



# CONGRESS REPORT 2025



**16TH IHEA WORLD CONGRESS  
BALI, INDONESIA  
JULY 19 - 23, 2025**



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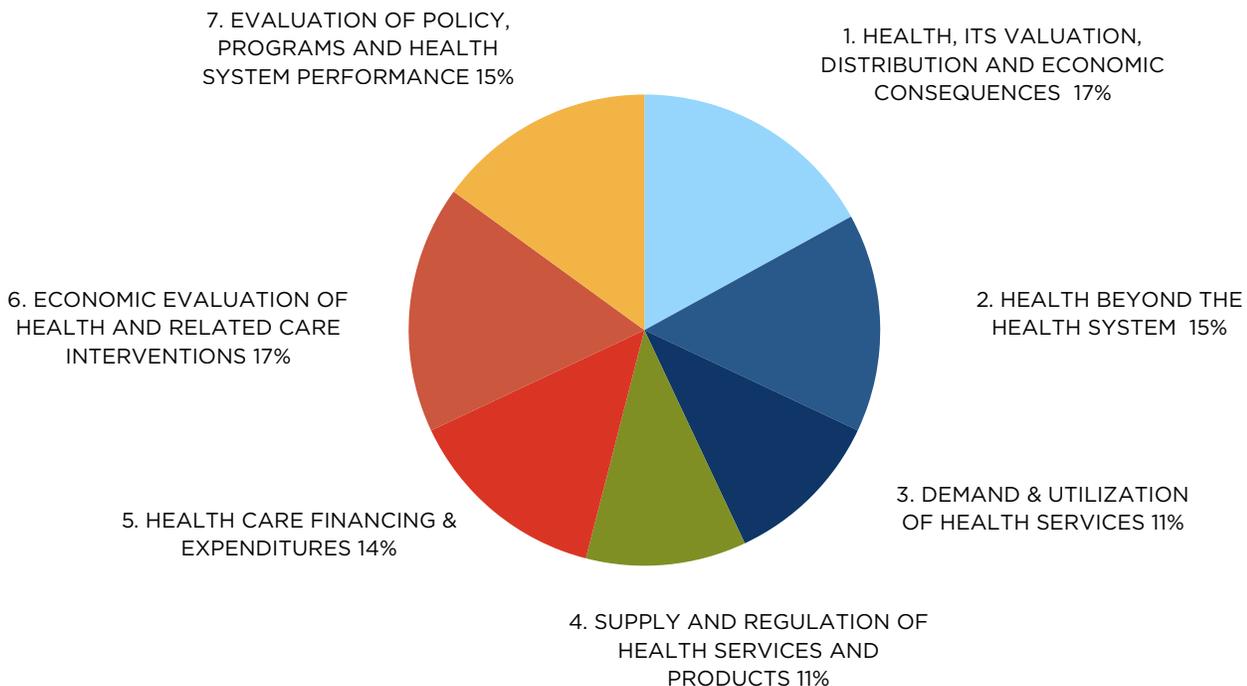
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The 2025 IHEA Congress was held in Bali, Indonesia, in partnership with the Indonesian Health Economics Association.

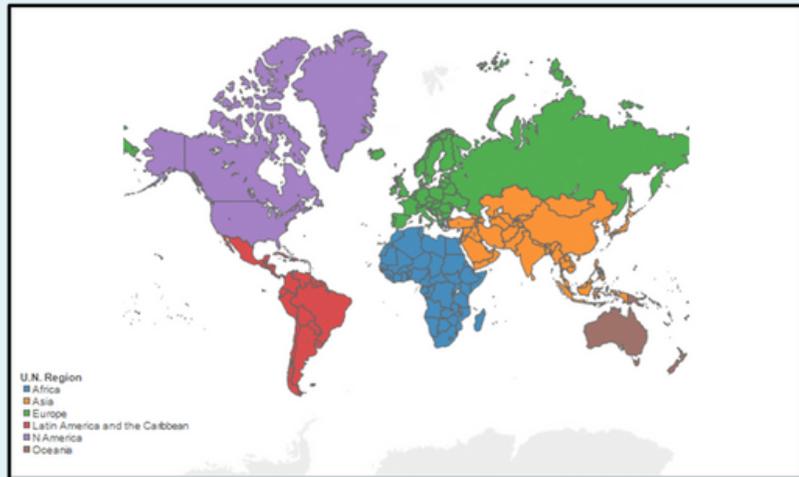


## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE

Nearly 2,800 abstracts were submitted for consideration for the 2025 IHEA Congress program, about 18% of which were included in proposals for organized sessions. Submissions were far higher than for previous congresses for which there are data; usually around 2,000 abstracts are submitted. Most of the increase was in the submission of individual abstracts; the share of abstracts in organized sessions can be as high as 25%, as in 2023.



There was a far more even distribution of abstract submissions across the fields of health economics than in previous congresses. While the field of economic evaluation still attracted the greatest number of abstracts (481), its percentage share was only 17% compared to over 20% of abstracts in previous congresses.



