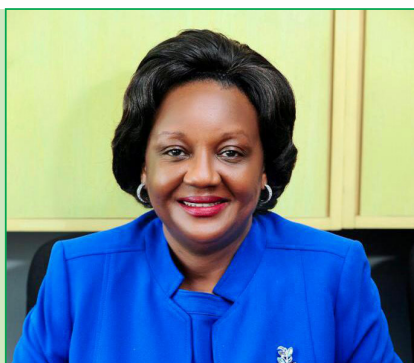




MakSPH Newsletter

**QUARTERLY
PUBLICATION**
Issue 1 Vol. 1
JANUARY-MARCH 2021



Message From Dean

Hello and welcome to our quarterly newsletter covering the months of January to March 2021. I hope all of you are safe and well amidst the uncertain times of COVID-19.

In this issue, we bring you a snapshot of what we have been able to do in the past 3 months. You will hear more of our progress in terms of research outputs, our teaching and innovations as the leader in Public Health education and research in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Also, we are making good progress on infrastructure development project and I am happy to share that the construction of our new home is taking shape. We expect to receive a complete structure of our modern auditorium in May this year. This milestone brings us even closer to providing the population with evidence in complex emerging issues in public health in Uganda, Africa and beyond.

We appreciate our staff, students and partners for the commendable work they are doing even during these uncertain times to ensure continuation of their programme operations. We also would like to send our sincere appreciation to all our partners and we hope to continue working with you in the future.

Enjoy reading our newsletter.

Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze,
Professor & Dean
Makerere University School of Public Health



Jhpiego Ranks MakSPH High in Latest Capacity Assessment



Members and Heads of Units at MakSPH in a group photo with a team from Jhpiego after sharing results of the 2nd OCA in February 2021. Photo by Davidson Ndyabahika

Makerere University School of Public Health scored highly during the 2nd Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA), conducted by Jhpiego, an international, non-profit health organization and an affiliate of The Johns Hopkins University.

As per the Jhpiego Organizational Capacity (JOC) toolkit, organisations implementing projects globally undergo thorough capacity assessment in areas of Leadership and Governance, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Project Management, and Data Visualization and Communications.

Initially, the School had scored 60% under leadership and governance but the second assessment has put MakSPH at 80%, signifying a steady improvement. Under this category, an assessment is conducted in some over-arching areas such as organizational registration, board, leaders and succession plans, fundraising as well as resource mobilization.

Just like in OCA1, MakSPH's Finance and Administration scores are very high

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Ms. Miria Tharao, Jhpiego Kenya Office Senior Human Resource Manager sharing highlights of MakSPH's performance on Human Resource Management. In the OCA the MakSPH scored 100% in Human Resource Management.

at 98%, a contributing factor in attracting new funding. The second assessment established that the School's procurement and Financial Management policies and systems are strong and that their semi-autonomous status has helped to streamline processes with high rates of donor compliance.

"We found out that submission of accountability for advances is now timely as a result of constant follow up and sensitization. Electronic filing of documents is now in place. Staff are planning their procurement better

thus improved turnaround time since government processes can be lengthy," Douglas Mwendwa, the head of Finance and Administration at Jhpiego Kenya.

Dr. Frederick Makumbi, Associate Professor and Deputy Dean MakSPH who also doubles as the PMA Uganda project's Principal Investigator assured the team that the project was to continue engaging other projects to learn and implement best practices.

"The School of Public Health is a star in Makerere University in many things. And

I think what makes us a star is partly the strength which comes with supporting the School not only in research but also capacity building," said Prof. Makumbi.

Representing the Dean, Dr. Christine Nalwadda, the Head of Department for Community Health and Behavioral Sciences -CHBS said she was extremely proud of the improvements, and thanked the efforts by the dedicated staff.

<https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/jhpiego-ranks-maksp-highest-latest-capacity-assessment>



Mr. Pascal Olinga, Jhpiego Uganda Country Office PMA Program Manager sharing results of the OCA at MakSPH.

Karolinska Institutet, Makerere University enter new phase of closer Collaboration with Centre for Sustainable Health



KI's President, Ole Petter Ottersen, and Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor at Makerere University, signed an agreement to establish the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health on 29th January 2021. Photo: Ulf Sirbom, Bildmakarna

On Friday (January 29), Makerere University and Karolinska Institutet, entered an agreement, to further an alliance between the two research-led universities with the view of deepening the long-standing successful cooperation.

The collaboration agreement led to the

establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health – CESH. This Centre seeks to promote partnerships, develop capacity, resources and tools to drive the agenda for sustainable health.

Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor Makerere University, and Prof.

Ole Petter Ottersen, President Karolinska Institutet, signed the agreement in a virtual ceremony.

The agreement is a step in the deepening of the collaboration between the institutions and a major leap towards driving the agenda for sustainable health.



"This is an important next step in the long-standing collaboration between [Makerere University](#) and [Karolinska Institutet](#). Deepening our partnership will be a significant contribution to increase action to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda](#)"

Professor Barnabas Nawangwe,
Makerere University Vice Chancellor.



"Fueled by our experiences in COVID-19, we see an urgent need to build universal preparedness for health and I am convinced that the new Centre will contribute significantly to this. My vision is that the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health will help transform how research and policies are formulated and conducted in the area of sustainable health",

Professor Ole Petter Ottersen,
President Karolinska Institutet

About CESH

Negotiations around the Centre's establishment began about a year ago. Professor Rhoda Wanyenze, the Dean, School of Public Health –and the Centre lead at Makerere University says the Centre is built around the global goals for sustainable development, specifically the 2030 agenda and sustainable development goals.

CESH will be a virtual Centre that will utilize technology and digital tools to achieve its aspirations. It shall focus on three broad areas of research and innovations around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Children, adolescents and characterizing the risk of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

<https://cesh.health/>

CESH Centre of
Excellence for
Sustainable Health



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development



**Karolinska
Institutet**



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



Disseminations



Researchers suggest localized Interventions against COVID-19 spread in border communities

On February 24, 2021, our researchers disseminated findings of a study that sought community understanding and uptake of COVID-19 preventive measures at hotspot border entry points.

Titled, *"Towards local adaptation of COVID-19 prevention measures among people living in Malaba and Mutukula points of entry in Uganda: Using the human-centered design model."* It was conducted at the Kenya Border Crossing of Malaba, a town in Tororo District in Eastern Uganda and Tanzania Border Crossing of Mutukula, a town in Rakai District between September and December 2020.

Funded by Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF), the study analysed

locally designed interventions to enhance community uptake of COVID-19 preventive measures in the two high-risk points of entry into Uganda with a view of providing evidence for stakeholders to support decision making towards minimizing the spread of the pandemic in the communities.

The study revealed that over 80% of the respondents had basic knowledge about how the disease can be prevented; referring to the WHO recommended preventive measures. However, it was discovered that some of the measures like social distancing were impractical especially amongst sex and health workers. According to these workers, the nature of their physically close interactivity

jobs proved social distancing impossible. The study involved local business people, truck drivers among others.

Researchers of the study recommended that guided community development of localized preventive measures would be more effective than the pre-determined recommendations against COVID-19 in place.

Researchers of this study were; Dr. Esther Buregyeya – Associate Professor Makerere University School of Public Health, Dr. Joseph KB Matovu–Research Associate Makerere University School Public Health, BUFHS, and Ms. Rebecca Nuwematsiko–Researcher Makerere School of Public Health.



The Study was conducted at the Kenya Border

Crossing of Malaba, a town in Tororo District in Eastern Uganda and Tanzania Border Crossing of Mutukula, a town in Rakai District between September and December 2020.

80%

of the respondents had basic knowledge about how the disease can be prevented; referring to the WHO recommended preventive measures.



Study Recommends Digital Labor Care Guide for maternity care providers in Uganda



Dr. Justine Bukenya, study PI, and Co-PI Dr. Richard Mangwi together with the study team at the dissemination event in Kololo.

On February 10, 2021, our researchers released results from a study that sought to monitor the feasibility of using an Electronic Partograph, a tool used to monitor progress of pregnancy among women in Uganda as opposed to the current paper-based partographs.

Based on the study results, researchers urged government to fast-track the use of the electronic partograph, a smart and lifesaving tool for improving quality and health outcomes in maternity care. In this study titled; ***“Scale-up of the electronic partograph (e-partograph) to improve skilled delivery and emergency referral among refugees and host communities in the West Nile region of Uganda”*** our researchers evaluated its usability, feasibility, and acceptability for maternity care providers in Adjumani district, at Pagirinya and Ayilo Health Centre IIIs between March - September 2020.

382 mothers were monitored in both facilities using a paper partograph on 201 mothers and electronic partographs for 181 mothers. Among mothers monitored using paper partograph, three were not monitored for the heart rate of unborn, and seven missed blood pressure measurements, while six missed temperature recordings. On the other hand, those monitored

using e-partographs had all maternal measurements recorded. Regarding the APGAR score, a scoring system doctors and nurses use to assess newborns one minute and five minutes after they're born, a total of 13 babies scored below seven of which mothers of 11 were monitored using paper partographs.

This evident background hence informed the researchers' urge to Government especially, the Ministry of Health to assess e-partograph effect on a larger scale including non-refugee settings since evidence suggests its efficiency in improving monitoring of labor.

