



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

college of Health sciences
school of Public Health

MakSPH

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020**

OUR FOUNDATION

OUR VISION

To be a leader in public health training and knowledge generation for societal transformation

OUR MISSION

To promote better health for the people of Uganda and beyond through public health training, research and community service

OUR CORE VALUES

PROFESSIONALISM

We will exhibit a high level of commitment to MakSPH and adhere to high professional standards in all our undertakings.

INTEGRITY

MakSPH staff will conduct themselves with utmost honesty and transparency in all our dealings to promote the image of the School, and to instil trust and credibility among our internal and external publics. We will do the right things for the benefit of the society, uphold strong moral principles and be trustworthy and authentic in pursuit of our mandate.

INNOVATIVENESS

We will strive to embrace change and infuse dynamism in all operation areas of the School through the initiation and adoption of new ideas that add value to the business of the School and improve the health outcomes of communities.

RESPONSIVENESS

We will endeavor to be responsive to both internal and external feedback and changes within the operating environment, and to respond to feedback provided on all our core functions.

COLLABORATIONS

Partnerships are essential in the delivery of our functions. As such, we will strengthen, develop and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations in teaching, research and community service.

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

MakSPH will integrate the principles of health, equity and social justice including human rights, freedoms and equity in public health education, research and practices. MakSPH will endeavor to identify and design solutions to reduce inequities in access to health services and health outcomes

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Dean's Foreword

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to introduce our 2020 Annual Report, which illustrates the Makerere University School of Public Health, (MakSPH)'s shared commitment to advancing excellence in public health education, research, and innovation in Uganda and beyond.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Public Health teams working together with the Ministry of Health and other partners moved fast towards enhancing the knowledge and awareness of our communities and other public health interventions to combat the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate a public health crisis that has thrown the world into disarray. We quickly adapted to the new normal, moving to working in a virtual environment and using blended approaches, to deliver our teaching, learning and research activities.



The pandemic has been a great challenge and slowed down several activities. However, this challenge has also propelled us towards fast-tracking some of our planned advancements including virtual learning and partnerships, and has accelerated our public health innovations in a bid to contribute solutions to the current and future public health challenges.

Research

Our research has focused on current issues to support evidence-based decision making, and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on essential health and other services, especially in vulnerable groups such as adolescents and children, refugees, among others.

Construction

In 2020, we embarked on construction of our new home that we hope will reduce the space constraints for our staff and students. I am happy to report that the construction is now under way at Makerere University Main Campus. We are sincerely grateful to our partners, sponsors and staff for the efforts towards this great move.

Community Engagement

Our teams have maintained a very active community engagement focus and working with various stakeholders to share research findings and support processes for knowledge translation. We have also maintained a high level of scientific research outputs including over 250 peer reviewed publications in 2020. I cannot thank our researchers enough for this great effort.

Grants

The number of partnerships, grants and volume of work at the School has grown within Uganda and the African region. We are very grateful to our funders; partners and stakeholders for this continued growth.

I acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by all our staff, students and alumni. We look forward to another productive year and decade of better service to our communities.

Have a nice read.

Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze,

Professor & Dean, School of Public Health, Makerere University



MakSPH LEADERSHIP

Deputy Dean



Dr. Frederick Makumbi
Associate Professor & Deputy Dean MakSPH

DEPARTMENT HEADS



**Dr. Christine Nalwadda
Luutu Kayemba**
*Senior Lecturer & Head,
Department of Community
Health & Behavioral Sciences
(CHBS)*



Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho
*Senior Lecturer & Head,
Department of Health Policy
Planning and Management
(HPPM)*



Dr. Esther Buregyeya
*Associate Professor & Head,
Department of Disease Control
and Environmental Health
(DCEH)*



Dr. Noah Kiwanuka
*Associate Professor & Head,
Department of Epidemiology
and Biostatistics (EPI-BIO)*



Appointments and Promotions in 2020

In the year 2020, the School of Public Health had several appointments and promotions in different departments finalised as indicated in the table.

