

10th
ANNIVERSARY

RGHI Rotterdam Global
Health Initiative

A photograph of four Black women in blue nursing uniforms with white collars and caps, walking in a line from left to right. They are outdoors, with a metal fence and trees in the background. The image is overlaid with a large white geometric shape in the top right and a blue and green geometric shape in the bottom left. The text 'Celebrating achievements in research, teaching and valorization' is centered in white.

**Celebrating
achievements** in
research, teaching
and valorization



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Health Initiative



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Colophon

Photo cover	Nurses on their lunch break, Mulago Hospital, Uganda
Photography	All photos are selected from the RGHI archives
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Welcome



This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Rotterdam Global Health Initiative (RGHI) and this report is a celebration of our members' achievements so far. The RGHI is a unique multi-disciplinary global health research and education network based at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands, with more than 180 members. Most of our members are based at the International Institute for Social Studies (ISS), Department of Public Health at Erasmus MC (MGZ), Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) and Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM). Through our research and teaching, we aim to contribute to equitable access to good quality health care in low- and middle-income countries, reduce health inequalities between and within countries and improve people's living conditions.

Our multi-disciplinary expertise encompasses the fields of health care sciences, economics, public health, epidemiology, parasitology and virology and the social and political sciences. Working with partners worldwide and locally, we strengthen evidence-based policy making and broaden this base by learning from practitioners and policy makers. Our main areas of work are Health Systems Strengthening; Health Equity; Social Determinants of Health; Communicable & Non-Communicable Disease Control; and Programme Evaluation.

We hope this report will be an inspiration for ongoing and new multi-disciplinary work on the most pressing topics in health and health care worldwide.

On behalf of the RGHI Management Team,

Igna Bonfrer PhD
Director Rotterdam Global Health Initiative



RGHI Rotterdam Global
Health Initiative

Governance

Facts and figures

The Rotterdam Global Health Initiative currently has more than 180 members, organizes research seminars on timely topics and shares members' successes through Twitter (@EurRghi), newsletters and the website (www.rghi.nl).

The RGHI has provided seed money to allow initiation of twenty multi-disciplinary research projects, most of these in collaboration with institutions based across a wide range of low- and middle-income countries. Members of the RGHI supervise PhD students and teach in courses on global health at both Bachelor and Masters level.

Funding Highlight

Research Excellence Initiative

The RGHI received 1 million euro for "Universal Health Coverage: what works?" for multi-disciplinary studies by researchers at ESHPM, ISS and MGZ into equitable access to health care.

Building on this project, research funding was subsequently acquired from among others the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, World Health Organization, World Bank, USAID and the D.P. Hoijer Fonds.

Management Team



Igna Bonfrer PhD
(Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management) - *Director*



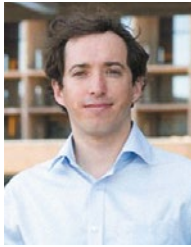
Tanja Houweling PhD
(Department of Public Health) - *Member*



Matthias Rieger PhD
(International Institute of Social Studies) - *Member*



Robert Sparrow PhD
(International Institute of Social Studies) - *Member*



Carlos Riumallo Herl PhD
(Erasmus School of Economics) - *Member*



David Blok PhD
(Department of Public Health) - *Communications Officer*

Steering Group



Prof. Inge Hutter
(Rector International Institute of Social Studies) - *Chair*



Prof. Eddy van Doorlaer
(Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management and Erasmus School of Economics) - *Member*



Prof. Lex Burdorf
(Head Department of Public Health) - *Member*



Prof. Owen O'Donnell
(Erasmus School of Economics and Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management) - *Member*

Where our partners are based





**Support from
D.P. Hoijer Fonds,
Erasmus Trustfonds**



The RGHI received significant funding for “Research for health impact in Africa: innovating services and programmes”. Led by Prof. Eddy Van Doorslaer, Maarten Kok PhD, Tanja AJ Houweling PhD, Prof. Arjun Bedi and Matthias Rieger PhD this 10-year programme aims to help improve access to services and programmes that can save lives. It consists of concrete, on-site research projects with possible immediate impact, as well as research to increase our broader understanding of the types of interventions and programmes that are most likely to reach the most in need and improve population health. Below, we highlight some of our work within this programme.