A partograph (labor progress chart) is a lifesaving tool designed and recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), to monitor the progress of labor and wellbeing of the mother and baby. Dr. Justine Bukenya, the Principal Investigator contends that the e-partograph is an efficacious intervention in close monitoring of labor as it facilitates complete filling of the partograph and timely action. This is as contrasted to the paper partograph commonly used in Uganda according to the researchers.

<https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/study-recommends-digital-labor-care-guide-maternity-care-providers-uganda>



Based on the study results, researchers urged government to fast-track the use of the electronic partograph, a smart and lifesaving tool for improving quality and health outcomes in maternity care.



“While it appears that it is costly now, in the next ten years, the internet will be a necessity in Uganda. Tablets are not going to be an exclusion for a few. So, the wave of digital technologies cannot be resisted. Each health facility can have one tablet and this can support this goal and it is feasible.” **Dr. Richard Mangwi, a co-Principal Investigator of the ePartograph study.**



“The application enables sharing of the partographs among health workers which make referral easy especially in remote communities. We have tested this system in Ayilo, Pagirinya, Dzaipi Health centers which all refer their patients to Adjumani Hospital,”

Joshua Businge Muleesi, Co-Investigator and a Computer Scientist with Think IT Company

Africa: Mak Researcher Designs “COVID Alphabet” for Awareness and Behavioral Change



Dr. Gloria Seruwagi, a Post Doctoral Fellow at MakSPH, displaying the **COVID Alphabet, a simplified behavioral change communication model tool**

In a bid to support government efforts in fighting against Covid-19, Makerere University School of Public Health's own, Dr. Gloria Seruwagi early this year designed a “COVID Alphabet”, a simplified behavioral change communication model tool.

On February 17, this year, the study unveiled the model to the public through media at Makerere University. Her inspiration to design this simple and relatable evidence-based product was after conducting COVID-19 studies in different communities including the REFLECT study in humanitarian contexts and ALERTs study in different informal settlements within Kampala.

Dr. Seruwagi who also doubles as a Lecturer and Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Health Policy, Planning and Management at Makerere University School of Public Health implores leaders, teachers, parents, civil society organizations, policymakers and all health stakeholders to pick an action point from each Alphabet letter to implement if COVID-19 is to be countered.

“As a country we already crossed a line where infections were managed at facility level. With the current community spread, let's reflect on this COVID Alphabet and let each person pick at least one action point”, She said.

The COVID Alphabet (A-Z of COVID in Uganda) is the first of its kind in Africa and has attracted media attention with different people describing it as factual, precise, simple and easy to understand.

Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/africa-mak-researcher-designs-covid-alphabet-awareness-and-behavioral-change>

A banner for the 'REGIONAL MEETING 2021 AFRICA' held from June 27-30, 2021, at the Speke Resort & Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort in Kampala-Uganda. The banner features logos for the World Health Summit, Makerere University, M8Alliance, the Government of Uganda, and the German Health Alliance (GHA). A red circular badge with the text 'COMING SOON' is in the bottom right corner. The background shows a cityscape at night.

Visit: <https://regionalmeetinguganda.com/>

Makerere Study Edges to Close Critical Data gaps on Uganda's snakebite burden and incidence



L-R: Mr. James Ntulume, a Snake expert; Dr. Alfred Mubangizi, Co-investigator/MOH Study Technical Advisor; Dr. John Bosco M. Ddamulira, Principal Investigator; Dr. Susan Kizito, Co-investigator/Study coordinator and Mr. Ssenyonga Ronald, Research officer/Data administrator for BOSASE study.

At least 560 people lost their lives between July and August 2020 due to snakebites according to a new report by Makerere University School of Public Health. The study conducted in six districts also reveals a general lack of knowledge on how to handle snakes and snakebites in the country.

The study conducted in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Kamuli, Kasese, Nakapiripirit and Mubende has shown that there is a relatively high burden of snakebites in the study districts in Uganda with 82.8% of the snakebites said to have occurred more than 12 months back while 12.7% occurred within the last 12 months. At least 5% of the victims said they were not certain of the exact period when it had occurred.

The study was conducted by a team of researchers from Makerere University School of Public Health led by Dr. John Bosco M Ddamulira who set out to determine the burden of snakebites in Uganda in order to generate information for Ministry of Health to design responses for its control and prevention. This was conducted with funding from the government of Uganda through the Makerere University Research and Innovation fund.

In this study, the researchers collected data through interviews with 1,080 household heads and 41 Key Informants (Health workers, District health team members and Community resource persons). They also reviewed medical records from 29 health facilities across the six districts.

While sharing the findings of this study on February 17, Dr. Ddamulira observed that most of the snakebites in Uganda are managed at regional referral hospitals at a rate of 48%, yet Health Centre IIIs see relatively most of the cases at a rate of 20% while private health facilities receive very few patients due to the costs of anti-venoms.

Uganda integrated snakebite envenoming into the country's neglected tropical disease (NTD) program and drafted the first national snakebite prevention and management strategy in 2018. But, the implementation of the strategy is taking a snail pace owing to serious gaps relating to absence of country baseline data on snakebite burden and incidence, the snakes involved and their distribution, characteristics of the bites, community knowledge and practices, and health facility capacity to manage snakebites.

Results from health facility data revealed that for the period January to December, 2019 a total of 736,580 patients that attended the 29 health facilities in the six study districts, 536 (72/100,000 population) were cases of snakebites. The findings also discovered that there were more cases of snakebites reported in the health facilities in Gulu and Nakapiripirit districts with 104 snakebites per 100,000 population, followed by Arua districts with 84 snakebites per 100,000 population compared to facilities in other districts.

James Ntulume, a snake expert on the study notes that Uganda has more than 80 species of snakes but only 5%

are venomous. He shared information regarding some of the venous and non-venomous snakes found in Uganda, citing that they are all generally distributed across the country.

The researchers recommended that the Ministry of Health should develop and distribute guidelines and protocols on management of snakebites in Uganda, including emergency first aid care and treatment kits in hospitals, training health care providers on snakebites and snakebite management and review the supply chain management for anti-venoms and the other drugs used for supportive management snakebite victim to address the frequent stock outs of drugs and also non stocking of anti-venoms by lower level facilities which receive a relatively high numbers of snakebites as compared to regional referral facilities.

The study team is composed of Dr. John Bosco M. Ddamulira, Principal Investigator; Dr. Simon Kasasa, Co-Principal Investigator/Statistician; Dr. Susan Kizito, Co-investigator/Study coordinator; Dr. Alfred Mubangizi, Co-investigator/MOH Study Technical Advisor; Dr. Julius Kyaligonza, Co-investigator; Mr. Ssenyonga Ronald, Research officer/Data administrator and Mr. James Ntulume, a Snake expert.

See details on website via: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/makerere-study-edges-close-critical-data-gaps-ugandas-snakebite-burden-and-incidence>

Results of Study on Stunting Among Children Under 5 Years Released; Reduced Malaria prevalence among children through Insecticide-treated bed nets a key indicator

On 30th March 2021, the Makerere University School of Public Health and the Centre for Global Child Health at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), (Toronto, Canada), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Uganda, and advisory support from the Centre of Excellence for

Maternal Newborn and Child Health released findings of a study on stunting among children under five years in Uganda.

Titled; *Exemplars in Stunting Reduction: Uganda Country Case Study*, the study aimed to understand the drivers of childhood stunting reduction

over the past two decades in Uganda. Uganda was selected as a country for study given its impressive gains in childhood chronic undernutrition, relative to growth in the gross domestic product (GDP).

The blended event brought together different stakeholders from across the world

including academia, the media, representatives from the Ministry of Health in Uganda, International Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the independent participants from the development spectrum.



Exemplars in Stunting Reduction: Uganda country Case Study team at Makerere School of Public Health in a group photo with Ministry of Health officials and other technical officials in government at the dissemination workshop in March this year at Golf Course Hotel, Kampala. Photo by Davidson Ndyabahika.

The study results show that national stunting prevalence decreased by 16% points and mean height-for-age z-score (HAZ) improved by 0.55 standard deviations between 2000 and 2016; however, improvements were not consistent across Uganda's regions, with the Northern region experiencing the slowest gains. Furthermore, child stunting prevalence was consistently lower among the richest, most educated, and urban households.

Also, the most important drivers of stunting decline among children under-five were increased coverage of insecticide-treated bed nets, improved maternal nutrition, and improved maternal education. Other important factors included: maternal and newborn

care, paternal education, access to piped water, increased household wealth, reduced open defecation, women's empowerment, reductions in diarrhea, improved inter-pregnancy intervals, and declines in adolescent births.

The researchers highlighted that insecticide-treated bed net coverage, along with preventive and curative approaches in pregnancy, worked to reduce maternal malaria burden and subsequently improve HAZ at birth. Effects on stunting may have also been achieved through reduced malaria prevalence among children.

Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/insecticide-treated-mosquito-nets-driver-childhood-impaired-growth-and-development-reduction>



The study results show that national stunting prevalence decreased by 16% points and mean height-for-age z-score (HAZ) improved by 0.55 standard deviations between 2000 and 2016

Beating the Odds: How Faith Atai Obtained First Class Degree at School of Public Health

Ms. Faith Atai has emerged top of her class with a Cumulative Grade Point (CGPA) of 4.46. She will definitely bag a First-Class Honors degree from Makerere University in the upcoming 71st graduation ceremony.