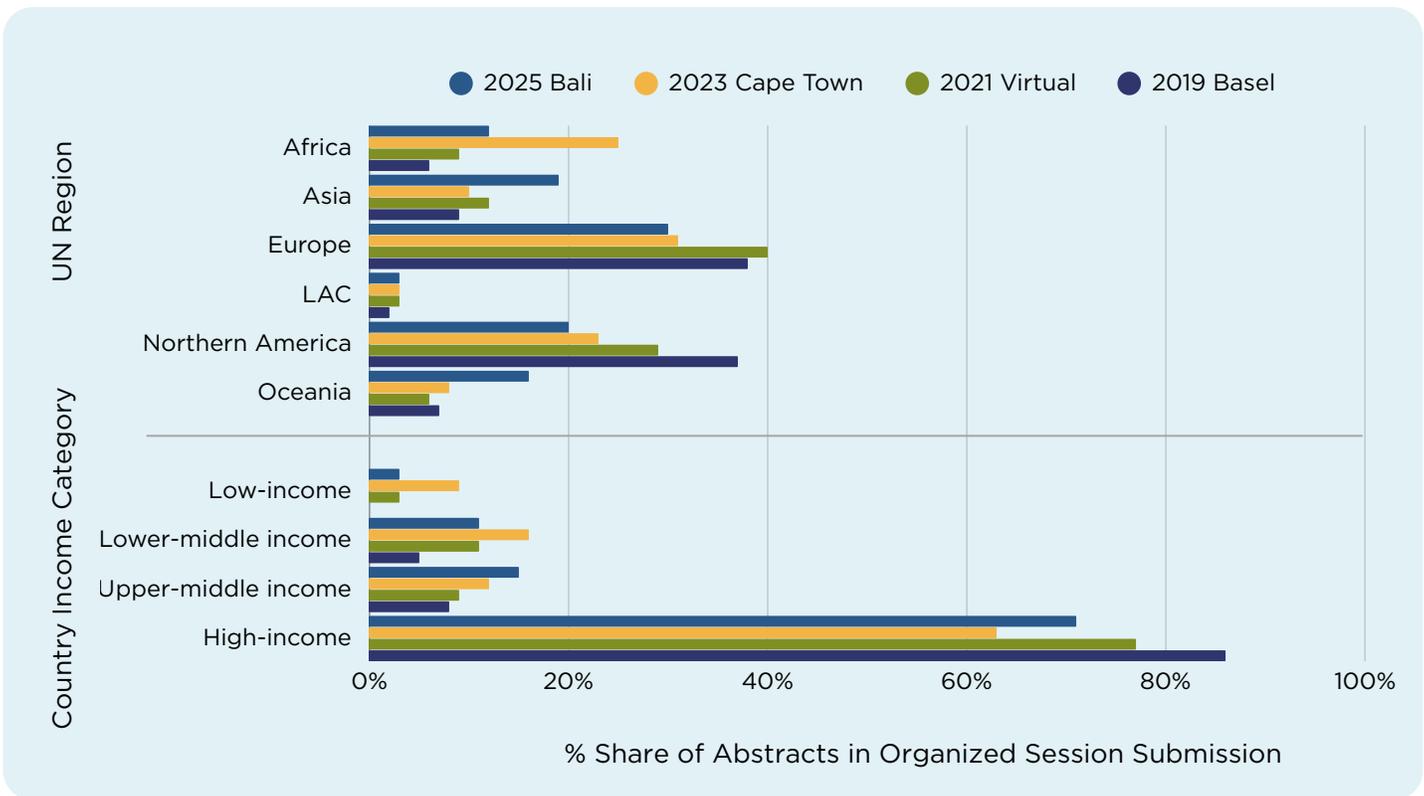
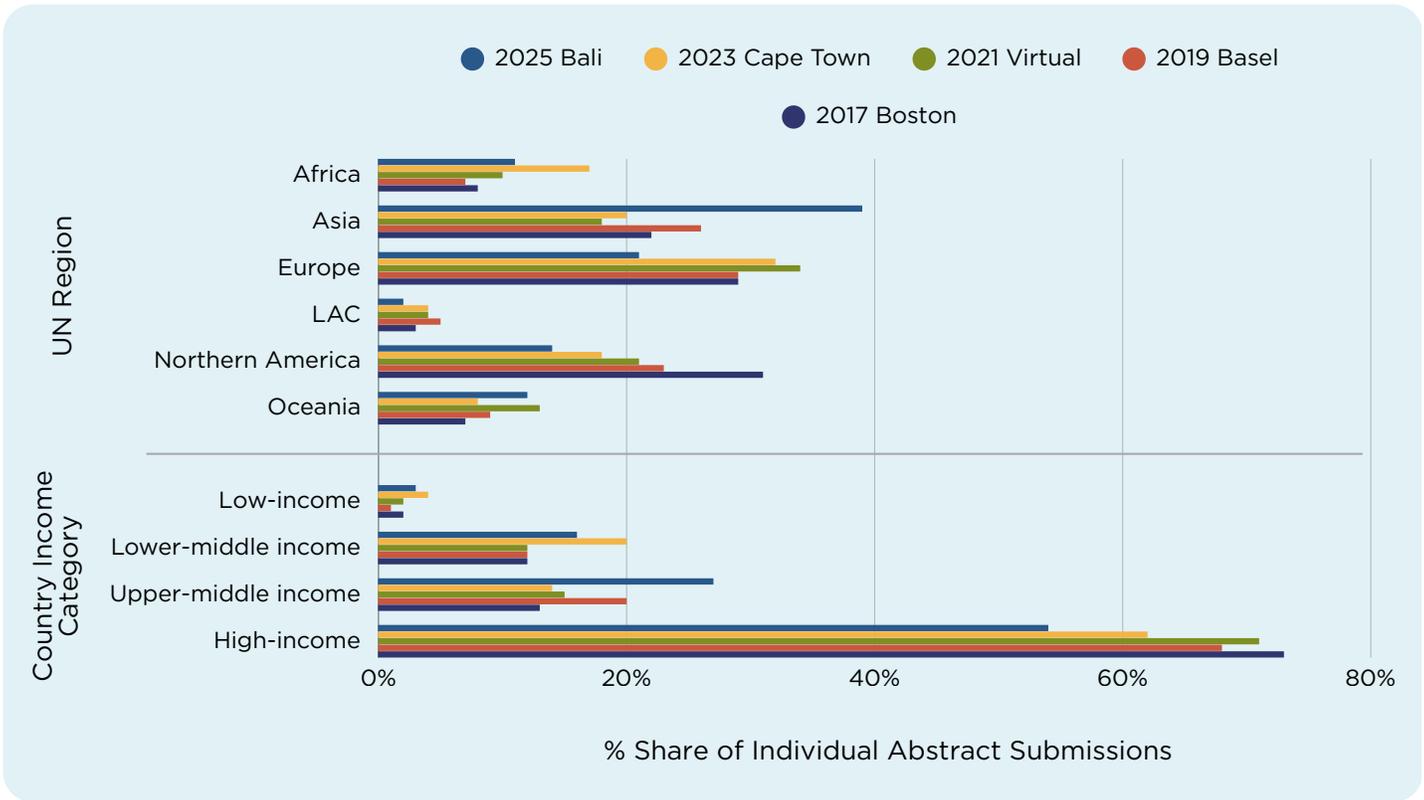
### United Nations Region Map