Healthy Entrepreneurs for improved access to medicines (Uganda)

A promising strategy for improving access to health services and products is through a network of Community Health Entrepreneurs (CHE) who run financially sustainable micro-franchises that offer essential low-cost but high-impact health services and products like painkillers, contraceptives, sanitary pads, antibiotics, soap, vitamins, and health information in remote villages. Starting in Uganda, and together with local partners, we establish the impact of the CHE approach on access to health products and services and the performance of community health workers. We also examine how best to integrate this approach within the national health system.



Client with Community Health Entrepreneur in Mopani, Uganda



Tuberculosis nurse in TB clinic in Cape Town area

The “Health Development Army” for improved maternal & child health (Ethiopia)

Several African governments have recently launched community-based strategies to improve access to health services in rural areas. The Ethiopian Government, under the leadership of its former Health Minister (now Director General of the WHO) has trained female volunteers, the so-called “Health Development Army”, to help improve health in their communities. They support and encourage pregnant women to go for check-ups, deliver in a health centre, eat a nutritious diet, and adopt hygienic practices. Together with Ethiopian researchers, we evaluate the impact of the Health Development Army on health care use, health behaviors, and health outcomes.

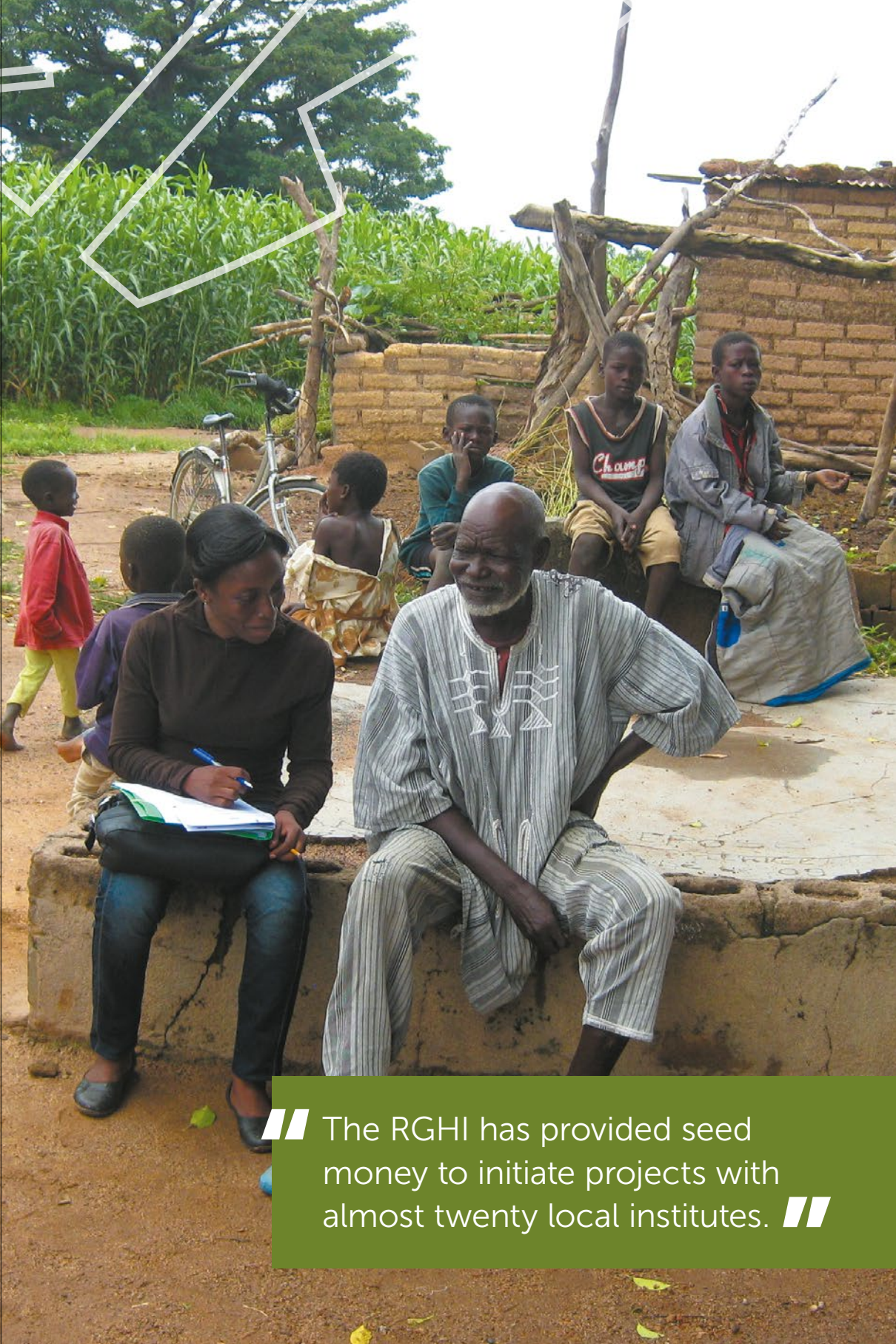
The project is built around our existing research team on the ground in Ethiopia, as well as our network in the Ethiopian health policy sector.