Atai, 33, a student of Bachelors of Environmental Health Science, the only undergraduate degree course at the Makerere School of Public Health – MakSPH. The health assistant at Soroti Municipal Council had a troubled background along with her education journey.

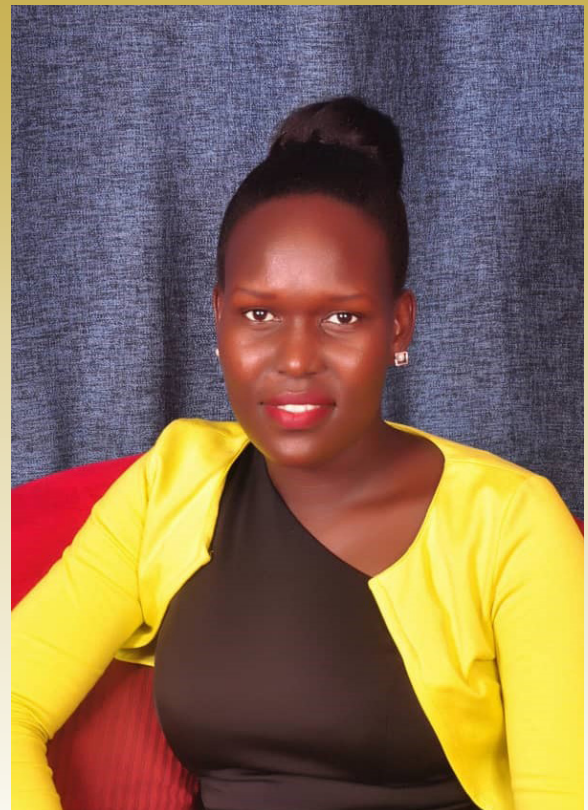
Her journey to success is inspirational. She was forced out of school at age 15 during the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency in Teso sub-region, in eastern Uganda in 2003. At the time, she was in Senior three, and learning processes in all schools in the region were suspended for over a month.

During this period, Atai recalls she stayed with her grandmother but under tense moments with faint glimmering hopes. *"Our movements were restricted. You would hear the open fire in the neighborhood and that whole time we were confined at home; you would pray to be alive the next day. I remember hiding under the bed always. Amidst fire exchanges, I was still optimistic about school,"* she recalls.

Her persistence and confidence that she can make it has delivered her success. She says a first-class degree attainable if, as a student, one knows what they want. She adds that it takes being committed, keeping time, and having the right attitude.

"Good grades are attainable. As a student, there are a few values that you should work on; self-esteem, commitment, time management, and teamwork. I want to especially thank my classmates for their moral support, encouragement, and contribution to my success in this program," Atai says.

She adds that; *"When I received a phone call about this, I cried tears of joy,*



prayed, and thanked God for this success. My mother was equally overwhelmed with joy. I thank a team of selfless and committed lecturers who have been so supportive to me and my classmates."

Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/konys-shadows-faith-atai-emerges-school-public-healths-best-student>



Students with Excellent Academic Performance to be Awarded with Vice Chancellor, Dean Honor Awards

MakSPH strongly advocates positive reinforcement and encouragement as the most powerful tools available in bringing about appropriate behaviors and academic performance among our students.

We recognize those students whose overall Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is above 4.00.

The school at its 50th Board Meeting held in January, 2021, agreed that Bachelor of Environmental Health Science (BEHS) students who made it to the Vice Chancellor's and Dean's lists at the end of their program should be awarded with certificates merit.

According to the MakSPH Principal Registrar Ms. Gladys Khamili, students with CGPA of 4.40-5.00 (First Class Honors) belong to the Vice Chancellor's list while those between 4.00-4.39 (Second Class Upper Honors) on the Dean's list.

The following students will have prestigious awards bestowed upon them for outstanding academic performance.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S LIST			
1	17/U/18579	ATAI Faith	4.46
DEAN'S LIST			
1	17/U/1815	AMPERIIZE MATHIUS	4.36
2	17/U/3463/PS	BALINDA EMMANUEL	4.35
3	17/U/1895/PS	ODIA Francis	4.34
4	17/U/18813	LOCHORO Godfrey Achuka	4.32
5	17/U/6039/PS	MAYEMBA SAMUEL	4.29
6	17/U/8021/PS	NAMAKULA LYDIA NABAWANUKA	4.29
7	17/U/8789/PS	NANYONJO GENEVIEVE GLORIA	4.27
8	17/U/1896/PS	OGWANA Ikol Rachael	4.25
9	17/U/19886/PS	KASIBANTE Emmanuel	4.23
10	17/U/295	JEMBA Pius	4.22
11	17/U/19679/PS	AUMA Christine	4.21
12	17/U/1949/PS	ABASIRA TRINITY MUNGUFENI	4.19
13	17/U/20360/PS	NTULU Rogers	4.18
14	17/U/19577/PS	AKUMU Stella Ayita	4.17
15	17/U/6780/PS	MUWANGA VALERIE MUWOMBIFU	4.16
16	17/U/8144/PS	NAMBAJJWE MOLLY	4.13
17	17/U/7095/PS	NABUKALU JALIDAH	4.10
18	17/U/5911/PS	MAKWASI PHILLIP ISREAL	4.06
19	17/U/19564/PS	AKELLO Rebecca	4.05
20	17/U/1818	BAGUMA JAMES NATWETA	4.00

PLACING MEDIA AT THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE

CHS-MakSPH, Family TV Uganda Partnership Give Birth to a Health Show



L-R: Ms. Lydia Kabwijamu, a Research Associate at Makerere University Centre of Excellence for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, Ms. Brenda Tusingwire Jakira, Associate Producer Family TV and Coordinator for Health Pot program, Dr. Christine Nalwadda Kayemba, the Head of Department Community and Behavioral Sciences, and MakSPH Communications Officer Mr. Davidson Ndyabahika. Photo by Judith Grace Amoiti

Universities are strategically mandated to generate and disseminate critical contextual information with potential to improve the population's life. However, if the knowledge generated is not widely shared or translated into easily understood plans, actions, its importance diminishes.

It is against this background that the Makerere School of Public Health, through the Department of Community and Behavioral Sciences and the Makerere University Centre of Excellence for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health reached out to work with Family Television through a proposed health Program to disseminate topical health information to her viewers.

The Health Pot show is conceived from the traditional African pot which is a multipurpose utensil that is traditionally known to be in every typical African homestead. The teams have since worked on ensuring the programme takes off, thanks to the management of Family TV, that accepted the proposal.

Family TV is a Christian ministry-based Television platform whose programming is available on Free-To-Air (FTA), and GO TV (and soon-to-be on Star Times and DSTV). Family TV is determined to reach millions with morally upright and uplifting content with a focus on spiritual and social economic development of families and societies in general.

The program is hinged on a continuum of care in the maternal and childcare with particular areas of focus being adolescent life, pregnancy, delivery, post-delivery and early childhood development intended to benefit the general public in Uganda, but with particular interest to the entire family including caretakers, mothers, fathers and adolescents. The program is inclusive and targets the population with hearing challenge by use of a sign language specialist at every show.

The 30-minutes show aims at sharing maternal and child health facts, as well as disseminating research findings, experiences and also responding to the questions people of different age groups ask about their reproductive health. The major achievement is envisioned to be

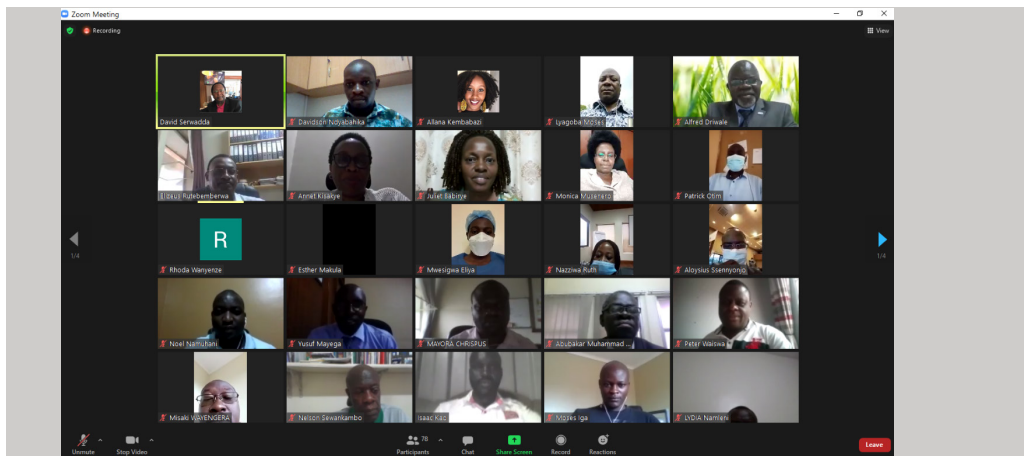
disseminating life changing information to all populations. The Program is currently spearheaded by Dr. Christine Nalwadda Kayemba, the Head of Department Community and Behavioral Sciences, and Dr. Peter Waiswa, the team lead Makerere University Centre of Excellence for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Others members on the team are Dr Gertrude Namazzi, Dr. Victoria Nankabirwa, Ms. Hilda Namakula, Ms. Lydia Kabwijamu and Davidson Ndyabahika at MakSPH, Dr Sam Ononge, a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology School of Medicine, Ms Amanda Murungi, a nutritionist at Mwana Mugimu Nutrition Unit in Mulago Hospital, Ms. Sarah Namutamba and Ms. Fatina Galenda a sign language specialist.