IHEA uses the United Nations' Regional classification in its geographic diversity analyses. The UN identifies 6 regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, and Oceania. The World Bank's country income categories are also used in IHEA's geographic diversity analyses.

The share of abstracts submitted – both individual and as part of organized sessions – by health economists residing in Asia was greater than in previous years. The share of individual abstracts submitted from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) researchers continued to grow. However, between LMICs, there was a lower share of submissions from low-income and lower-middle-income countries and higher share from upper-middle income countries than the 2023 Congress; this is not unexpected given that most low-income and lower-middle-income countries are in Africa.

Conversely, there has been a decline in the share of abstracts submitted by residents in high-income countries, particularly in Northern America, over time. While there was a lower share of individual abstracts from Europe, there was a higher share from Oceania. As expected, these patterns are influenced by the location of each Congress.

In terms of absolute numbers of abstracts submitted, it is interesting to note that these have increased over time for Africa and Asia and all categories of LMICs, as well as for Oceania. There has been little change in the absolute number of submissions from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and for high-income countries overall. The only region in which there has been a decline in the absolute number of submissions is Northern America (a 20% decline between 2019 and 2025).



Data is not available for abstracts that were part of organized sessions in the 2017 Congress

Given the substantially higher number of overall abstract submissions for the 2025 Congress than previous congresses, and that program spaces are similar across congresses, overall acceptance rates were lower for this congress.

As in previous years, there was a higher acceptance rate for abstracts in organized sessions (66%) than for individual abstracts (54%). The acceptance rate of individual abstracts submitted by health economists residing in high-income countries has declined since 2017, and increased for those in low- and middle-income countries. Acceptance rates for abstracts from health economists in high-income countries remain higher than other countries.

Acceptance rate by World Bank country income category	Individual Abstracts	Abstracts as part of Organized Sessions
Low-income	56%	60%
Lower-middle-income	39%	57%
Upper-middle-income	47%	68%
High-income	61%	67%
<b>Average</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>66%</b>

An important innovation in the 2025 Congress was the introduction of “Flash Orals”, of 3 minutes long, consisting of 12 auto-advanced slides with 15 seconds per slide. This presentation style draws on the increasingly popular “Pecha Kucha” and “Ignite” format of presentations. Flash Orals effectively replaced posters; this change was made based on feedback from previous congresses where poster presenters indicated they had limited opportunities to engage around their research and their preference for an oral presentation. A prize was awarded for the best Flash Oral presentation.