Patient incentives to encourage improved tuberculosis treatment (South Africa)

Even when health services are available, other factors (indirect costs and lack of appreciation of benefits of treatment), can discourage patients from seeking and adhering to treatment. This is particularly true in the case of tuberculosis (TB), which requires long (6 months) treatment.

Together with Ethiopian researchers, we evaluate the impact of the Health Development Army on health care use, health behaviors, and health outcomes.

In South Africa, where TB prevalence is higher than anywhere else in the world, many TB patients don't start treatment after diagnosis, or don't stick to the treatment regime, despite TB treatment being accessible and free. In collaboration with Stellenbosch University and the Desmond Tutu TB Centre, we identify the main barriers to start TB treatment among patients diagnosed at eight high-burden clinics in the Cape Town area, and design, evaluate and compare interventions that encourage patients to start and stick with treatment.



// The RGHI has provided seed money to initiate projects with almost twenty local institutes. //

Research Projects

Members of the RGHI are involved in a wide range of global health oriented research projects. We highlight some examples for each of our five main areas of work: Health Systems Strengthening; Health Equity; Social Determinants of Health; Communicable & Non-Communicable Disease Control; and Programme Evaluation.



Health Systems Strengthening

Social protection for tuberculosis-affected household after the implementation of universal health coverage in Indonesia

Principal Investigator:
Ahmad Fuady PhD



This research measures the costs incurred by tuberculosis (TB)-affected households due to accessing TB related services and the incidence of catastrophic costs due to this disease in Indonesia.

Catastrophic costs due to tuberculosis (TB).

It uses these measurement results to assess the needs for social protection for TB-affected households after the implementation of universal health coverage. Furthermore, results are used to predict the effect of additional social protection on reducing the incidence of tuberculosis and catastrophic costs due to TB.

The effect of human resource management on hospital performance in Ethiopia

Principal Investigators:

Martina Buljac PhD, Prof. Joris van de Klundert and Philipos Gile



As many low-income countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), Ethiopia suffers from a severe shortage of health professionals and increasing care demand at the same time. Previous studies have shown the potential positive effect of human resource management (HRM) on performance and patient outcomes, but also the importance of context. Understanding and improving HRM is needed to improve the situation for a depleted and overstretched health workforce in the Ethiopian context.

Studies have shown the potential positive effect of human resource management (HRM) on performance and patient outcomes.

This project presents a systematic literature overview on the relationship between human resource management (HRM) and hospital performance in SSA. Furthermore, it investigates how HRM is crafted in Ethiopian hospitals, as well as the relationship between HRM and hospital performance (e.g. employee behavior, HR outcomes, patient outcomes) within the context of Ethiopia. It uses this information to enhance hospital performance in Ethiopia via a multifaceted intervention.