MakSPH Seminar

Uganda's COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout, Deployment Plan and Equity in access

On Friday, February 5th, 2021 for over two hours, Makerere University School of Public Health through the Knowledge Management & Evidence Response Unit-KERU Project held a virtual seminar under the theme; *"COVID-19 Vaccine: Preparations and considerations for the successful introduction and roll-out in Uganda."*



The stakeholder's Seminar was held via Zoom, providing a rare and valued opportunity for over 100 representatives from the academic and research institutions, Ministry of Health, communication experts, Civil Society Organizations, Gavi, WHO, the Office of the President among others, to discuss COVID-19 vaccine, preparations and considerations for the successful introduction and roll out in Uganda.

Organized with support from Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF), this seminar was motivated by the commitment to fundamentally change the research to policy approach to deal with tomorrow's increasingly complex health threats and opportunities.



"What we know is people who are 50yrs and above, UBOS tells us they are 3.3 million people. Our teams are breaking this down and looking at the districts specific demographics, and say; what does this translate for Manafwa, which now becomes Manafwa's target. During microplanning, the vaccination is going to be preceded by registration of beneficiaries, who are either the elderly people that must now be known by name and entered into a register. We are looking at applications which help us to have a database that allows us to know whether we hit our target, and also with capabilities detecting and reminding us of those who have dropped out. So, there's much more work that requires to be done with the downstream stakeholders,"

Dr. Alfred Driwale

Assistant Commissioner Vaccines and Immunization –MOH



"This seminar is a very timely one, we are all very excited about the vaccine, we are very excited that there are many vaccines being approved, there are more candidates [vaccines] in the pipeline and that we have many prevention tools coming on board, so we can escape the disaster that this pandemic has been and perhaps get back to our normal life even as we search for more evidence around many unanswered questions, how long will it protect us and many others that we have in mind about this evidence,"

Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dean, MakSPH



The advantage of mass vaccination is that you gain hard immunity quite first and you raise coverage quite quickly and it also gives publicity and enthusiasm and the feeling that oh, this is working, and then of course for all the health workers feeling like they are part of the intervention. And then of course, you have your problems that relate to cold chain.

Dr. Juliet Babirye, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health Makerere University School of Public Health.



"I know all of us are really looking at the equity being an agency for action, therefore, multiple vaccines are needed at this point in time to meet this global vaccine demand, through the fair allocation mechanism as advised by the strategic advisory group of experts. But please take note, more data is still needed, the age, at the moment the vaccine can be administered to, is 16 years and above, but now more data is needed for the 16years and below, booster doses. A lot is still ongoing."

Dr. Annet Kisakye, Cluster Lead for Immunization and Vaccine Development/ Family Reproductive Health cluster WHO Uganda Office



"The stand of the President is that he doesn't want rich people to have privileged access to vaccines until the common people can also have access to it. So, let it run parallel when we have the vaccine for the common person. We cannot have people who can afford accessing the vaccine, that is not really ethical in Public Health, this is a Public Health issue. So, the focus of government should first be to have us get access whether through COVAX or bilateral agreements and whatever few doses we get, should be available equitably irrespective of whether you can afford or not, or whether you are well connected or not."

Dr. Monica Musenero,

Senior Presidential Advisor on Epidemics

UPDATE

Uganda's Home-grown trials for coronavirus drug

In January this year, President Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhabwe Museveni launched Uganda's first clinical trials for home-grown natural remedy for coronavirus drug at Mulago Hospital.

The home-grown natural product was an innovation by the country's scientists in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Uganda, Makerere University School of Public Health, and Mulago Hospital, among other stakeholders.

But speaking to stakeholders at the MakSPH organized seminar on *"COVID-19 Vaccine: Preparations and considerations for the successful introduction and roll-out in Uganda,"* Dr. Monica Musenero Masanza, a Senior Presidential Advisor on Epidemics said they had experienced some challenges that hampered the progress of this local drug. She said they were hitting a snag in accessing some of the essential inputs, because international companies were unwilling to sell the reagents to Africans.

"We are still struggling to get a few re-agents which are critical for us to transform what we have done so far into a vaccine candidate for animal studies," said Dr. Musenero.



MakSPH Researchers Feature on CGD Panel to examine indirect effects of COVID-19 on essential Healthservices



Three researchers from Makerere School of Public Health on March 31 presented at the global virtual event co-hosted by the Center for Global Development and Gates Ventures.

The event focused on emerging findings from Kenya and Uganda, was organized under the theme; What Do We Really Know About COVID-19's Impact on Essential Health Services? Evidence from Kenya and Uganda,

The experts compared how these two neighboring countries experienced disruptions to essential health services during the pandemic. The discussion also covered what we know so far about the impacts of COVID-19 on other key health areas and shared insights about how ongoing response strategies can protect and promote the broader health needs of the population.

Panelists including Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, Professor and Dean MakSPH, Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, Associate Professor and Steven Kabwama, Training Manager for the CDC fellowship program at MakSPH reflected on the Uganda country findings, challenges surrounding the evidence, and opportunities to address gaps and strengthen evidence-informed approaches to pandemic response that take account of health impacts beyond those directly caused by emerging pathogens, including the effectiveness of mitigation methods besides lockdowns.

Other panelists included; Jacob Kazungu, and Stacey Orangi, both Research Officers at the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme, and Petra Vergeer, Senior Health Specialist, Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF). It was moderated by Carleigh Krubiner, a Policy Fellow at Center for Global Development.

At the event, Dr. Tumwesigye, presented results of a study conducted alongside other colleagues; Okethwangu Denis, Mary Kaakyo, Claire Biribawa titled; Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on health services and mitigation measures in Uganda.

But Dr. Mbona says they assessed the effects of the COVID-19 containment measures such as lockdown on health services to better inform the next preventive measures. For instance, from March to April 2020 attendance to health services reduced and then rose in June or July.

"Notable reduction was in Outpatients Department (OPD) attendance (17%), malaria-OPD (7%), Antenatal care (8%), Immunization (10%), hypertension (17%) and diabetes (10%). Institutional mortality reduced in same period. The intervention significantly reduced the trends of Malaria-OPD and Immunization," says Dr. Mbona.

The results show that the lockdown reduced access to health services and Institutional mortality also reduced due to reduced number of patients and recommend that in future, government needs to explore the effectiveness of other mitigation measures beside lockdowns.

According to Dr. Mbona, although public health responses to COVID-19 should be prioritized, they should be done in context of other diseases. *"Public response to COVID-19 need to be evidence based. Hard restrictions disrupt services and this can have a devastating effect on the health system. There is also need to explore the cost effectiveness of other prevention methods that work in our own settings besides lockdowns. Government needs to invest more in proper enforcement of COVID-19 response measures."*

He also called on the need for government of Uganda to invest in systems that capture mortality data from communities.

INNOVATION IN HEALTH

Four Innovators Win 2020 Social Innovation in Health Awards

Four innovations identified by external reviewers, received awards from the Makerere University School of Public Health Social Innovation in Health Initiative –SIHI Uganda project.

This was during the 3rd national stakeholders workshop held on March 17, 2021 at Golf Course Hotel, Kampala to reward and recognize the best community-based health solutions in Uganda.

The workshop aimed at strengthening collaboration with stakeholders in advancement of social innovation in health. It also gave an opportunity for innovators to showcase their social innovations that have enabled the delivery of more inclusive, effective and affordable health services to Ugandans. It even brought together officials from Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Health, Makerere University and members of the public.

The winners of the 2020 social innovations for solutions that improved access and quality of health care were; Ishaka Health Plan Project (Community based health insurance scheme) that

facilitates access to quality and affordable healthcare services to communities in Bushenyi district, My Pregnancy Handbook project, a user-friendly portable short handbook prepared to deliver authentic health information concerning pregnancy to pregnant mothers, midwives and the general population and SEEK-GSP project, a project aimed at narrowing the treatment gap for depression among people living with HIV using group support psychotherapy delivered by community health workers and the Community Health Insurance, an initiative by the Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau.

Also awarded were students from the School of Public Health for their innovations. They are; Mr. Filimin Niyongabo who showcased the Student's HIV/AIDS Awareness campaign (SHIVA), and Mathias Amperiize spearheading a Youth led cancer and diabetes awareness campaign (YCADAC).

For more details visit <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/four-innovators-win-2020-social-innovation-health-awards>



The winners of the 2020 Social Innovations in Health Awards organized by the School of Public Health pose for group photo.



Dr. Maxwell Otim Onapa, the Director of Science, Research and Innovation at Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation hands over a plaque to Dr. Etheldreda Nakimuli and her team at SEEK-GSP project.