APPOINTMENTS		DEPARTMENT	POST CONSIDERED
1.	Dr. Fred Wabwire-Mangen	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Post retirement contract renewed
2.	Prof. David Guwatudde	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Offered Post retirement contract
3.	Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach	Community Health & Behavioral Sciences	Offered Post retirement contract
CONFIRMATIONS			
1.	Dr. Dathan Mirembe	Community Health & Behavioral Sciences	Lecturer
2.	Dr. John Mbaziira Ssenkusu	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Assistant Lecturer
3.	Ms . Juliana Namutundu	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Assistant Lecturer
4.	Dr. Joseph Kagayi	Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Lecturer
PROMOTIONS			
1.	Dr. Esther Buregyeya	Disease Control and Environmental Health	Associate Professor
2.	Dr. David Lubogo	Community Health & Behavioral Sciences	Senior Lecturer
3.	Dr. Richard Kibirango Mugambe	Disease Control and Environmental Health	Lecturer

Teaching And Learning

During 2019/2020, 310 students were admitted to programmes at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The student population is expected to further increase with this year's intake from 873 to 1,183.





Enrolment

Students enrolled at Makerere University School of Public Health.

Student categories		Government		Private		
No.	Programme	F	M	F	M	Total Students
Undergraduate						
1. i)	BEH III	1	7	21	29	58
ii)	BEH II	2	2	15	23	42
iii)	BEH I	2	4	17	25	48
Sub-total		5	13	53	77	148
Postgraduate						
2. i)	MPH (Full Time) I			23	16	39
ii)	MPH (Full Time) II			42	32	74
3. i)	MPH (Distance) I			36	52	88
ii)	MPH (Distance) II			25	51	76
iii)	MPH (Distance) III			83	112	195
4. i)	MPH (Nutrition) I			5	5	10
ii)	MPH (Nutrition) II			23	12	35
5. i)	MHSR I			1	4	5
ii)	MHSR II			16	19	35
6. i)	MDM I			3	9	12
ii)	MDM II			6	9	15
7. i)	MHI I			3	9	12
ii)	MHI II			15	27	42
8. i)	MBIO I			5	7	12
ii)	MBIO II			8	7	15
9. i)	M&E I			8	11	19
ii)	M&E II					
10.	PHD			17	22	39
Sub-total				319	404	
Grand total						723



Key	
BEHS	Bachelor of Environmental Health Science
MPHN	Master of Public Health Nutrition
MHSR	Master of Health Services Research
MPH-FT	Master of Public Health (Full Time)
MPH-DE	Master of Public Health (Distance Education)
MDM	Master of Public Health Disaster Management
MHI	Master of Health Informatics
MBIO	Master of Biostatistics
MPHM&E	Master of Public Health (Monitoring and Evaluation)
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy

Highlights of MakSPH 2020 Graduation Ceremony (Performance, PhD graduand)



The Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof Ezra Suruma confers a PhD upon Godfrey Bwire



On Tuesday, 14th January, 2020, graduates of the School of Public Health received their honours at the historic Freedom Square.

A total of 132 students across all academic programs, graduated from Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), amidst cheers and jubilations. Bwire Godfrey received a degree of Doctor of Philosophy for his work “Molecular characterization of *Vibrio cholerae* responsible for cholera epidemics in Uganda by polymerase chain reaction (PCR), multi-locus variable number of tandem repeat analysis (MLVA) and whole genome sequencing (WGS)”.

Dr. Godfrey Bwire was among the 85 students who attained their graduate degree awards. Overall, 50 graduands obtained degrees of Masters in Public Health, 12 Masters in Public Health Nutrition, 5 Masters in Disaster Management, 12 Masters in Health Services Research, 5 Masters in Health Informatics and 47 qualified with Bachelors in Environmental Health Science. The Vice – Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, revealed that the College of Health Sciences (CHS) is the Flagship College of the University ranked highly worldwide for research in clinical medicine as well as in collaborative research output. He added that Makerere University was the world’s leader in Tropical Medicine especially in regards to Communicable and Non – Communicable Diseases like Ebola, Malaria, and HIV/AIDS among others.



The Dean MakSPH presents students to the Chancellor for conferment of degrees. Looking on is Professor Charles Ibingira, the Principal CHS, Professor Moses Joloba, Dean, School of Biomedical Sciences and Professor Damalie Nakanjako, Dean School of Medicine



Chancellor’s procession: Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dean of Makerere University School of Public Health (front) and Prof. Moses Joloba, the Dean School of Biomedical Sciences.



