor Leanne Robinson BSc Adv (Hons) PhD MPHTM is a leading vector-borne diseases researcher. An NHMRC Fellow and Senior Principal Research Fellow, Leanne is Co-Program Director of Health Security and Head of the Vector Borne Diseases and Tropical Public Health Group in the Health Security and Disease Elimination Programs at the Burnet Institute.

Leanne is a recognised expert in malaria epidemiology and implementation research for the control and elimination of malaria and neglected tropical diseases. She leads a highly collaborative and inter-disciplinary research program, with strong links to disease control programs.

Leanne spent 10 years living and working in Papua New Guinea (PNG), leading the implementation of novel cohort studies and intervention trials at the PNG Institute of Medical Research. She is committed to strengthening the capacity of researchers and health workers in endemic countries and has supervised and mentored numerous scientists around the world.

**Program role:** Consortium Member Representative

**Organization:** Burnet Institute

**Position:** Co-Program Director of Health Security and Head of the Vector Borne Diseases and Tropical Public Health Group in the Health Security and Disease Elimination Programs

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## Forum Convenor & MC

### Kirsten Ridley



Kirsten Ridley works with the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney, where she manages multi-country global health programs. Currently this involves working closely with consortium members and partners in Cambodia, Laos PDR and Papua New Guinea on the Strengthening Laboratory Capacity in the Indo-Pacific Program – the program at the centre of this forum.

Kirsten holds a BA and a Master of Management, specialised in non-profit management. She brings deep and broad experience in the global development sector, having worked with numerous purpose-driven organisations in Australia and abroad, including Action Against Hunger Bangladesh, the School for Social



Entrepreneurs, Caritas Australia, and the Institute for Global Development at UNSW Sydney. In 2023 she was appointed a board director at the Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF).

**Program role:** Program Manager

**Organization:** Kirby Institute, UNSW

**Position:** Program Manager – Global Health Program

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Photos



All attendees - 24 October



Cambodia Program Colleagues - 24 October



PNG Program Colleagues - 24 October

The IndoPacLab Program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is implemented by the IndoPacLab Consortium.





Lao PDR Program Colleagues - 24 October



Ms Tegan Park, First Secretary - Development Cooperation, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT), Australian Government, Cambodia, and Assistant Professor Sovanthida Suy, Deputy Director General of Health of the Ministry of Health (MoH), Cambodia, and Profesor John Kaldor, Kirby Institute. Opening Session - 24 October

The IndoPacLab Program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is implemented by the IndoPacLab Consortium.





Panel Session, DNO - 24 October



PNG program colleagues at networking event - 24 October

The IndoPacLab Program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is implemented by the IndoPacLab Consortium.





Site visit to NRL - 25 October



Site visit to NRL - 25 October



Site visit to NRL - 25 October



Site visit to NRL - 25 October

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Site visit to NRL - 25 October