Integrated Rural Health in Colombia

Principal Investigator:

Isabelle Fabbriotti PhD



This project is a follow-up of the Dutch health and life sciences mission to Colombia in June 2016, during which the Colombian Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social expressed its interest in further collaboration with the Netherlands in the field of Life Sciences & Health (LSH). During this mission, it became clear that Colombia was considering adjustments to its rural health systems so as to improve the integration of these services, and create systems which are well tailored to the variety of rural environments in Colombia.

The purpose of this project is the improvement and integration of rural health service systems in Colombia, by means of capacity building of national and local policy makers and Colombian scientists, and the starting up of a research project in rural Colombia. The 'capacity building' takes the form

of workshops, including discussions and case studies of local/rural health service systems in Colombia.

The purpose of this project is the improvement and integration of rural health service systems in Colombia.

Hence, the fact-finding mission and workshops help to rethink current approaches in healthcare systems by presenting (and implementing) the concept of 'Integrated Care', as well as develop a mutual research project.

Health Equity

EquiNaM: building evidence to support equitable improvement in newborn and maternal health

Principal Investigator:

Tanja AJ Houweling PhD

EquiNaM builds evidence to support an equitable improvement in newborn and maternal health. In particular, it generates evidence on: (1) how socio-economic inequalities translate into inequalities in newborn and maternal mortality within countries; (2) how to address the exclusion of poor

and otherwise marginalised groups from efforts to achieve the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs); and (3) how to reduce socio-economic inequalities in newborn and maternal and newborn mortality. For more information: <http://equinam.global-health-inequalities.info/>

EquiNaM builds evidence to support an equitable improvement in newborn and maternal health.





A Road to Sustainable Universal Health Coverage and the Effectiveness of Health Care Reform in Indonesia

Principal Investigators:

Prof. Eddy Van Doorslaer, Prof. Menno Pradhan, Robert Sparrow PhD and Novat Pugo Sambodo

Indonesia aimed to reach Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2019 with the introduction of the National Health Insurance scheme called Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (JKN). In this context, and given the size of the JKN scheme, the Indonesian reforms are of high policy relevance for the rest of the world. Reforms are indeed still needed as many challenges remain in the implementation of UHC, especially how to increase coverage in the informal sector, tackling problems of adverse selection, improving health-care service delivery, and reducing inequity in access due to vast geographical and socio-economic inequalities.

The general theme of this project is to provide evidence to guide policies aimed at reducing inequities in health

and health care in Indonesia. It first attempts to analyse the trend in health equity because of socio-economic groups and geographical differences.

Improving healthcare service delivery, and reducing inequity in access due to vast geographical and socio-economic inequalities.

Subsequently, an impact evaluation is executed in Performance-Based Capitation implementation. The latter involves collaboration with BPJS-Kesehatan (Indonesian National Health Insurance Agency).

Evaluation of Together For Her

Principal Investigator:

Igna Bonfrer PhD



So far more than 30,000 Indian women have rated their experience with recent delivery care on digital platform Together For Her. Many private providers use their feedback to improve their care. This research evaluates this intervention using a digital platform. Researchers are specifically interested in the effects of this non-financial, feedback incentive to bridge the know-do gap.

30,000 Indian women have rated their experience with recent delivery care on digital platform Together For Her.



“ Researchers are specifically interested in the effects of this non-financial incentive to bridge the know-do gap. ”



Social Determinants of Health

Social networks and access to cardiovascular disease preventive care in El Salvador

Principal Investigator:

Carlos Riumallo Herl PhD



This project aims to evaluate whether social networks can enhance the impact that traditional cash transfer programmes have on accessing a preventive consultation for cardiovascular health. Through an randomized controlled trial in collaboration with the London School of Economics, it evaluates different forms of incentives (financial and social) on access to preventive consultations.

Transfer Project Tanzania Youth Evaluations

Principal Investigator:

Leah Prencepe

The Transfer Project, led by UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti and in collaboration with local research partners, UNICEF Tanzania and the Tanzania Social Action Fund, has implemented two impact evaluations. Both help to understand how the Productive Social Safety Net, the flagship social protection programme of Tanzania, affects the well-being of adolescents and youth, a key demographic for breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

The evaluations provide evidence on the effects of two social protection programmes on youth well-being and the transition to adulthood in Tanzania. Prencepe's PhD research contributes to these evaluations.