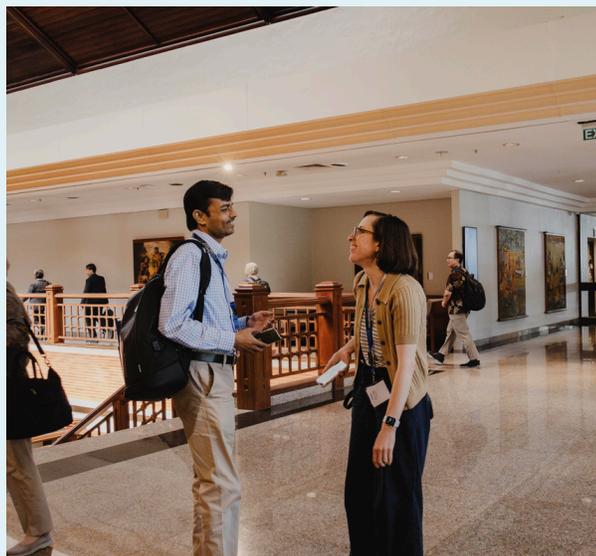
## CONGRESS PROGRAM AND PARTICIPATION

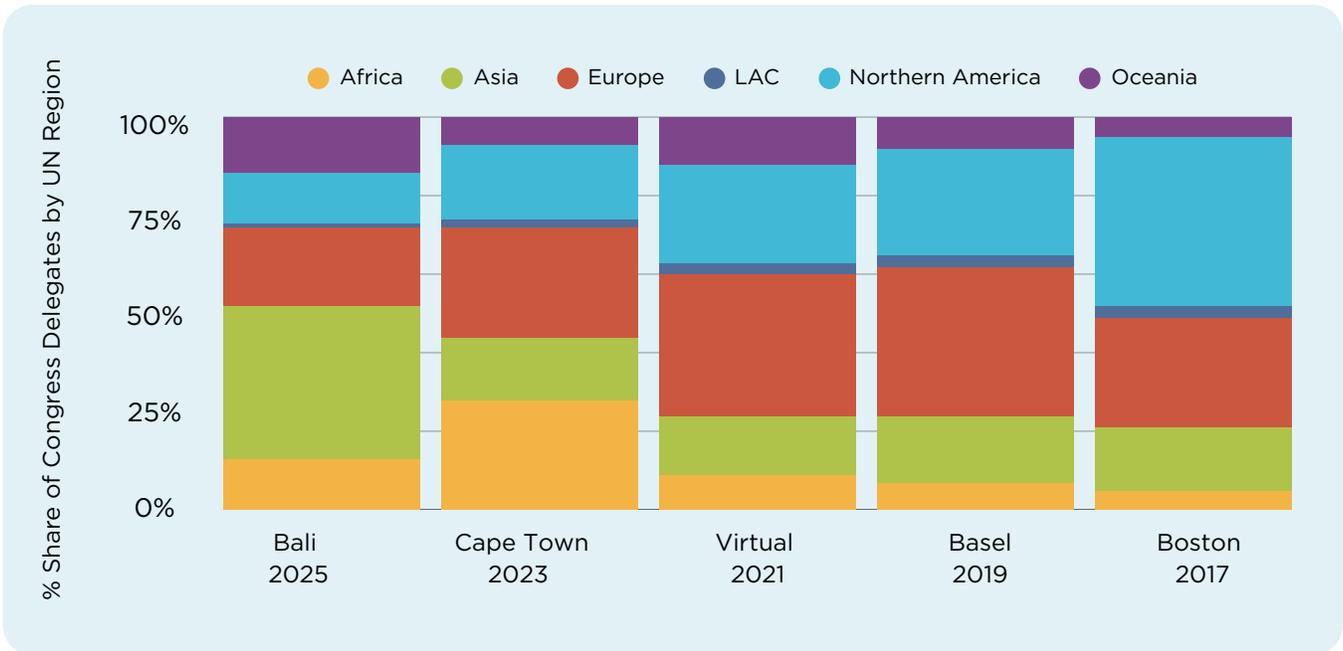
There was a packed Pre-Congress session program on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July, with the highest number of sessions (33) offered at any IHEA Congress. The Congress program comprised of opening and closing plenaries (“Using Economic Policy Instruments to Improve Health: Challenges and Opportunities” and “Mental Health Economics at a Crossroads: Tackling Key Challenges in the Field” respectively) and 240 concurrent oral presentation sessions (84 organized sessions and 156 individual abstract-driven sessions). Special Interest Groups (SIGs) also had an opportunity to meet and discuss future plans. The full program details can be viewed [here](#).

There were a number of events targeted specifically at early career researchers (ECRs), including a Pre-Congress session where selected ECR papers were discussed by experienced health economists and journal editors. ECRs also had an opportunity to have detailed discussions with experienced health economists at a mentoring lunch.

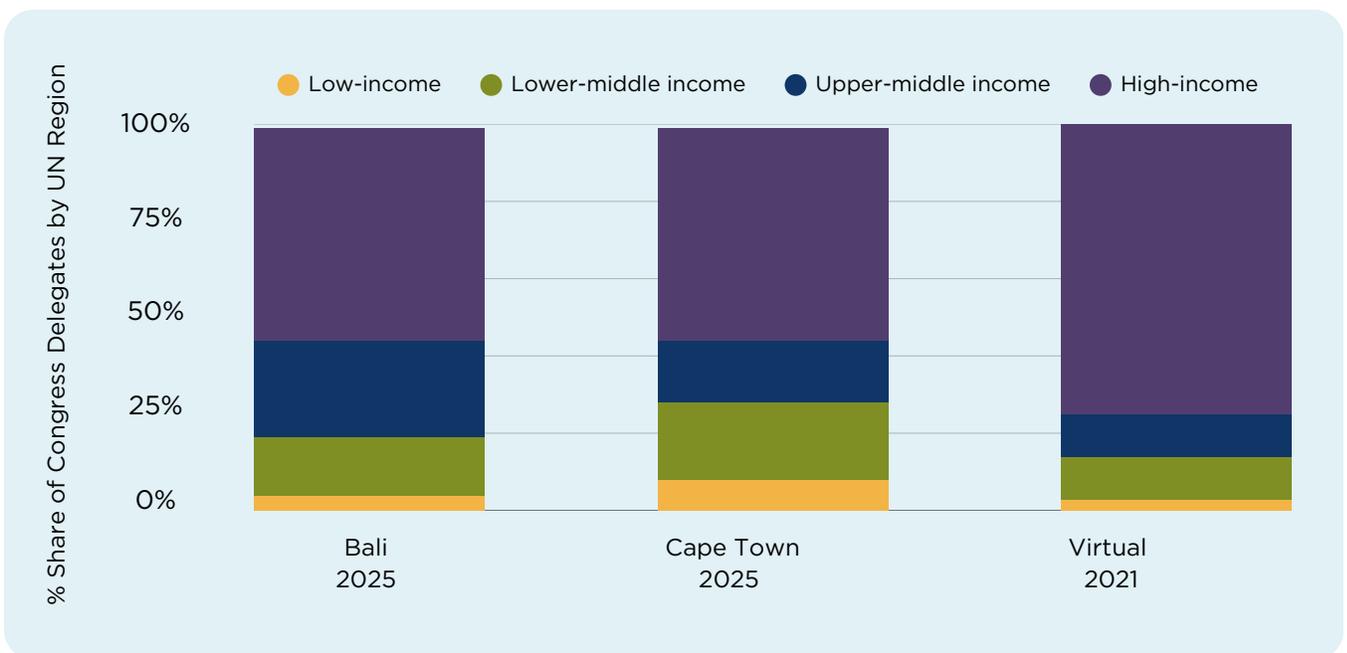
Nearly 1,500 people participated in the Congress, with delegates drawn to Bali from 73 different countries. Geographic diversity is even greater when considering the country of origin of delegates, with 95 different countries being represented.