Mr. Filimin Niyongabo, a MakSPH-BEHS alumnus receives a certificate of recognition for his innovation Students HIV/AIDS Awareness (SHIVA) Campaign from Prof. Damalie Nakanjako, Principal MakCHS.



Mr. Lubega Martin, the author of My Pregnancy handbook receives an award from Dr. Maxwell Otim Onapa, the Director of Science, Research and Innovation at Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.



Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, Professor & Dean MakSPH speaking at the 2020 Social Innovations in Health Awards at Golf Course Hotel.



Ms. Susan Nakalawa and Mathias Amperiize, both final year students of Bachelor of Environmental Health Science receive a certificate of recognition for their innovation from Professor Damalie Nakanjako, the Principal College of Health Sciences.



Dr. Olaro Charles, Director Clinical Services at Ministry of Health hands over a plaque to Dr. Patrick Kerchan, the head of programs at Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau - UPMB and his colleagues for their innovation on Saving lives through community health insurance.



Dr. Olaro Charles, Director Clinical Services at Ministry of Health hands over a plaque to Dr. Manasseh Tumuhimbe and colleagues from Ishaka Health Plan, the winners of the 2020 Social Innovations in Health Awards.



Rawlance Ndejjo, Scoops 2021 Velji Young African Award

Rawlance Ndejjo, a Research Associate in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health at Makerere School of Public Health has received the 2021 Velji Young African Leader Award. This was at the Consortium of Universities for Global Health annual conference (CUGH) in March 12-14, 2021.

It was at the conference that the 2021 Drs. Anvar and Pari Velji Awards for Global Health Excellence were announced and later posted on the [conference website](#)

The Velji Young African Leader Award honors an individual who is successfully working to improve health outcomes for individuals in low-income settings through service, advocacy, education, policy-making, diplomacy, and/or research.

Dr. Keith Martin, the founding Executive Director of the Washington, DC based Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) congratulated the recipients citing that; "Every year at our conference we honor individuals for

their outstanding work in global health."

The Velji Family Foundation celebrates global health education, research and service annually by honoring individuals and projects that demonstrate committed, creative approaches to serving underserved populations. The awardees receive recognition at the CUGH Conference, waived conference registration fees, a recognition Plaque and USD \$500 to support ongoing global health activities.

The 2021 Velji Young African Leader Award honored an individual who was under 35 years of age on December 31, 2020, born in an African nation, and is currently attending/working in an institution in Africa. Usually, the winners must have shown exceptional ability and commitment to improving the wellbeing of individuals in low-income settings.

Mr. Ndejjo's research interests are in Cardiovascular disease, Environmental health, and COVID-19.



Learning from Exemplars in Global Health: Mitigating the Indirect Effects of COVID-19 on Maternal and Child Health

On Saturday, March 13, 2021, Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze was among the high-level panel that presented at the international conference of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH). The panel included Nadia Akseer, an Assistant Scientist at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, USA, Professor Agnes Binagwaho, Vice Chancellor University of Global Health Equity, Rwanda and Mushtaque Chowdhury, a Professor of Population & Family Health at Columbia University and Adviser, BRAC

The panel explored how countries employed strategies for delivering interventions and structured

programs to achieve health gains during past emergencies as well as present emerging findings on

innovative strategies to maintain essential health services and mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Join Exemplars in Global Health at CUGH 2021

Rhoda Wanyenze
Dean and Professor,
Makerere University
School of Public Health,
Uganda

Nadia Akseer
Assistant Scientist, Johns
Hopkins Bloomberg School of
Public Health

Mushtaque Chowdhury
Professor of Population &
Family Health, Columbia
University and Adviser, BRAC

Agnes Binagwaho
Vice-Chancellor, University of
Global Health Equity

Taking the lead in COVID-19 Vaccination



Dr. Peter Waiswa receives his AstraZeneca jab at Jinja hospital



Makerere University Vice Chancellor Professor Barnabas Nawangwe taking his COVID-19 Vaccine jab at Makerere University Hospital on March 26. Photo by Mathias Ssemanda



Our MPH alumnus who currently serves as Uganda's Health Minister Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng taking her COVID-19 Vaccine. Photo by Kelvin Atuhaire



Dr. Fred Wabwire-Mangen, Professor of Epidemiology in the Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics at MakSPH taking his AstraZeneca jab. Photo by Kelvin Atuhaire



Prof. William Bazeyo, RAN Lab Director & Chief of Party together with the WHO Country Representative to Uganda, Dr Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, and other dignitaries. They all received their AstraZeneca jabs. Photo by Kelvin Atuhaire



Prof. Damalie Nakanjako, Principal, MakCHS receive Vaccination against COVID-19 on March 20, 2021. MOH Photo.



On Wednesday March 10, Uganda rolled out the first phase of a nationwide Covid-19 vaccination, joining a host of countries in Africa to initiate the inoculations.

The School of Public Health has equally taken lead in receiving the jabs. Here, we bring you a pictorial snapshot of how staff at Makerere University have embraced the vaccination campaign.

Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health received the first COVID-19 vaccine injection in the country's inoculation campaign.

As part of a phased rollout, a total of 950,000 frontline workers including health workers, security personnel, teachers and journalists are expected to receive the AstraZeneca jabs.

On the move to train 600 VHTs on epidemics and Pandemic Preparedness



Dr. David Musoke and team onboard a boat on their way to Bussi islands on Lake Victoria for the training of VHTs.

On March 12, a team led by Dr. David Musoke concluded a 4-days training of community health workers, locally known as Village Health Teams (VHTs), on epidemic and pandemic response and preparedness on Bussi and Zzinga Islands on L. Victoria in Wakiso district.

This is part of an international partnership between Nottingham Trent University in UK and Makerere University, Uganda. The project is currently being implemented under the School of Public Health with Dr. David Musoke as the team Lead while

Associate Professor Linda Gibson is a Co-Lead at Public Health Nottingham Trent university.

"We are training VHTs to take part in cases of pandemics such as COVID-19 and Ebola and epidemics like cholera, measles and yellow fever among others. Given that VHTs are the first people to respond in communities, it is necessary to be knowledgeable so that in case of an outbreak they are in a good position to respond to diseases in their communities," Dr. Musoke said.

During the training, Mr. Richard Mabira, the Bussi Island Sub County Chief in his remarks hailed MakSPH's timely support for VHTs on the islands and encouraged the VHTs to use the knowledge and skills they had gained to improve their communities including for preventing the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The target is to train at least 600 Village Health Teams in Wakiso district. The trainings are expected to end at the end of April with support from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

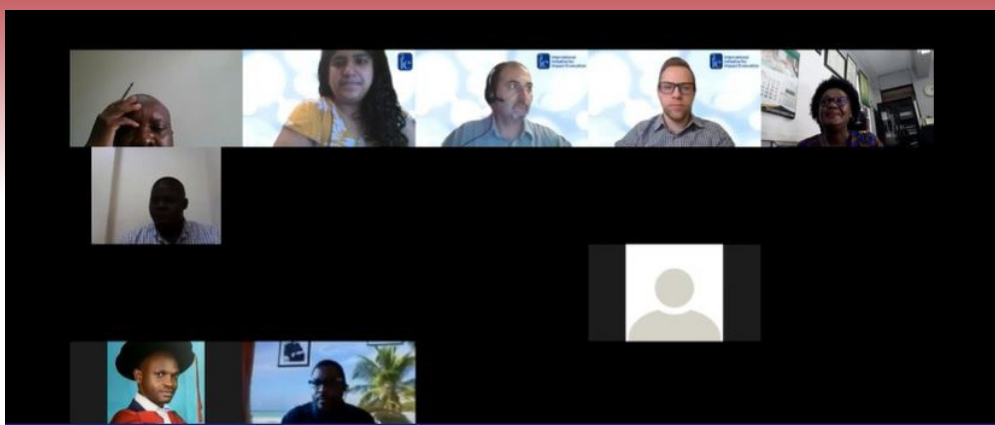


VHTs at Bussi Island Sub County together with the MakSPH team after the training.



Dr. David Musoke in a group photo with VHTs after their training on Epidemics and Pandemics preparedness at Bishop Kawuma Primary School, Zinga island, Lake Victoria.

37 Makerere University Staff, key government officials receive skills in impact evaluation



Thirty-seven officials in Uganda have undergone a three-weeks capacity building training, under the Impact Evaluation for Evidence Based Decisions (IEED) project.

IEED project is a collaborative effort amongst academics and researchers affiliated to the Schools of Public Health and Statistics and Planning within Makerere University and policy makers in the sectors of health, education and agriculture with an overall goal of strengthening the use of impact evaluation in policy decisions and program implementation.

The training was conducted virtually by International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), as well as the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) at the University of California Berkeley.

Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, a Professor and Dean, Makerere University School of Public Health said the School is looking forward to learning from 3ie and expanding this partnership beyond the training to the actual evaluations on the ground in Uganda and the region.

"On behalf of the School of Public Health, I would love to welcome you all and to appreciate our partners. Thank you for working hard and letting us to this point when we can begin the course and I appreciate our deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of academic affairs, Prof. Umar Kakumba for joining us" said Dr. Wanyenze.