Impact evaluations to understand how social protection affects the well-being of adolescents.



Communicable & Non-Communicable Disease Control

Elimination of helminth infection in man: mathematical modelling 2.0

Principal Investigator:

Luc Coffeng MD PhD

Globally, parasitic worm infections still affect the health and socio-economic status of over one billion people. Fortunately, these infections are now being targeted for elimination. The researcher develops an individual-based modelling framework for spatial and social transmission networks, combined with novel model concepts for

evolution of monogenic and polygenic drug resistance in helminths, and detects residual or returning helminth infections through novel diagnostic tests. This helps to better understand and predict how mass drug administration can lead to elimination of parasitic worm infections.



Parasitic worm infections still affect the health and socio-economic status of over one billion people.

Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis programme

Principal Investigator:

Prof. Jan Hendrik Richardus

The leprosy post-exposure prophylaxis (LPEP) programme was launched in 2014. The aim was to evaluate the feasibility and efficiency of contact tracing and the provision of preventative treatment (post-exposure prophylaxis) for leprosy under routine programme conditions, and to determine the impact this has on leprosy incidence. The programme was carried out in eight countries: Brazil, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania. The programme provided evidence that post-exposure prophylaxis with a single dose of rifampicin is safe, can be integrated into different

leprosy control programmes with minimal additional efforts once contact tracing has been established, and is generally well accepted by index patients, their contacts, and health-care workers.



The aim was to evaluate the feasibility and efficiency of contact tracing and the provision of preventative treatment.

NTD Modelling Consortium

Principal Investigator:

Prof. Sake de Vlas



lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, visceral leishmaniasis ("kala azar"), and (previously) leprosy. The World Health Organization has set ambitious targets for eliminating much of the burden of these and other NTDs, inspiring global action to reduce their disease burden. The NTD Modelling Consortium was set up to help evaluate the impact of current programmes and adjust policies to improve future effectiveness.

The Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Modelling Consortium is a large international effort, involving teams from Erasmus MC in the Netherlands and other renown modelling groups in the UK and USA. The consortium is well embedded in international stakeholder coalitions, ensuring that key modelling results are rapidly communicated to and taken up by intended end users to change interventions were needed. Erasmus MC's modellers work on a number of NTDs specifically, namely onchocerciasis ("river blindness"),

The modellers are challenged to define what needs to be done to sustain the achievements from recent interventions.

The modellers are challenged to define what needs to be done to sustain the achievements from recent interventions, which is an important question for under-resourced countries and intervention programmes.

Physical (in)activity among Saudi Women

Principal Investigators:

Prof. Jane Murray Cramm, Prof. Joris van de Klundert and Lujain Osabi

Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) account for a large portion of mortality and morbidity in the oil-producing countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Physical inactivity has been estimated to be the leading cause of most NCDs

and is a major public health burden in Saudi Arabia, where more than 1.2 million people died due to NCDs in 2008 alone. This study strives to increase our understanding of physical (in)activity among Saudi Women.

Non-Communicable diseases account for a large portion of mortality and morbidity in the Arabian Peninsula.



Growing old pleasantly in own communities for Dutch citizens with and without migration backgrounds

Principal Investigators:

Prof. Jane Murray Cramm and
Prof. Anna Petra Nieboer

With rapid population aging, policy makers and service providers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of building and maintaining age-friendly communities. Clearly, “age-friendly” relates to the impact of context on people’s well-being. But how? What is an age-friendly

community, and does that differ for native and immigrant older people? How can we ensure that older citizens, with and without a migration background, can age in a pleasant way in their own neighbourhood?



What is an age-friendly community, and does that differ for native and immigrant older people?



“ The importance of building and maintaining age-friendly communities. ”

Programme Evaluation

Boosting Maternal and Child Health in Wollega, Ethiopia

Principal Investigator:

Prof. Arjun Bedi



This project aims to improve maternal and neonatal health and reduce mortality in Ethiopia's Wollega region. This study evaluates the impact of its set of maternal health interventions (training, equipment, provision of maternity waiting homes) on utilization of maternal health care.