Joyous: MakSPH graduates show excitement during the 70th Graduation ceremony at Makerere University Freedom Square.



The School’s Principal Registrar, Ms Gladys Khamili congratulating the students on their momentous milestone.



Ms. Miria Nowamukama (center), Administrator for the Higher Degrees and Research Ethics Committee at MakSPH together with Harriet Nankya. Miria graduated with Masters of Health Science in Bioethics.



Ground-breaking for New MakSPH Building



2020 was a great year for MakSPH. Big and bold steps were taken and the School embarked on the journey towards constructing its new home.

On Friday, February 28, 2020, Members of Makerere University Management and staff of the MakSPH were joined by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Uganda, H.E. Henk Jan Bakker to break ground for the new MakSPH home on the Main Campus. Located right at the entrance of the University’s Eastern Gate opposite the Estate and Works Department, the 14,969 square metre facility will house tutorial rooms, demonstration and innovation laboratories,

auditoria as well as space for research fellows, doctoral students and postdoctoral trainees.

The Dean MakSPH, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze shared that ground-breaking for the new eight-storey building worth US\$9.8million came 66 years after the Department of Preventive Medicine was founded, which later gave birth to the first Institute of Public Health in Africa in 1974.



Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, the Dean MakSPH speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony on February 28, 2020



The Principal College of Health Sciences (CHS), Prof. Charles Ibingira congratulated MakSPH upon embarking on the new project. He also paid special tribute to the University Council for allocating land for the construction of the new MakSPH home.

Prof. William Bazeyo, a former Dean MakSPH (2009-2017)
"The journey to build the new home started in 2014 with a fund-raising drive embraced by all staff then. I believe that there is no 80% deficit on this project because we have friends who will not abandon us, especially now that we have found the starting capital," he envisaged.

Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe commended MakSPH staff for leading by example, describing their act as "a great display of patriotism." He also noted that construction of the New MakSPH home was going to be one of the flagship projects as Makerere University kicks off her Centennial Celebrations and urged the contractor ROKO to deliver good quality work.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Uganda, H.E. Henk Jan Bakker together with VC Professor Barnabas Nawangwe at the ceremony.



Eng. Christina Kakeeto, Estates Director, Architect Dolores Collins, Dr. Lynn Atuyambe, the Chair Infrastructure Committee and Professor David Serwadda at the ceremony.

"As a University, we must remain committed to ensuring that our country achieves the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through contributing to the training of high-quality graduates. The College of Health Sciences is our flagship of research excellence, accounting for 50% of our research output as an institution" said the Vice Chancellor.

The Guest of Honour H.E. Henk Jan Bakker noted that Uganda is better placed than many other countries in Africa to respond to outbreaks of diseases like Ebola because its citizens are educated, thanks largely to efforts of the School of Public Health. The Ambassador equally commended the team spirit exhibited by MakSPH staff in owning the project by making personal contributions.

He also shared that the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had contributed approximately US\$300,000 towards establishment of a state-of-the-art auditorium in the new home, equipped with ultramodern ICT equipment. The Ambassador pledged his Government's readiness to continue supporting the four priorities of; Food Security and Nutrition, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the Justice Law and Order Sector as well as Refugees and Host communities in Northern Uganda.



COVID-19 Response: Mak School of Public Health in Action

MakSPH continues to provide leadership in public health education and research in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Pandemic gave us a new sense of urgency to many of the priority issues on which the team works.

Our scientists have been on the front lines of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing new research, collaborating on projects, and advising the government, business community and the entire population.



Dr. Freddie Ssengooba, a Health Policy Expert-based at MakSPH has been involved in several works related to COVID-19. He has served on the Scientific Advisory Committee for Uganda’s COVID-19 Response. Among other tasks, Dr. Ssengooba, an Associate Professor of Health Economics and Health Systems Management has supported the policy actions and public awareness programmes through the public media engagements, and training of journalists about COVID-19 interventions such as oxygen supply and distribution, vaccine economics and general prevention messaging about the pandemic. He has played an important role in customising global evidence to realist public health policies and practices in Uganda.

Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, Professor and Dean MakSPH is a member of the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Committee. She chairs the Epidemiology and Surveillance committee. Dr. Wanyenze has been involved in reviewing and customising evidence at a global level to inform the decisions of the Ministry of Health and ensure they are evidence based but also conduct home-grown research. She is leading a study, evaluating the COVID-19 response in four countries, namely; Uganda, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo -DRC and Nigeria to support policy, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Gates Ventures. She has also been involved in conducting several studies that aim at ensuring COVID-19 compliance with SOPs through electronic surveys.



Dr. Noah Kiwanuka, is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and an expert in infectious diseases research and clinical trials. He is involved in a number of research studies on COVID-19 as a methodological expert on clinical trial design, randomization and data analysis. These include; the first clinical trial on COVID-19 in Uganda and made the first publication on the clinical features of COVID-19 in Uganda (Kirenga B et al. Characteristics and outcomes of admitted patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 in Uganda. *BMJ Open Respir Res.* 2020; 7(1): e000646. Published online 2020 Sep 7. doi: 10.1136/bmjresp-2020-000646); the first and second rapid assessment surveys (RAS) on COVID-19 infection in Uganda; the assessment of feasibility, safety and efficacy of COVID-19 convalescent plasma for treatment of COVID-19 adults in Uganda; a phase II randomized clinical trial to determine the preliminary efficacy of Uganda bee venom (UBV-01N) in treating mild-to-moderate COVID-19 among adults in Kampala; a stepped wedge trial on the impact of masks on community spread of COVID-19: Evidence from Uganda; and the vitamin D levels and its potential role in COVID-19 pathogenesis in a Ugandan population. The RAS studies were the first on COVID-19 in Uganda and led to important findings that guided the management and control of the local COVID-19 epidemic during the national lockdown period in 2020.



MakSPH-MPH (FETP) Alumni and Residents supporting Uganda in COVID-19 Response

Since March 2020, MakSPH deployed 40 front line epidemiologists from the Master of Public Health program to support COVID-19 response in Uganda (26 MPH alumni volunteers; six (6) current residents and eight (8) MPH alumni employed by the Ministry of Health). Most of these epidemiologists were deployed in Kampala and the surrounding districts.

In April 2020, eight of the MPH alumni volunteers were deployed by the Ministry of Health to support strengthening of COVID-19 decentralized response. The alumni were deployed in districts with Regional Referral Hospitals to set up rapid response and alert management systems, support epidemiological investigation of cases and contacts, operationalize protocols for sample collection and quarantine site management, oversee reporting and line lists management, support districts to activate their task force and submit daily situation report to the emergency operations centre. Following a rise in the number of cross border truck drivers that tested positive for COVID-19, another team of 8 MPH alumni and residents were deployed at major Uganda border entry points to set up and activate surveillance team anklets to investigate COVID-19 cases, list their contacts and follow up appropriately.

The deployment in the response has supported Uganda’s health system and provided an opportunity for the residents to learn. One of the residents, Dr Kakuru Glet had this to say; “My involvement in this pandemic as a MakSPH-MPH student has made me practically apply what can free us of the COVID-19 burden by utilizing the health belief model to understand individual vulnerability and mindset change to combat the COVID19 pandemic. The focus is on individuals to understand how each can contribute to the efforts of prevention”.

The alumni and residents have been mobilized and coordinated through the Dean’s Office and the MakSPH MPHAlumni Association. They provide their time and expertise on a voluntary basis as service to their country and report directly to the Ministry of Health. AFENET and CDC have provided financial support.



A team of MakSPH-MPH Alumni (Getrude, Petranilla and Aggrey) reviewing list of contacts during contact tracing for the COVID-19 confirmed cross border truck drivers



One of the MPH Residents (Dr Kakuru Glet, standing in a T-shirt) supporting sample collection from truck drivers at Busia-Uganda border



MPH Alumni (Brenda Nakazibwe) who is part of institutional quarantine sensitizing Kira Road Division police officers at one of the institutional quarantine sites where they were on guard following the escape of 36 Chinese Nationals from quarantine. Executing the arrest is Kira Road Police Division DPC SP Micheal Kasigire.