The training had participants from Makerere University across various schools, and other participants from the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

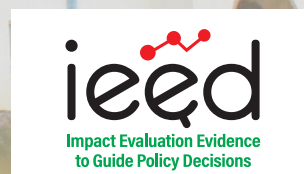
"We are hopeful that this will start us off in terms of doing joint work to evaluate the programmes in the ministries that are participating and, in the future, perhaps more so that we can add value in terms of using evidence to expand our programmes in Uganda," Dr. Wanyenze said.

Professor Umar Kakumba, the first Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) at Makerere University lauded the projects for kick-starting the inaugural training, capacity building for our governmental institutions.

"We are looking forward through research and innovations that can be impactful to the community but also enhancing that strategic partnership role within not only governmental institutions within the country but also regionally and internationally. So, we are looking at this impact evaluation program and project where we are to strengthen the use of impact evaluation for evidence to provide evidence that can guide the policy decision but also huge investments," Professor Kakumba said.

The IEED project is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation with the main goal of improving country-level policy processes and systems that make evidence use integral to policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring, contributing to evidence-informed improvements in specific government policies and programs that have potential for wider influence and fortifying the emerging field of evidence-informed policymaking.

Professor Kakumba, who is also the IEED project chairperson Advisory Board hailed the funders for their trust and generosity to support such initiatives aimed at providing skills to Ugandans. Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/37-makerere-university-staff-key-government-officials-receive-skills-impact-evaluation>



IEED project is a collaborative effort amongst academics and researchers affiliated to the Schools of Public Health and Statistics and Planning within Makerere University and policy makers in the sectors of health, education and agriculture with an overall goal of strengthening the use of impact evaluation in policy decisions and program implementation.

Successful PhD Defense Virtually Through Social Distance

For generations, dissertation defenses have been crowning moments for PhD candidates, something they spend years visualizing. At a defense, a student presents work and fields questions; the professors on the dissertation committee then confer privately, and render their verdict to the student. Usually, this is a physical face to face experience.

However, in these challenging times and under unprecedented global circumstances, our PhD students continue to be flexible and resilient to successfully complete this important milestone in their academic careers.

Warm congratulations to these postgraduate students who have recently completed their successful remote defenses!

Dr. Kaitesi Mukara Batamuliza



On 25th January 2020, **Dr. Kaitesi Mukara Batamuliza** successfully defended her Ph.D. via Zoom. She

appeared before a panel chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho with Prof. Stephen Lawoko Opio as her opponent. Prof. Johannes Fagan was her external examiner while **Dr. Elizeus Rutebemberwa** and **Dr. Sarah Ssali** her internal examiners. The student has been supervised by **Dr. Peter Waiswa**.

It was organized by the Department of Health Policy, Planning and Management.

The candidate presented her thesis in about 49 minutes. This was followed by cross examination between the Opponent and the Candidate which lasted for about 1 hour. It was noted that the candidate had two publications and two manuscripts still

under review. The external examiner and two internal examiners then examined the candidate.

She investigated the Burden and care seeking practices for ear infections in children under five in a district of Kigali City, Rwanda.

Following the final evaluation by the examiners, Dr. Batamuliza's thesis was considered worthy of the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Makerere University.

Her defense was attended by several personalities from the academia including Prof. Sharon Fonn, the deputy director for from CARTA, a project that supported Kaitesi's project.

Dr. Justine Nnakate Bukenya



Dr Justine Nnakate Bukenya equally defended her PhD in a blended function held both virtually at Makerere University School of Public Health, Ran Lower Lab Kololo Annex, on Tuesday March 2nd 2021.

She investigated; Pregnancy Planning and Utilization of Maternal Health Services by Female Sex Workers in Uganda.

Dr. Nnakate presented her thesis in 43 minutes followed by cross examination

of the Candidate by the external examiner, Prof. Olufunmilayo Fawole. She was externally by Prof. Jerome Kabakyenga in a session chaired by Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach.

Three internal examiners examined the candidate. They included Dr. Joan Kalyango, Dr. Josaphat Byamugisha and Dr. Juliet Kiguli. Professors Rhoda

Wanyenze, David Guwatudde and Assoc. Prof. Stella Neema were her supervisors.

The function was organized by the Department of Community Health and Behavioral Sciences. The candidate's thesis was considered worthy of the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Makerere University.



Professors: Rhoda Wanyenze, David Guwatudde, the supervisors of Dr. Bukenya in a photo with Professor Christopher Garimoi Orach, the session chairperson.

Dr. Arthur Bagonza



On Tuesday March 2nd 2021, **Dr Arthur Bagonza** defended his PhD in a blended function held both virtually and at Makerere University School of Public Health, RAN Lower Lab Kololo Annex.

The function was organized by Makerere University College of Health Sciences, School of Public Health, Department of Community Health and Behavioral Sciences and the session was chaired by Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach.

Arthur investigated **the Feasibility and Effectiveness of Peer Supervision on Paediatric Fever Treatment Among Registered Private Drug Sellers in East Central Uganda**

After his presentation, Dr Bagoza was cross examined by Prof. Yemane Behane (opponent) and Prof. Ib Christian Bygjerg (external examiner).

His internal examiners Assoc. Prof. Stella Neema and Assoc. Prof. Lynn Atuyambe. He was supervised by Dr. Henry Wamani, Prof. Stefan Swartling Peterson and Prof. Andreas Martensson.

His PhD thesis was considered worthy of the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Makerere University. The panel of examiners echoed that the candidate had made a fruitful and remarkable academic journey and his thesis work was worthwhile.



L-R: Assoc. Prof. Stella Neema, Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach, Assoc. Prof. Lynn Atuyambe Dr. Henry Wamani and Dr. Richard Kajura.



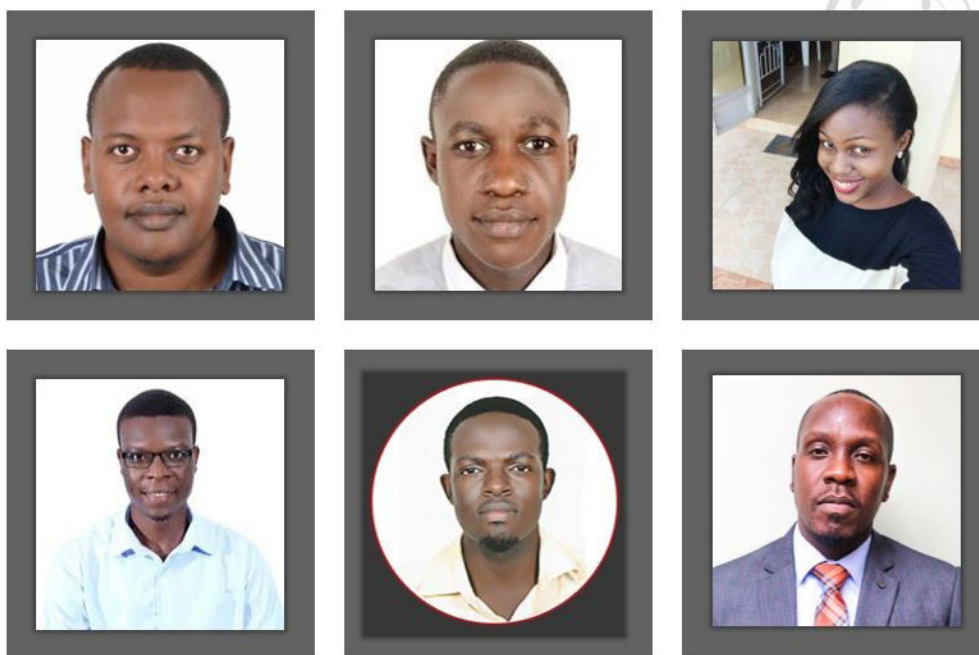
MakSPH staff with Dr. Justine Bukenya and Dr. Arthur Bagonza. The duo will be graduating with PhDs in the forthcoming Makerere University 70th graduation ceremony.



Dr. Arthur Bagonza during his PhD defense at MakSPH, Kololo offices.

Six MakSPH Early Career Scholars Receive Seed Research Funds

Cycle three MakSPH Small Grants winners 2021



The six awardees of the MakSPH Small Grants Program:

L-R; Dr. Arthur Bagonza, Solomon Wafula, Catherine Ninsiima, Rawlance Ndejjo, Bonny Enock Balugaba, and Frederick Oporia.

Six early-career scholars at the Makerere University School of Public Health have been awarded funding to support their research.

Cycle three (3) of the MakSPH Small Grants Program has six awardees that are: **Rawlance Ndejjo, Solomon Wafula, Dr. Arthur Bagonza, Frederick Oporia, Catherine Ninsiima, and Bonny Enock Balugaba.**

Each of the awardees shall receive up to US\$5000 (about 18 million Uganda Shillings) for the research. The awards were announced by [Dr. David Musoke](#), the newly appointed Grants and Research Capacity Building Committee Chairperson in a virtual Committee meeting held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021.

Representing the Seed Grant recipients, [Rawlance Ndejjo](#), a Ph.D. Student and Research Associate at the School hailed the School management for the initiative towards supporting early-career scholars to grow their research capacity.

"On behalf of the recipients of this third round, I want to thank the Grants and

Research Capacity Building Committee for awarding us these grants. It's an honor. We want to thank you for giving us funding to implement some of our ideas," Ndejjo said.