Although the country in which the largest number of delegates reside is Australia (n=195) followed by China (167), the USA (160), the UK (152) and Indonesia (134), the Asia region accounted for the largest share of delegates (39%). The trend in distribution of delegates across regions is strongly related to the location of each Congress. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that 39% of delegates were from institutions in Asia compared to around 16% in previous congresses. The share of delegates from Oceania is also greater than previous in-person congresses. The dramatic decline of delegates from Northern America is at least partly due to recent funding cuts for universities and research in the USA.

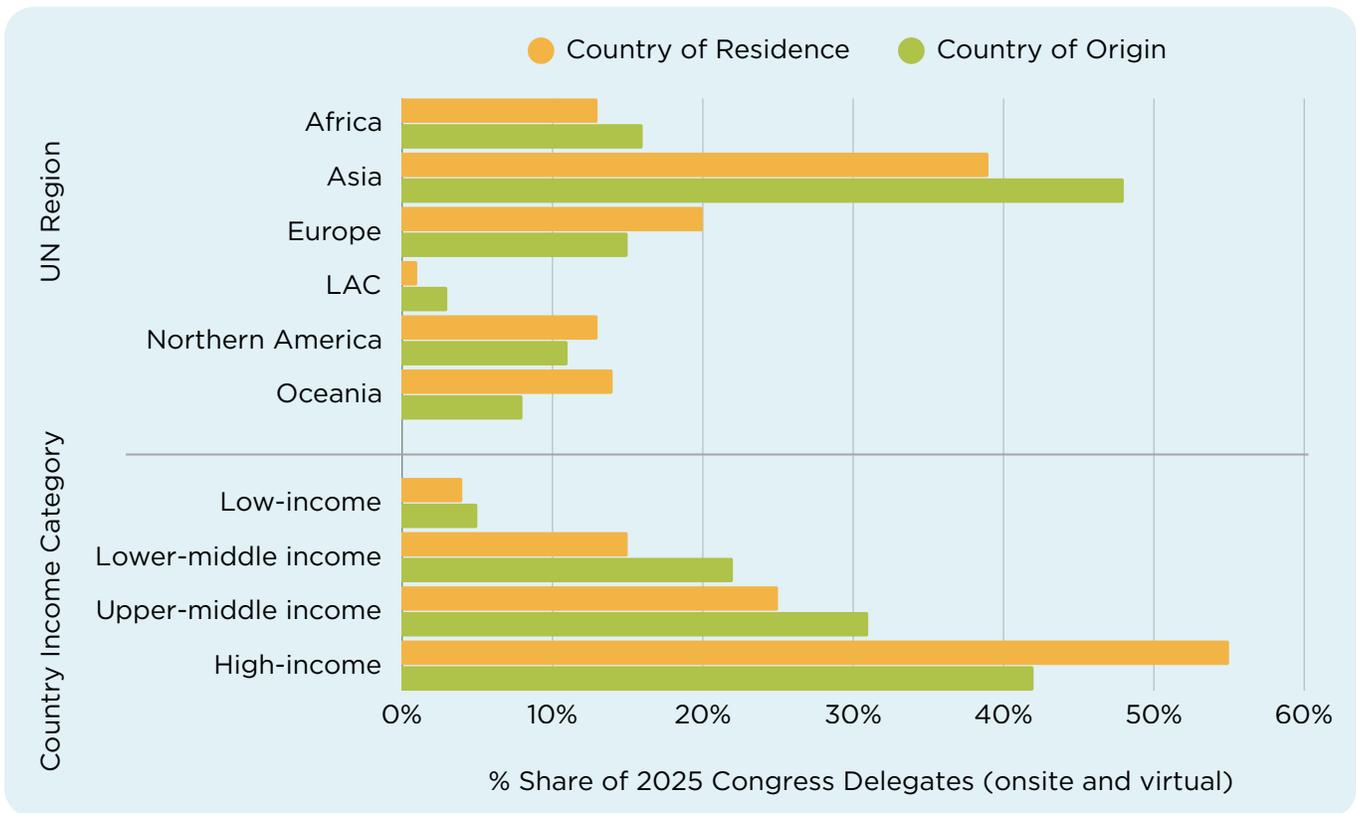




The share of delegates from institutions based in high-income countries was similar to that for the 2023 Congress in Cape Town, and considerably lower than in previous congresses, including the Virtual Congress in 2021. The relative distribution between other country income categories is again related to the congress location; Africa has a larger number of countries categorized as low-income or lower-middle-income than Asia, while Asia has more upper-middle-income countries than Africa.



The geographic distribution of delegates is even more diverse when considering the country of origin of delegates (the country which an individual self-selects as the one they most identify with, due to being born and/or raised in that country), rather than the country of the institution at which they work or study. Through the lens of ‘country of origin’, the majority of delegates were from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with nearly 50% coming from Asia. Participation by delegates from LMICs was facilitated by grants from several funding partners.



## EDI AT THE CONGRESS

Ways in which equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) were promoted in the Congress included:

- Advising submitters of organized session proposals to pay attention to diversity of presenters and discussants.
- Inviting different delegates to moderate each session made up of individual abstracts, to promote inclusion and diversity in moderators.

- Providing guidelines to moderators to promote inclusion of a range of voices in sessions.
- Providing guidelines to presenters to promote access for those with visual and/or auditory impairments.
- Ensuring full accessibility in the venue for those with mobility impairment.
- Providing a multi-faith prayer room (which was used extensively).
- Providing a lactation room and information on childcare options – although it was not financially feasible to provide childcare at no cost to delegates (as at the 2023 Congress), onsite childcare was available through the hotel linked to the convention centre.
- All catering was halal and accommodated dietary preferences and food intolerances.
- Taking the most extensive proactive measures of any congress to facilitate the issuing of visas for all delegates requiring one.
- Raising over USD140,000 in grants for financial support to 185 delegates from low- and middle-income countries and students. An innovation for this congress was a crowd-funding initiative to be able to support students from high-income countries.