This study evaluates the impact of maternal health interventions on utilization.



Translating evidence into better sexual and reproductive health: how can we assess, improve, and institutionalize research use

Principal Investigators:

Prof. Roland Bal, Maarten Kok PhD and Abla Amawi PhD

Objective: Organizations active in the field of sexual and reproductive health generally struggle to effectively translate research evidence into better policies and practices. Over the years there have been several initiatives aimed at overcoming these struggles. One such an initiative are knowledge translation platforms (KTP). These can be seen as networks that actively encourage evidence-informed health-policy-making by organizing (research) priority setting exercises, developing policy briefs, and hosting deliberative dialogues. However, several questions about the functioning of KTPs remain unanswered. This project instigated an interdisciplinary

consortium that aims to assess, improve, and institutionalize this 'knowledge use' in sexual and reproductive health.

Assess, improve, and institutionalize knowledge use in sexual and reproductive health.



Evaluating the Impact of Risk Information and Screening on Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in the Philippines

Principal Investigator:
Prof. Owen O'Donnell



This study seeks to assess how beliefs about health risks, specifically the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), affect health lifestyles and the demand for preventive care in a low-income setting.

Establishing the effectiveness of PhilPEN in delivering primary prevention.

It also aims to establish the effectiveness of the Package of Essential Non-Communicable Disease Interventions in the Philippines (PhilPEN) in delivering primary prevention of CVD.



Assess how beliefs about health risks affect lifestyles.

Seminars



RGHI Conference, June, 11, 2015
Theme: Universal Health Coverage



RGHI Seminar March, 22, 2017
Theme: 3-minute PhD thesis pitch competition

RGHI Seminar October, 2, 2017
Theme: Creating impact in Global health



RGHI Seminar September, 6, 2018
Theme: Infectious disease elimination



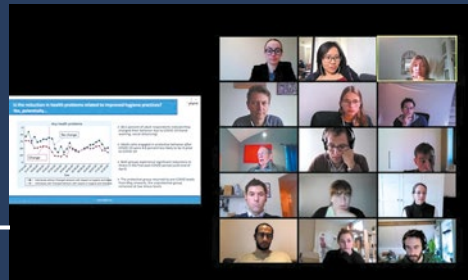
RGHI Seminar February, 19, 2019
 Theme: Health care innovations
 in low- and middle-income countries

RGHI Seminar June, 13, 2019
 Theme: Social protection in health



RGHI Seminar March, 11, 2020
 Theme: All 'Bout the money? Motivating
 health care providers to do (even) better

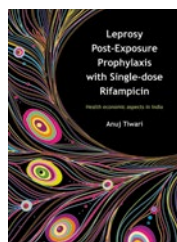
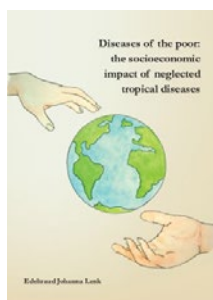
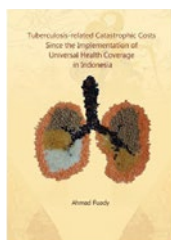
RGHI Seminar October, 1, 2020
 Theme: The socio-economic and
 (indirect) health impacts of COVID-19
 on rural households in Kenya



Teaching



Members are involved in teaching in courses on global health at Masters and Bachelor level. At Masters level we teach among others the courses Global Health Economics (ESHPM), International Health Law (ESHPM), Health, Economic Development & Policy (ISS) and coordinate the Global Health track in the international Eu-HEM programme. At Bachelor level, we teach Impact Evaluation (ISS), Global Challenges in Health & Behavior (ESHPM) and coordinate the Minor Global Health (Erasmus MC). Members of the RGHI supervise Master students and some of the successful projects have been published in scientific journals. Furthermore, PhD students supervised by RGHI members are working on a wide range of themes in global health are based at the International Institute for Social Studies, the Department of Public Health at Erasmus MC, the Erasmus School of Economics and Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management.