He also thanked the School Management and the Dean for starting this initiative to support young researchers.

"This will be a big stepping stone for us as we look forward to winning other grants. I also want to congratulate my colleagues for getting this far and I promise that we shall work as a team to move the different research agendas forward," Ndejjo said.

[Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze](#), Professor and Dean, MakSPH congratulated the team of six researchers for emerging winners of the 3rd round of the seed grants from the School.

"They are seeds to grow our individuals and young faculty, our stars for tomorrow. They are also seeds because they are growing new areas of research where we are not doing as much as we ought to. But they are also seeds because they are growing us as a School," Prof. Wanyenze said.

The Dean also appealed to the grantees to exhibit professionalism, ethics, and accountability.

"When you receive a seed, please do not eat it. This is meant to grow. Please make sure that it grows in various directions. Make sure that it grows you as an individual, and the subject of research you are going to work on. In other words, do a good study, look out for other grants that you can apply for to move that agenda forward, and also make sure that it grows the School. We are looking up to you and hopefully, this seed grant can add value to you all," Prof. Wanyenze added.

Overall, a total of 11 applications were received but six were successful. [Dr. David Musoke](#) congratulated the grantees on the awards and encouraged them to conduct good quality research so as to be a stepping stone for better things in the future.

Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/six-maksp-early-career-scholars-receive-seed-research-funds>

CERTIFICATE IN HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH



Makerere University
College of Health Sciences
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Fees and funding for course

Ugandan Participants **740,000UGX (200USD)**
External participants **250 USD**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT



Championing Training for Field Epidemiologists in Uganda: 12 Graduate from PHFP



PHFP Fellows cut cake with CDC and Program officials at the 5th cohort graduation ceremony in January.

Twelve (12) Field Epidemiologists graduated under the Uganda Public Health Fellowship Program, a tripartite Public Health Workforce Capacity building program of the Ministry of Health, Makerere University School of Public Health and the U.S Centers for Disease Control (US CDC). This was after the fellows completed their two-years field disease analysis.

The graduates were awarded certificates of completion by Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, the junior Minister of Health for General Duties who represented, Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health at the 5th Graduation ceremony of the Fellowship program on Friday, January 29, 2021, at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala.

In her remarks, Dr Lisa Nelson, the U.S CDC Director, Uganda hailed the graduating fellows for uncovering important public health problems facing communities. *"This included analysis of surveillance data & investigating a couple of outbreaks".*

This cohort's activities included the COVID response - airport screening, contact tracing, mental health of health workers and border surveillance. The CDC supports response to Malaria, HIV NCD prevention and this cohort managed to complete 18 projects in HIV response.

Dr Lisa Nelson said lessons learned from this program will be critical in containing COVID-19 and other epidemics such as Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV.

"Expertise in these areas is important because staffing challenges remain a problem in dealing with disease outbreak and emergencies. Our target is to have one (1) Epidemiologist per 200 people. Going by Uganda's population, 260 Epidemiologists are required" - Dr Lisa.



Dr. Julie Harris, the CDC Resident Advisor hands a certificate to Dr. Ronald Reagan Mutebi a graduating fellow. Looking on is Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, the junior Minister of Health for General Duties.



Director General Health Services Dr. Henry Mwebesa hands a certificate to a graduating fellow at the ceremony.



The PHFP Fellows

- 1) Doreen Nsiimire Gonahasa
- 2) Dr. Rukondo B. Gerald
- 3) Gloria Bahizi
- 4) Dr. John Kamulegeya
- 5) Dr. Irene B. Kyamwine
- 6) Maureen Nabatanzi
- 7) Katusiime Maureen
- 8) Dr. Muwerezwa Peter
- 9) Phoebe Nabunya
- 10) Dr. Mutebi Ronald Regan
- 11) Sandra Nabatanzi
- 12) Yvette Wibabara

80

PHFP fellows enrolled in advanced field epidemiology since 2015.

110

Out break investigations made by fellows over the last six years

45

Manuscripts published in reputable peer reviewed journals

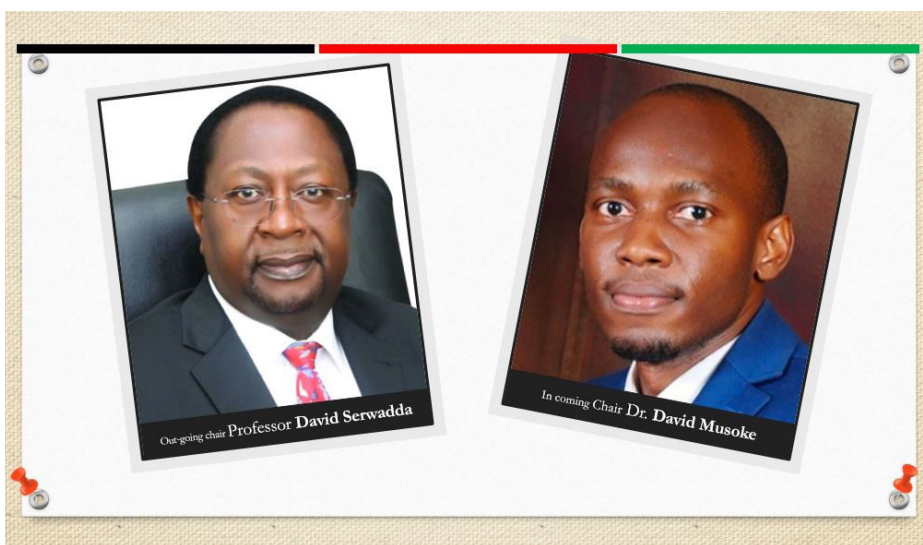
Over the past six years, the fellows have conducted over 110 out break investigations, most of them on higher priority diseases of public health importance, thereby contributing to the effective management and control.

They have also analysed public health surveillance data with the aim of improving detection for disease epidemic alerts and prompting early response.

Dr. Henry Mwebesa



MakSPH Grants and Research Capacity Building Committee Gets New Leadership



Makerere University School of Public Health's (MakSPH) [Dr. David Musoke](#) has started his term as the new Chair of the Grants and Research Capacity Building Committee.

Dr. Musoke, a Lecturer in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health at MakSPH, replaced [Dr. David Serwadda](#), an infectious disease epidemiologist and Professor at the School who had served in this capacity for 13 years, at the committee's handover meeting held on 23rd March 2021.

MakSPH maintains its rank as an academic,

research leader in public health in the region. This has been enabled by a strong and dedicated team of professionals that support the research and training. The School has also been leading in this area of grants management in the entire University, thanks to the credible leadership of the School.

One of its key achievements under Prof. Serwadda's leadership has been a generation of strong policies to guide the grants management at the School, that have since been approved by the School Board. The documents range from

the Grants Procedure Manual, Conflict of Interest Policy to Management of Grants external to MakSPH.

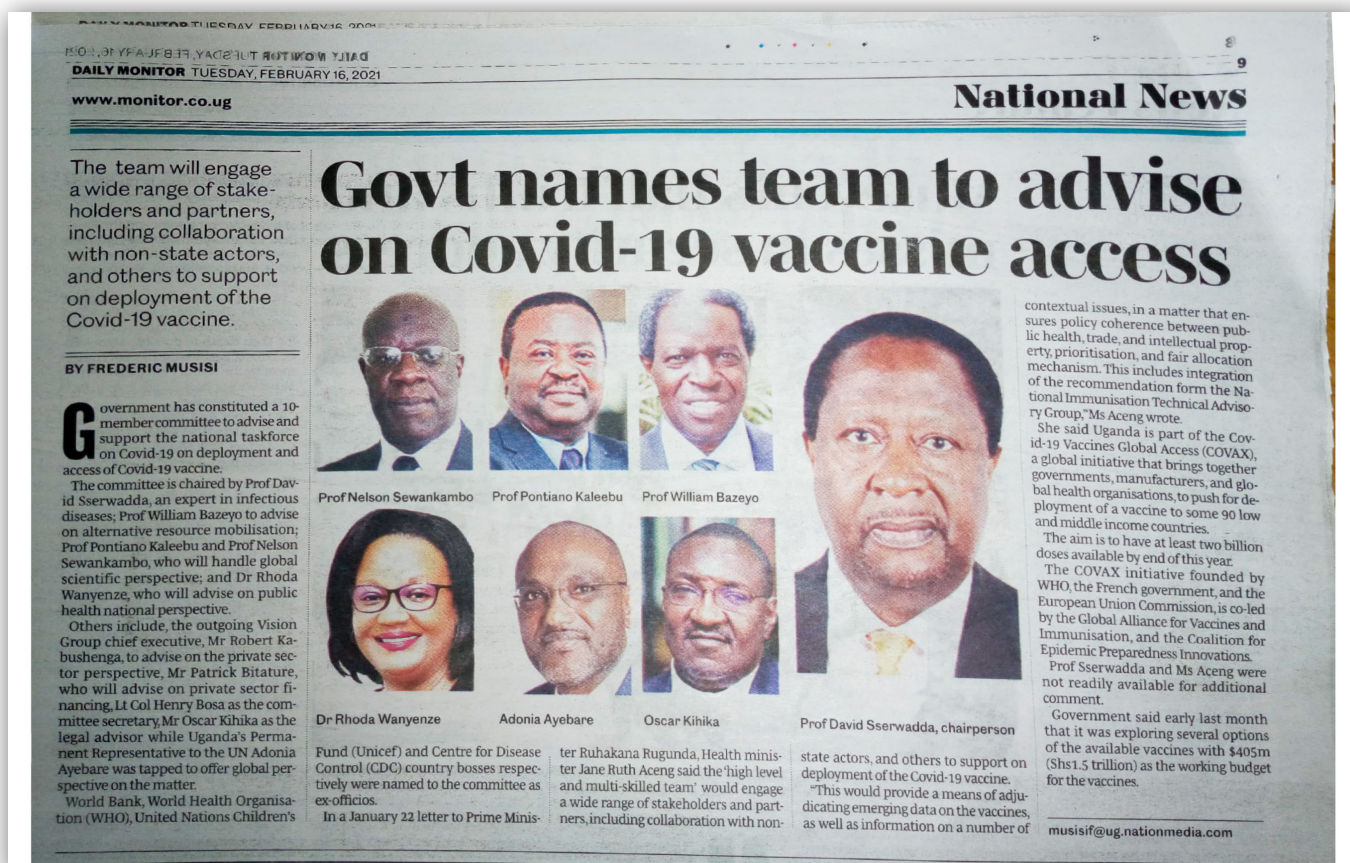
"These documents we have developed are very important for purposes of management and procedural management of the grants at the School. Having these documents is a very important achievement as Makerere University Central Management does not have some of them very well outlined for the whole University," Professor Serwadda.