## POST-CONGRESS SURVEY FINDINGS

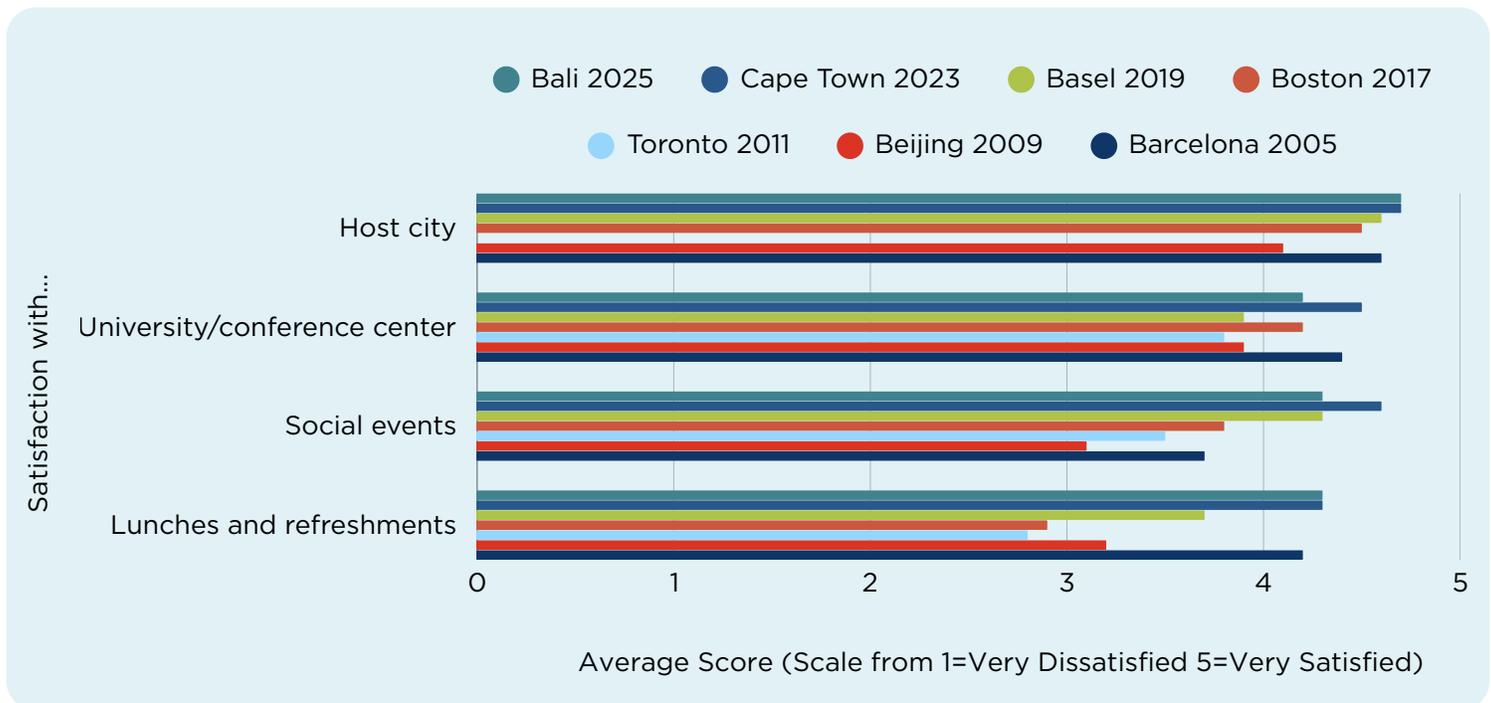
Nearly 40% of congress delegates responded to the post-Congress survey, the highest response rate for any IHEA Congress. The characteristics of survey respondents was comparable to that of delegates (e.g. in terms of regional distribution and career stage). About 55% of respondents indicated that they had not attended an IHEA Congress before, compared with 58% for the 2023 Congress and about 50% at the onsite congresses in 2017 and 2019.