Valorization



RGHI members are actively involved in valorization of their work through policy advice, animations, documentaries and policy briefs. Below a selection.



Infographic: Nudging children in Indonesia towards healthier snacks

<https://www.iss.nl/en/media/2021-08-nudging-children-indonesia-choose-healthier-snacksinfographic>



Research brief: Health rights of undocumented people

<https://www.iss.nl/en/media/2020-09-33321-researchbriefhealthrightsundocumentedpeople31-final-edited-17sep2020>



Animation: Ethiopia health extension programme

<https://www.iss.nl/en/news/ethiopian-health-extension-programme-helps-reduce-maternal-mortality>



Video: Social protection programmes in Ethiopia

https://youtu.be/kBle_IJlkpU



Video: Community women's groups to reduce neonatal mortality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=en1ubgj69wg>



Video: COVID-19 and sex worker earnings in Senegal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqbDPxxRpXw>

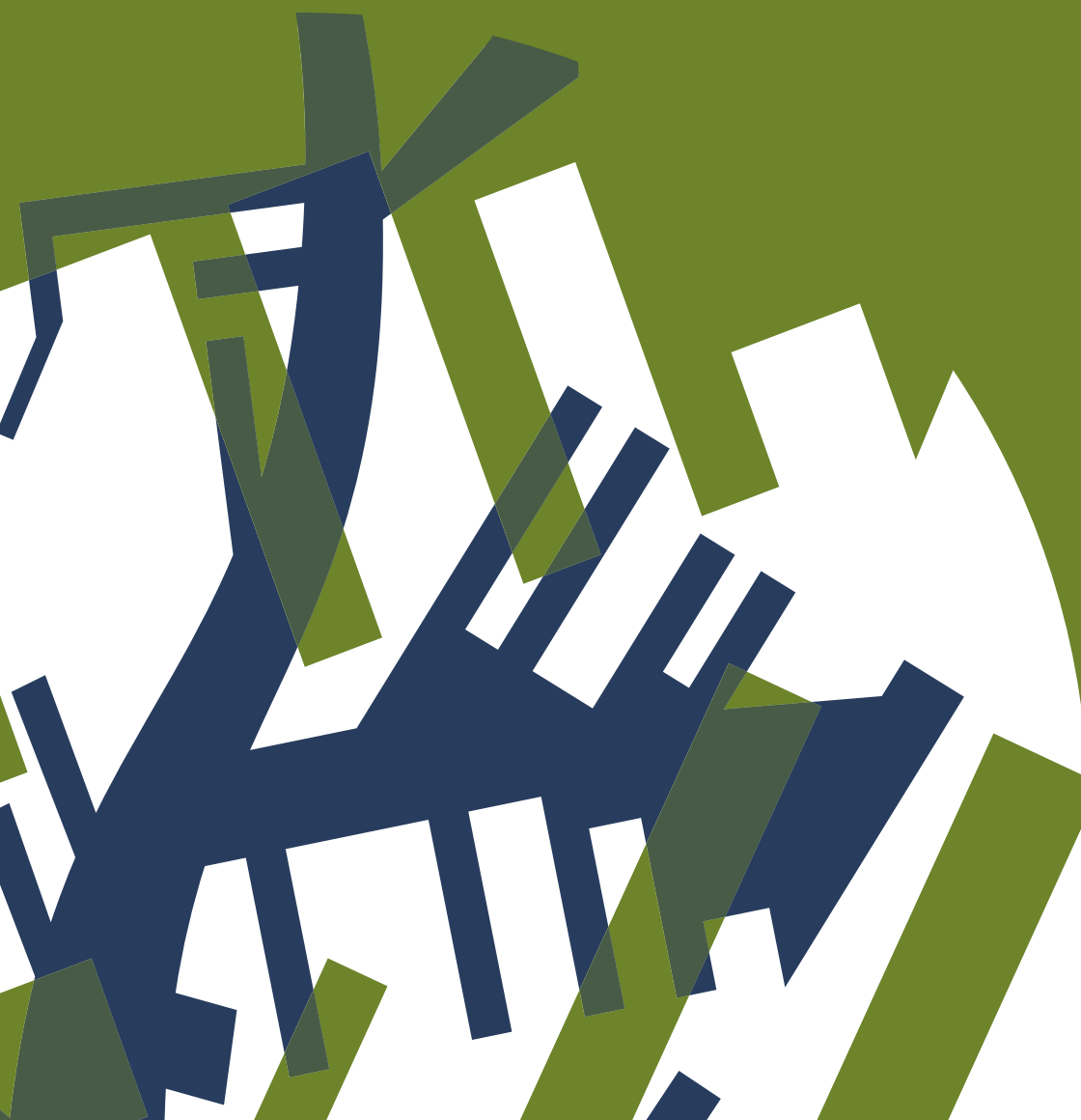


Video: Health Equity and Financial Protection in Asia

<https://www.eur.nl/en/eshpm/research/eu-projects/hefpa/video-material>

Publications

Members of the RGHI have published their multi-disciplinary research widely and in high-impact journals. We highlight a few of these publications.



Mecheva, M. D., M. Rieger, R. Sparrow, E. Prafiantini and R. Agustina (2021). "Snacks, nudges and asymmetric peer influence: Evidence from food choice experiments with children in Indonesia." [Journal of Health Economics](#)

Prencipe, L., T. A. J. Houweling, F. van Lenthe, T. Palermo (2021). "Do conditional cash transfers improve mental health? Evidence from Tanzania's Governmental Social Protection Program." [Journal of Adolescent Health](#)

Dieteren, C., and I. Bonfrer (2021). "Socioeconomic inequalities in lifestyle risk factors across low- and middle-income countries." [BMC Public Health](#)

Shigute, Z., A. Mebratie, G. Alemu, A. Bedi (2021). "COVID-19 and balance in access to health care in Ethiopia." [Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health](#).