He adds that; "The School of Public Health has been leading in this area and some of the colleges are learning from what we have been able to do to manage their grants."

The in-coming Grants committee chairperson [Dr. David Musoke](#) said thanked the School management for entrusting him with the leadership of the committee.

"This confidence in me by the management of the School will be a driving force to work with the new team to ensure that we build on what has been achieved by the committee and move its agenda forward," Dr. Musoke.

<https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/makspg-grants-and-research-capacity-building-committee-gets-new-leadership>



Message from Chair, MakSPH Infrastructure Development Committee



Welcome to this section of the MakSPH newsletter where we share about our treasured new home. Despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, it is indeed very exciting that we have made good strides on the construction. Our achievements have largely been because of all your financial and moral support. I am sure despite the pandemic and its challenges; you still feel the urge to visit the MakSPH Finance Department and reach out to your pockets for an additional contribution. I have good news that by the end of May 2021, phase 1A will be completed and handed over to us by ROKO Construction Company. Phase 1A consists of the Auditorium, a Community Centre, and the Ground Floor of the Main Block i.e., 50% of the three main towers! A big thank you to our Consultant Arch. Collins Nankya and her team.

I am also grateful to the MakSPH administration, our MakSPH Infrastructural Development Committee that I chair, the Estates and Development Department of Makerere University, and indeed the entire University administration.

Warmest regards.

Assoc. Professor Lynn Atuyambe, MPH, Ph.D.

Chair, MakSPH Infrastructure Development Committee



Makerere University School of Public Health New Home Taking Shape



As the Makerere University School of Public Health turns 65 years, it is putting innovations and partnerships at the forefront of its business. This includes a new state-of-the-art building that fits into the school's strategic plan. The current building that houses the School of Public Health was constructed 50 years ago, to cater to less than 300 students. Since then, the School's population has grown tremendously (over 1,000), hence the need for more room for teaching, research, and innovation. The school has designed a 30 billion grand plan for a new home. In 2019, a fundraising dinner organized for alumni and friends of Makerere University collected 522 million shillings for the construction of the new home. We continue to fundraise given the size of this project.

PMA Regional Dissemination Bunyoro, Tooro and Buganda

Between 15th and 18th March 2021, MakSPH-PMA project researchers and a team of officials from the Uganda National Population Council, Ministry of Health, Pathfinder International, Jhpiego, USAID/ Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA) held Regional Family Planning Data Utilisation and Dialogue and Dissemination of the Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) survey results for the Tooro, Bunyoro and South Buganda sub-regions of Uganda.

The regional dissemination was blended, both virtual and physical and attracted several stakeholders including district health officers, religious and cultural leaders, district planning officers and the media.



Dr. Fredrick Makumbi (extreme right), Dr. Simon Kibira (2nd left), and the project PMA team arrive at Kalya Courts Hotel in Fort Portal for the Tooro subregion dissemination of the PMA of Phase 1 Survey Results (2020) on March 16, 2021.



MakSPH-PMA project researchers, officials from the Uganda National Population Council, Ministry of Health, Pathfinder International, Jhpiego, USAID/Uganda Family Planning Activity and Tooro subregion district health officers, religious and cultural leaders, and planning officers



Dr. Placid Mihayo
Family planning Focal Person, MOH



Rev. Fr. Jude Tadeo Basaija
Fortportal Catholic Diocese Health Coordinator



Rev. Sarah Kakyo
Diocesan Health Coordinator, Rwenzori Diocese

RISE Program Commissions Research Team for Midline Survey



Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, RISE Program MakSPH Team Leader, Ms. Cissie Namanda, the Coordinator with the study supervisors after the training.

Makerere University School of Public Health –MakSPH has commissioned 126 research assistants and 10 supervisors to collect data from across the seven UBOS 2011 regions to inform policy on family planning in Uganda.

This part of the project dubbed Reducing High Fertility Rates and Improving Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes in Uganda (RISE), aimed at supporting the Government of Uganda's effort to address the population challenge and improve family planning uptake.

MakSPH is a partner in a consortium of Institutions/Organisations that is implementing a 5-year RISE program. The consortium, which is led by Mariestopes International as the Prime Grant holder, is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of United Kingdom.

Speaking at the commissioning of the researchers on March 22nd, 2021 at the Makerere University Central Teaching Facility II, Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, an Associate Professor in the Department

of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at MakSPH and the Study PI said they research assistants are to support efforts towards a midline evaluation in the program regions of Central 1, Central 2, East Central, Eastern, Karamoja, West Nile and Western, as part of the School of Public Health's role of monitoring and evaluation in the consortium.

According to Dr. Tumwesigye, the study investigators wish to make an effort to reduce maternal mortality rates in Uganda. He cites that one of the way to reduce it is by promoting family planning. He argues that maternal mortality rates, though reducing, are still very high and far from the sustainable development goal target, which calls for more strategic planning for the economy, hence family planning.

"This project stated in November 2018. A formative study and baseline survey were conducted in April and August 2019 respectively. We are now carrying out a midline survey. The focus of the survey is assess intention to use family planning, general characteristics of

people in reproductive group, willingness to pay for family planning services, use of family planning and attitudes to family planning. We want to assess any changes within the two years of implementation of this program from baseline survey" says **Dr. Tumwesigye**.

Cissie Namanda, MakSPH RISE Program Coordinator noted that the midline study is to evaluate changes in the attitudes, effects and social factors that influence uptake of family planning methods.

She says they intend to enroll 3,414 participants across the country in the 57 districts, 63 enumeration areas.

"We will visit 4,410 households with the intention to conduct interviews with 3,414 men and women of reproductive age. The Research assistants will collect data using a tool called Open Data Kit –ODK but the participants will have to consent on paper," Namanda says.

Erimiah Kyanjo, a research supervisor for Karamoja and Teso Sub region says he was impressed by the research assistants' understanding of the study tools and hoped

they would deliver to their expectation. *"Through the training period, the research assistants have demonstrated high participation and so are my high expectations of them in study."* Kyanja said.

Michael Mutunga, one of the research assistants collecting data on behalf of the project in Namisindwa district in Eastern Uganda. He says was happy with the training in research ethics, mapping, data collection and the tools to use. *"We did a training on the mapping, establishing the boundaries of enumeration areas we are going to. We were requested to be ethical so that we can collect high quality data. This training has been much better than the baseline and we hope to do our best,"* says Mutunga.

The study PI's include; Prof. Nazarius Mbona, Dr. Peter Ddungu. Other MakSPH RISE team members including; Assoc. Prof. Fredrick Makumbi (Deputy team leader), Assoc. Prof. Lynn Atuyambe, (Lead qualitative), Assoc. Prof. Sarah Ssali (Lead gender) and Dr. Aggrey Mukose (Lead Clinical).



The RISE study team at MakSPH in a group photo with the research assistants at their commissioning.

Why the Study?

The study aims to address awareness and uptake performance of family planning among women and men of reproductive age in the stipulated areas. For women 15-49years and males of 15-54years.

According to Family Planning 2020, a reproductive health initiative in Uganda, the country is committed to scale up the use of modern family planning methods to ensure female birth control choices.

United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) 2017 report observes that although modern contraceptive prevalence rate is improving, it is still low to cause formidable effects in the total fertility rate. Uganda's fertility rate stands at 5.4 ratio.

According to the report, for the country to realize vision 2040, total fertility rate must reduce to 2.2 children per woman and modern contraceptive prevalence to increase to at least 67%.



One of the facilitators training the research assistants for the midline survey for RISE Project at MakSPH

3414 Participants to be enrolled

57 Districts in Uganda

63 Enumeration Areas



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