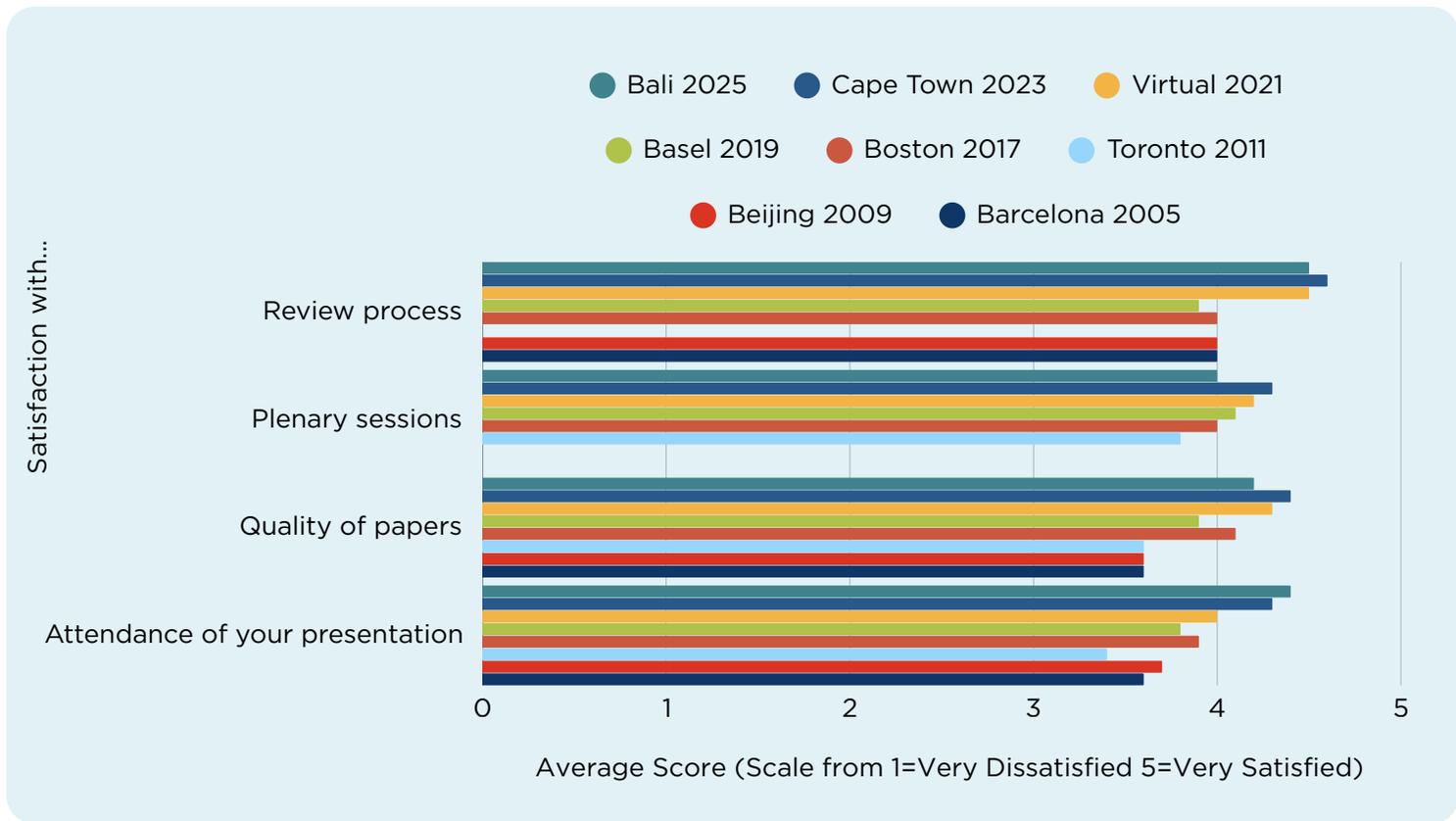
The survey indicated high levels of participation in the pre-congress program, with 73% of respondents indicating that they had attended one or more of these sessions, compared with 69% and 65% at the 2023 and 2019 congresses respectively and only 41% in 2017.

The overall assessment of the 2025 Congress was one the highest of previous congresses for which such survey data are available. The average overall satisfaction with the 2025 Congress was rated 4.3 using a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Congress	Survey Response Rate	Overall Congress Rating (Scale 1-5)
Barcelona 2005	8.5%	3.9
Beijing 2009	20.0%	3.8
Toronto 2011	28.9%	3.7
Boston 2017	31.8%	4.0
Basel 2019	26.5%	4.3
Virtual 2021	29.0%	4.1
Cape Town 2025	33.6%	4.5
Bali 2025	38.2%	4.3

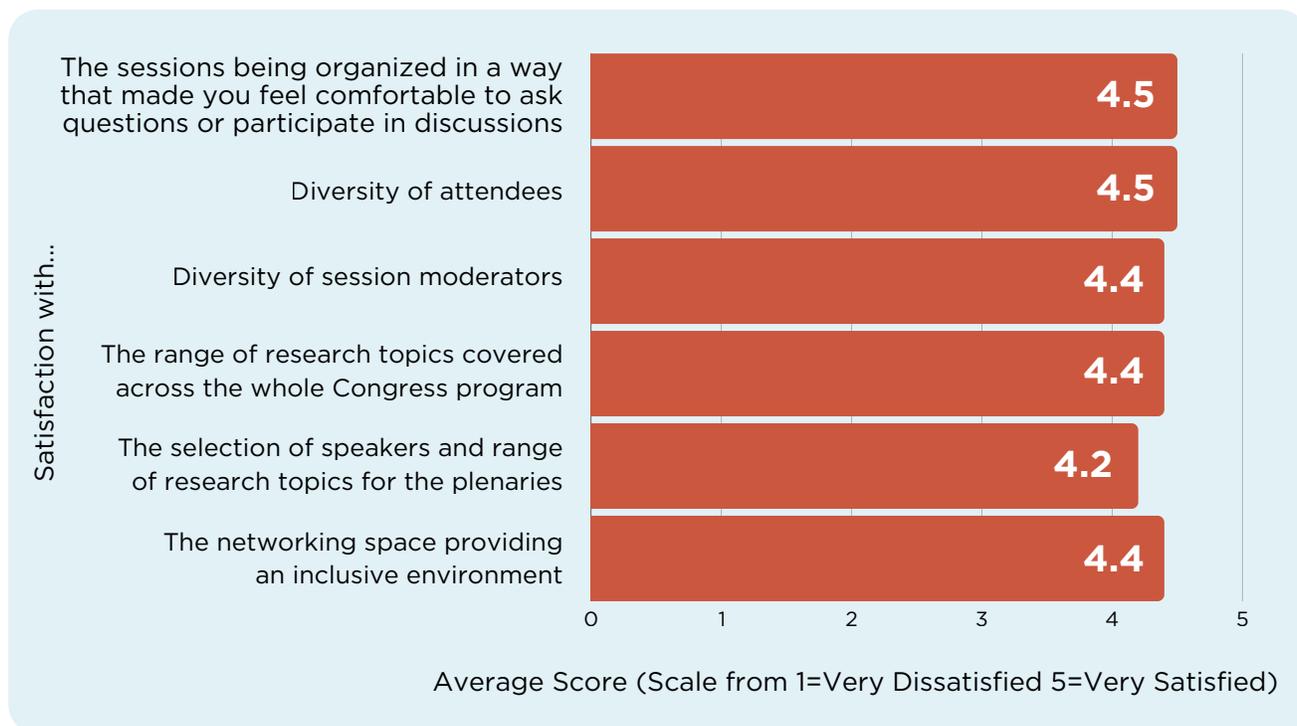
It was also rated highly on most aspects (from satisfaction with the host city, and food and beverages, to satisfaction with the review process and attendance at the session in which the respondent presented), compared with previous congresses for which data are available.