Blok, D., A. Tiwari, P. Steinmann, [..] and J. Richardus. (2021) "The long-term impact of the Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (LPEP) program on leprosy incidence: A modelling study." [PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases](#)

Sambodo, N. P., E. Van Doorslaer, M. Pradhan and R. Sparrow (2021). "Does geographic spending variation exacerbate healthcare benefit inequality? A benefit incidence analysis for Indonesia." [Health Policy and Planning](#)

Houweling, T. A. J., C. Looman, K. Azad, S. Das, C. King, A. Kuddus, S. Lewycka, D. Manandhar, N. Sah More, J. Morrison, T. Phiri, S. Rath, M. Rosato, A. Sen, P. Tripathy, A. Prost, D. Osrin and A. Costello (2019). "The equity impact of community women's groups to reduce neonatal mortality: a meta-analysis of four cluster randomized trials." [International Journal of Epidemiology](#)

Rieger, M., N. Wagner, A. Mebratie, G. Alemu and A. Bedi (2019). "The impact of the Ethiopian health extension program and health development army on maternal mortality: A synthetic control approach." [Social Science & Medicine](#)

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Thongkong, N., E. van de Poel, S. Sarbani Roy, S. Rath, T. A. J. Houweling (2017). "How equitable is the uptake of conditional cash transfers for maternity care in India? Evidence from the Janani Suraksha Yojana scheme in Odisha and Jharkhand." [International Journal for Equity in Health](#)

De Vlas, S. J., W. A. Stolk, E. A. le Rutte, J. A. C. Hontelez, R. Bakker, D. J. Blok, R. Cai, T. A. J. Houweling, M. C. Kulik, E. J. Lenk, M. Luyendijk, S. M. Matthijsse, W. K. Redekop, I. Wagenaar, J. Jacobson, N. J. D. Nagelkerke and J. H. Richardus (2016). "Concerted Efforts to Control or Eliminate Neglected Tropical Diseases: How Much Health Will Be Gained?" [Plos Neglected Tropical Diseases](#)

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Bonfrer, I., E. Van de Poel and E. Van Doorslaer (2014). "The effects of performance incentives on the utilization and quality of maternal and child care in Burundi." [Social Science & Medicine](#)





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