Towards effective interventions for transgender people and their clients to prevent HIV infection and transmission
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Acknowledgement

A deep desire to complete the doctoral program is not sufficient to complete the journey. As a practitioner and not an academic, the process required that I learn to bring science and theory together with my observations and understandings from the field. Endless readings and discussions with my supervisor changed viewpoint in a significant way. I suddenly understood how to bring theory and practice together.

Writing the dissertation was not an easy task and unlike any other writing I had previously done. I learned how to connect with the scientific world by submitting several manuscripts for publication to international journals. Writing articles from different points of view and submitting them for review was a humbling process. Experiencing rejection and resubmission made me tenacious in the rigors of research.

Time pressures and managing time were major challenges especially when I was working at FHI 360 while writing the dissertation. I made the decision to leave my work and move to the Netherlands so that I could receive guidance from faculty and focus on my research. Another important challenge was adhering to the planned time frame for completing the dissertation and return to Indonesia. Fortunately faculty was vigilant in reminding me that it was time to return to Indonesia.

I acquired a new set of skills in order to complete data analysis. Fortunately, faculty and fellow students were able to help me learn not only how to interpret the data but also how to examine data from different points of view.

My experience at FHI 360 with the transgender network and civil society organizations opened doors not only to transgender sex workers but also their clients. I gained access to the waria community for my research.
Separation from my family in Indonesia for many months was extremely difficult. I longed for daily routines of life that I shared with my husband, Mas Koko, and also my two daughters, Nadya and Nida. As a temporary solution we decided together as a family to split our household into a bi-national one. So one daughter remained with Mas Koko in Indonesia while the other daughter stayed with me in the Netherlands. Fortunately, Skype and periodic visits from the family sustained me until the family could be reunited.

I was resolute to finish no matter what lay ahead. Whenever I start a project, I finish it. I soon realized that completing my doctoral studies was not entirely an independent activity. I turned to many faculty, colleagues and friends for support and help. I was blessed to be surrounded by the very best support network and am grateful for the guidance, encouragement, and patience I received from many individuals.

I was fortunate to meet my supervisor (promoter), Prof. dr. Arie Dijkstra, at Leiden University in 2002 as a master degree student. That introduction led me to continue my doctoral studies in 2007. Under his supervision and guidance, my interest in behavior change intervention was transformed into a passion for research in applied behavioral sciences. Professor Dijkstra simplified the dissertation structure and then guided me step by step through the process: building a model, analyzing data, developing a framework, coaching me on how scientific writing, and finally compiling all the pieces into one comprehensive dissertation. During our regular consultancy meetings, I also learned essential values and principles as a researcher. He emphasized that “(Researchers) should be transparent and honest.” Professor Dijkstra also underscored the need to be independent as a researcher. These messages seem so simple and obvious but keeping them in mind throughout the process is not as easy as it seems. I am indebted to him for his kind patience in seeing me through the process.
I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. dr. Abraham P. Buunk, who accepted me as a PhD student and also was my timekeeper for doctoral studies. He created a realistic and manageable schedule for finalizing the dissertation and essentially kept me on track. Special recognition also for his helping me to identify when I needed to briefly interrupt my program to return home to Indonesia before my father’s passing.

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the second data collection, they created a safe, comfortable environment so that discussions with clients of transgender sex workers (TSWs) on sexual behavior were open.

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Completing a doctoral program and dissertation was not just my decision. This project required the commitment, involvement and full support of the entire family. This dissertation would not have been possible without the enduring love, sincerity, patience and relentless support of Mas Koko, my husband, my daughters, Nadya and Nida. This project took quite some to complete with sacrifices by all. I dedicate this research to them who were always on my side during the most difficult and darkest moments as well during achievements, successes and celebrations. I love you dearly.

And lastly my deepest love and thanks to my father, Bapakku, Djoko Prabowo Saebani, who shaped me, who taught me to never be a Quitter, and who always encouraged, supported me and gave me room to grow. I will always remember many nights when he shared his thoughts and values which I later recognized became a part of me. I am comforted in knowing that I shared precious time with him before his passing and was there when he took his final breath. Bapak, may you rest in peace.
Ciptasari Prabawanti (Ari) was born in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 3 April 1969. She graduated from senior high school in 1987 at SMA Muhammadiyah I Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She continued and completed her undergraduate study at the Faculty of Psychology, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta (1995), and in 2002, completed her master degree in Health Psychology at Leiden University, the Netherlands. In 2007, she decided to pursue her doctoral degree at the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Social Psychology Department, Groningen University, the Netherlands under the supervision of Prof. dr. Arie Dijkstra and Prof. dr. Abraham P. Buunk with the title of dissertation: “Towards Effective Interventions for Transgender People and their Clients to Prevent HIV Infection and Transmission: A Study of the Psychological Determinants, Sexual Behaviors, and Socio-demographic Characteristics related to Condom Use and Health Care Use.”

Until now, Ari brings 19 years of experience implementing and managing donor-funded HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and family planning programs with and through local NGOs in Indonesia. She started her career spending six years working with teenagers and female sex workers as a counselor and project manager for the Indonesia Planned Parenthood Association (IPPA/PKBI) in Yogyakarta which is affiliated with International Planned Parenthood Federation. Afterwards, she worked at the Population Council, Indonesia Office in Jakarta (1997-1998). After joining FHI 360 (Family Health International) in 1999 to 2013, she spent more than seven years as the Unit Chief/Team Leader for Behavior Change Interventions for the Aksi Stop AIDS (ASA) program and then
in 2010 she was promoted to be Chief of the Prevention Unit. At FHI 360, she provided technical leadership in Behavior Change Interventions and Communications for the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV and support of HIV-related health seeking behavior interventions. She worked in close partnership government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing capacity building and managing collaboration. She is one of the most trusted advisors to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and to other national and international partners on matters related to Behavior Change Intervention/Behavior Change Communication, prevention of sexual transmission among key affected populations including female sex workers, transgender women, men who have sex with men, and other high-risk men, and reproductive health program. Her NGO networks span the archipelago and include women’s organizations, HIV/AIDS NGOs and universities.