Satisfaction rating with:	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
The presentations in the sessions (presenters' performance, readability of slides)	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.1
The sessions' organization (similarity of topics, number of presenters and discussants, chairing)	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.1
The discussions in the sessions	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.3	4.3
The Congress as a forum for networking and exchange of ideas	4.2	4.2	3.6	4.5	4.4

There were also high levels of satisfaction with efforts to implement the IHEA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy, such as providing an inclusive environment in Congress sessions and networking spaces.



An important finding from the post-congress survey is that 68% of respondents supported continuing with flash orals rather than returning to posters. Given that this was the first time that the flash oral format was used, and that many presenters did not follow the guidelines or successfully convey key messages from their research within the allocated time, this level of support is encouraging. To promote improved flash oral presentations at future congresses, recordings of those who won the Best Flash Oral prize or received an honorable mention have been made available on the IHEA YouTube channel.

## KEY ISSUES FOR FUTURE CONGRESSES

There are many lessons from this review of the 2025 Congress and comparison with previous congresses. IHEA is grateful to all who provided data through the abstract and registration systems and those who responded to the post-Congress survey.

There are several possible contributing factors to the very high level of abstract submissions for this congress. The physical and financial accessibility of the congress location to the large and rapidly growing health economics community in Asia, as well as in Oceania, is of importance – 48% of all abstracts were submitted from these two regions. It is also likely that Bali is viewed as an attractive destination to health economists in other parts of the world.



There is support for flash orals to be a standard part of future congress programs. Flash orals contributed to increasing the total number of presentations that could be accommodated on the program, and feedback from participants on flash oral sessions has generally been positive. There have been suggestions for refining this presentation format, which will be considered by the Scientific Committee. The greatest challenge is to increase the uptake of the PowerPoint template and guidelines provided – those who didn't use the template ran over time and couldn't complete their presentations; those who used the template and guidelines were more successful in conveying their research through imagery and limited text.

The issue of visas as an obstacle to inclusive participation at IHEA Congresses was a major concern for the 2025 event. The congress was moved from its original location due to delegates, particularly from Africa, facing visa processing times of up to a year (see [Nature article](#) here). IHEA is extremely grateful to the Indonesian Health Economics Association (InaHEA) for being willing to become the host of the 2025 Congress at short notice. While visa access for Indonesia is far easier than in many other countries, particularly given the fully online application process, some delegates required special visas. InaHEA engaged with the relevant Ministry to secure their cooperation and submitted applications on behalf of all delegates requiring special visas. A major achievement of this congress was securing visas for every delegate who required one. This in no small way contributed to this congress having one of the highest attendance levels in IHEA's history.

While IHEA has always endeavored to provide visa support to congress delegates, the 2025 Congress experience has highlighted the importance of:

- Securing accurate information on visa requirements and processing times before selecting congress sites, and regularly monitoring for any subsequent changes;
- Initiating discussions with the relevant government authorities at a very early stage;
- Ensuring delegates receive and respond to full and accurate information on visa requirements.

An important factor that impacted on the 2025 Congress was the financial and other constraints faced by colleagues in the USA. It was noticeable that a large share of withdrawals from the program were from those based in the US. Unfortunately, it was not financially feasible to hold a hybrid congress on this occasion, which would have enabled these colleagues to participate in the congress. This option will be explored for future congresses, while encouraging in-person, on-site attendance wherever possible. A hybrid format also allows the recording of all sessions, which can be viewed by delegates afterwards; this alleviates problems due to not being able to attend all sessions of interest in the packed on-site schedule. It would be necessary to plan for a hybrid event from the outset and develop an appropriate registration fee schedule for in-person, on-site versus virtual participation.

Finally, there has been growing concern about financial constraints faced by students in some high-income countries. Not all institutions provide support to Doctoral (and sometimes Masters) students to attend international conferences. Grants raised for delegate support at present all specify that the funds should be used to support those from LMICs. This year, IHEA launched a crowd-funding initiative to address this gap. We are very grateful to those who contributed, enabling five students from high-income countries to be supported. For future congresses, it is recommended that crowd-funding be initiated earlier, and that grants to specifically support high-income students be explored. Raising funds for these students is particularly important given ongoing reductions in funding to universities and for research in several high-income countries.

## AGKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IHEA is grateful to the many people who played a key role in the success of the 2025 Congress, including the IHEA Board, management team and:

### LOCAL TEAM:

Prof. Hasbullah Thabrany, Nadhira Alifa, Rini Noviyani, Mutia Sayekti, Eka Pujiyanti and the InaHEA Board



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 Sachiko Ozawa, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
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## FUNDING PARTNERS:

We are grateful to the following organizations for their financial support for the congress.

Gates  
Foundation



EUROQOL

## CONTRIBUTORS TO CROWD-FUNDING:

The following individuals generously contributed to a fund for students from high-income countries needing financial support to participate in the congress:

Julie Abimanyi-Ochom  
Elena Druica  
Ni Gao  
Karen Grépin  
Michael Grossman

Paula Lorgelly  
Gesine Meyer-Rath  
Mark Shepard  
Ting-Fang Shih  
Aparnaa Somanathan

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