MPH Alumni Rita Tamale (standing in an apron) educating staff at Grand Global Hotel (a quarantine site) about infection control measures to be observed while attending to suspected cases



Uganda's Preparedness to Prevent, Detect and Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

As COVID-19 cases continued to spiral around the world, preparedness to prevent, detect and respond to the global pandemic was key.

In March, 2020, the Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) hosted panelists from the Ministry of Health (MoH)-Uganda, World Health Organisation (WHO)-Uganda, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-Uganda and the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET) at a dialogue aimed at addressing the country's readiness to combat the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The dialogue contributed to COVID-19 preparedness in Uganda through educating the general public on the strategies the country was implementing to prevent, quickly detect and expediently respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic. It also provided a platform to the general public to be educated on what they should do to prevent themselves and others from getting infected with the communicable respiratory disease.



The Dean, MakSPH -Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, AFENET Director, Mr. Simon Antara, Dr. Lisa Nelson, the CDC Country Director and Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, the WHO country representative at the conference.

During the dialogue, Dr. Henry Mwebesa - the Director-General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, called upon every Ugandan to play a role in preventing the spread of coronavirus. He further revealed that as the Ministry of Health was doing all it could to keep COVID-19 at bay, they were also battling misinformation spreading through social media and other platforms yet the issue was a national public health concern.



Keeping Staff Safe from COVID 19. What Has Worked for MAKSPH?

Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho, MakSPH COVID-19 Workplace Taskforce Chairperson



The COVID-19 crisis put a lot of pressure on employers and workers generally. With the physical distancing measures achieving a sufficient reduction in COVID-19 transmission rates, government authorized a gradual resumption of work activities.

Like other workplaces, the Makerere University School of Public Health was not spared from COVID-19 and a few of our staff got infected with the COVID 19 Virus. However, the Virus did not have an easy time trying to infect the staff at the School of Public Health, because we prepared for the attack that we surely knew was going to come. The School Management set up a Workplace Task Force as soon as it was confirmed that the world was faced with a pandemic for we knew it was only a matter of time and the virus would get to Africa. The taskforce members include Associate Professors Esther Buregyeya, Noah Kiwanuka, Peter Waiswa, Dr. Christine Nalwadda, Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho, Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi and Ms. Faridah Mbambu. The undertakings for the Task Force were clear; To set up Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that would ensure that staff and students at the School were safe. These safety measures were in line with the Ministry of Health National guidelines for the management of COVID-19. These measures have tremendously achieved a sufficient reduction in COVID-19 transmission rates. **Read more:** <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/keeping-staff-safe-covid-19-what-has-worked-makspH>



COVID-19 Pandemic: What Students Say



Dr. Simple Ouma,
third-year Master of Public
Health-DE student

As an MPH-DE student, academic life wouldn't have been easy if not for the supportive environment within the Makerere University School of Public Health. I commend the Faculty for supporting my journey throughout the year 2020, but I can't forget the enabling administrative support provided by Ms. Juliana Namutundu, Mrs. Max Walusimbi, Mr. Huzaifah Mutyaba, and Ms. Esther Nakasiko.



Dr. Mwine Patience,
Master of Public Health
-Distance MPHDE

"2020 was a unique year with many challenges that came along with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a finalist MPH distance student in Cohort 2017, I was supposed to carry out my research and write the dissertation and submit it by July 2020. Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, I continued with Data collection, worked closely with my supervisors (Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa and Mr. Mubiri Paul), and was able to submit my dissertation on time which I successfully defended recently.



Kakuru Glet Bitatiho,
a finalist full time
MPH student, 2018_Cohort

I was considered for involvement at the National COVID-19 response team attached to Public health emergency operations' centre. After a thorough self-meditation and reflection on COVID pandemic and personal risk to acquisition of infection, I accepted the offer and was attached initially to alert verification and management sub-pillar and later contact tracing and follow up sub-pillar. Overall, the pandemic brought more meaningful exposure, learning and real-life experience to adopt, adapt and or abandon unnecessary expectations, deeds and was able to focus on survival (life first), and the rest will fall in line.



Carla Achiro-MPH
full Time Year II student.

I learnt to utilize every available opportunity to make my time in fieldwork count. With guidance and support from the Tororo District Health Officer Dr. David Cyrus Okumu who was my field supervisor, I fitted well within the district health team and worked well with every person I was assigned to work with and I learnt a great deal. I am grateful to MakSPH for having utilized that time to help me gain hands on training in the middle of the pandemic. My appreciation goes to the supportive staff of the school who proved invaluable to me at this particular time; Ms. Enid Kemari and Ms. Doreen Tuhebwe. I thank my academic field supervisors Dr. Dinah Amongin and Ms. Aanyu Christine who took time and came to the field to offer practical academic guidance and insight to me.



Nakalawa Suzan,
third-year student, Bachelor
of Environmental Health
Science

I experienced different challenges, for example, unstable internet connections, electricity blackouts, expensive mobile data costs, and interference of house chores. Good enough, some provisions were made for example the Vice-Chancellor collaborated with some internet service providers in the country to make some online learning platforms, for example, Makerere E-Learning Environment (MUELE) free of data charges. However, at MakSPH, we mainly used the zoom application which isn't free.



Balinda Emmanuel,
Former GRC School of Public
Health 85th Guild 2019/20,
Class Representative BEHS
2017 Cohort

"We were told to leave campus on the 17th March 2020. Making serious progress in the dissertations was also a bit challenging unlike when I was at campus where I could meet my Supervisor Miss Juliana Namutundu over three times in the same week. When I returned, reality hit me hard that I was supposed to hand in my research work and also prepare for my final examinations.



Dorothy Akongo,
MPH-FT Year 2

"2020 was a very challenging year characterized with total national lockdown. Much as there were challenges, the pandemic also came with opportunities and the School of Public Health gave me an opportunity to participate in COVID-19 related activities like contact tracing and work place assessment of COVID-19 measures. These activities built my capacity in the fields of data collection, reporting, analysis and we are currently working on a manuscript to publish.



Moses Were Mugeni,
MPH-Fulltime, Second Year
Student and Class President.

"The online classes were a new learning experience and more profoundly as a class coordinator, that I had not yet encountered. The online classes offered lecturers an efficient way to deliver lessons to students, then students to learn amidst the interruptions due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, with a dynamic and ever-changing technological world, the online classes were embraced with positivity though they had some contests.



Thumbs UP: Faculty Accolades 2020

What a year! Despite the pandemic and its disruptions, MakSPH continued to reap big in 2020.

We congratulate Dr. Peter Waiswa who was rated a Global expert in Infant Mortality by Expertscape's PubMed-based algorithms.

The recognition was based on his scholarly writing about Infant Mortality over the past 10 years.

In a message sent to Dr. Waiswa, Expertscape said; "Expertscape's PubMed-based algorithms place you in the top 1% of scholars writing about Infant Mortality over the past 10 years, a level we label as "Expert."

See details: <https://expertscape.com/ex/infant+mortality>

Dr. Waiswa, an Associate Professor of Health Policy Planning and Management was in the same year appointed to the World Health Organisation advisory board for Maternal and Child Health.



Dr. Peter Waiswa

Also, in 2020, Dr. Waiswa was included in Stanford University's list of the Top 2% most-cited scientists in the world!

"To be ranked as one of the top 2% of the world's most-cited researchers is an outstanding achievement signifying how important your work has been for so many others in taking their research that step further. We are extremely proud to have had the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for choosing IntechOpen as your Open Access publisher. It would be an honor to support you in your future publishing activities," said IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books.

Rawlance Ndejjo and Trasias Mukama nominated to attend Nobel Laureate meeting



Rawlance Ndejjo



Trasias Mukama

Rawlance Ndejjo and Trasias Mukama, both Research Associates in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health were nominated to participate in the 70th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting - from 28th June to 3rd July 2020. Rawlance was among the seventeen early career scientists nominated by the African Academy of Sciences - a not-for-profit pan African organization whose vision is to see transformed lives on the African continent through science while Trasias' nomination was by the Helmholtz Association - a network of 18 research centers in Germany including the German Cancer Research Centre, where he is currently pursuing a PhD in Cancer Epidemiology.

The duo was nominated to attend the interdisciplinary meeting that takes place every five years providing a forum for the participants to engage with their peers from different disciplines across the globe and Nobel Laureates about current developments and future challenges in their field. Over 600 highly talented young scientists from all over the world are expected to participate in the meeting together with up to 80 Nobel Laureates. The interdisciplinary meetings are sandwiched by yearly meetings focusing on physiology and medicine, physics, and chemistry - the three natural science Nobel Prize disciplines.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020 meeting was postponed to 27th June to 2nd July 2021 but to keep the momentum, Online Science Days were organised for participants from 28th June to 1st July 2020 in which they both participated including the Online Sciathon, a global competition that was hosted alongside. Rawlance and Trasias are looking forward to attending the meetings in 2021.



PhD Forum hands over Leadership to new team

In October 2020, the Ph.D. Forum handed over leadership to a new team having run the forum for two years (2018 to 2020). The outgoing team had Rawlance Ndejjo as President, Charles Ssemugabo (Vice President), Jimmy Osuret (Welfare and Mobilisation), and Esther Bayiga (Secretary). The team handed over to Dr. Aloysius Ssenyonjo (President), Olivia Nakisita (Vice President), James Muleme (Welfare and Mobilisation), and Harriet Aber (Secretary).

At the virtual handover ceremony, Ndejjo highlighted the achievements, success factors, challenges, and unfinished business of their leadership.

The key achievements were: instituting bi-weekly forum seminars and holding over 32 of these including 14 concepts, 8 proposals, and 3 pre-defence presentations.

The team also run a professional development series dubbed the 'unpacking the Ph.D.' seminar series with topics spanning the entire journey from pre to post-doctoral level issues with 7 such seminars organized. Rawlance noted that they provided opportunities for Ph.D. students to take the centre stage in leading seminars including as moderators or panelists, uploaded student profiles on the MakSPH website, acquired a forum email address, and created a WhatsApp group.

The leadership also started a quarterly newsletter, grew forum membership and overall visibility continuously shared opportunities with students and ensured availability to support students during their journeys. The team attributed their success to advance planning for events, being proactive, communicating effectively, having a passion to make a difference, having regular meetings and follow-ups, and the advice and support they received from MakSPH faculty.

The team also shared their reflections and experiences of running the Forum and thanked the members for their support which ensured their very successful tenure. They in addition appreciated the MakSPH faculty and all persons who contributed to the forum. In his remarks, the incoming President, Dr. Aloysius Ssenyonjo,

noted that they would consolidate the achievements of the previous leadership leveraging on their unfinished business and plan strategically for the Forum. He noted the need to ensure a sustainable mentorship and peer support program; coherent resource mobilization, partnership, and advocacy strategies; and continued documentation of the forum's achievement to enhance visibility and influence. He thanked the outgoing team for doing the voluntary role with consistency, vigour, and commitment and the incoming team for offering themselves to steer the forum to the next level.

The event was officiated by the Dean and Deputy Dean, MakSPH. In her remarks, the Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze noted that she was passionate about the work that the Ph.D. Forum does as it directly contributes to the School's goal. She noted that she was interested in growing PhDs as they are critical for the advancement of the School and growing future public health leaders and researchers. that will also be crucial in further strengthening the School's Ph.D. program. She thanked the outgoing and incoming teams and said that her door was open for any support the forum needs.

Dr. Fredrick Makumbi thanked the team for keeping the Ph.D. Forum active ever since its constitution and thanked the outgoing team for supporting students who were now increasingly attending forum events. He noted that the university was increasingly getting more interested in graduate training and it was a perfect time for students to enrol and complete their PhDs.



Ph.D. Forum leaders (2018-2020): Rawlance Ndejjo, Charles Ssemugabo, Jimmy Osuret, and Esther Bayiga



SPICES Project Continues to Impact Rural Livelihoods Through Awareness Programmes for Reduced NCDs

On February 18, 2020, at least 100 MakSPH staff and students received comprehensive CVD risk factor screening and participated in a three-day educational seminar on CVD prevention organised by the SPICES Project team. The staff received screening for Blood sugar, Blood Pressure, Waist and Hip ratio, BMI & their adherence to healthy lifestyles

Additionally, a team from MakSPH led by the SPICES Project team lead Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi, joined by the field teams carried out visits to health facilities to monitor progress of the SPICES project as well as provide critical capacity building towards the different beneficiaries of the interventions.

A host of health facilities including Goma HC III, Mukono hospital, Katoogo HC III, Seeta-Nazigo HC III, Busabaga HC III, Buikwe HC III, Kawolo Hospital, Nsakya HC III, Namabu HC III, Makindu HC III, Lugala Ssi HC III, Kojja HC IV, Mpunge HC III, Nakifuma HC III, and Nabalanga HC III were visited, despite the lockdown challenges. During the field visits, the project team emphasized the need to keep the cardiovascular disease prevention agenda high among their clients.

the MakSPH-SPICES Project team also delivered branded face-masks and thermometer guns as COVID-19 intervention by the project, branded aprons with key CVD prevention messages, batteries for the blood pressure monitor and measuring tapes as well as a mechanical weighing scale with a height rod (Stadiometer).



during the field visit at Mukono District Headquarters on August 19, 2020.



Team Lead Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi (C) flanked by the In-charge Seeta-Nazigo HCIII Dr. Jennifer Hajambo in a group photo with Health Workers at the handover of items donated by the SPICES Uganda Project, MakSPH to Seeta-Nazigo HCIII in Mukono District, Uganda on 21st August 2020.



SPICES team together with health workers at Siberians Health Centre - Mpunge Parish, Ntenjeru Sub-county, Mukono District during a field visit in August 2020



The Dean MakSPH, Prof Rhoda Wanyenze participates in the screening for CVD risk factors organized by the Spices Mukono district leadership together with the SPICES team



SPICES Project PI Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi handing over branded Aprons, temperature gun, and facemasks to health workers at Mukono Referral Hospital .

Read more: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news>



Public Health Fellowship Program Activities 2020

The year 2020 saw the Uganda Public Health Fellowship Program (PHFP) host the 6th Annual Field Epidemiology Conference in which 25 abstracts were presented as well as the 1st Regional Field Epidemiology Conference organized by AFENET in which 11 abstracts were accepted for presentation by current residents.

The key program activities implemented in the year involved the continued support to 25 Fellows including 12 Fellows enrolled in 2019 and 13 Fellows enrolled in January 2020. The fellows were supported to provide technical assistance and fill key human resource gaps at the Ministry of Health. They particularly were assigned to work with HIV Implementing Partners and CDC Uganda to implement 6 HIV/ TB related projects, conducted 10 quality improvement projects, and conduct 28 applied epidemiological investigations including response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda.

4th Cohort of the MakSPH-CDC Fellowship Graduates

In January 2020, PHFP successfully held its 4th graduation ceremony at Imperial Hotel in Kampala. The 4th cohort PHFP program had 10 graduates. The Public Health Fellowship Program – Field Epidemiology Track (PHFP – FET) is a 2- year training-through-service program in applied epidemiology and public health leadership implemented by Makerere University School of Public Health in partnership with the Ministry of health with support from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC.

The colourful ceremony celebrated achievements of the tripartite Public Health Workforce Capacity building program of the Ministry of Health, Makerere University School of Public Health and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.



Professor Rhoda Wanyenze presenting at the Public Health Fellowship Program 4th Graduation ceremony at Imperial Royale on January 31st, 2020



Dr Fred Monje (holding [plaque]) receives an award for being the most outstanding Fellow in the 4th cohort.

Speaking on behalf of MakSPH but also as the Program Director, Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, Professor and Dean hailed the partnership for strong commitments towards the PHFP program, which prepares the researchers to do a lot of work in the field.

“We appreciate the Ministry of Health, which has been a key partner in support of the MPH program for the 25 years it has existed. We are focusing on mapping out new areas in research which haven’t been fully explored in this country,” Professor Wanyenze said. She further advanced in a fairly attended graduation ceremony that the program was continuously focusing on further enhancing the quality of the specialists that are currently being produced.



Former MakSPH Dean Professor David Sserwada in attendance at the Public Health Fellowship Program 4th Graduation ceremony at Imperial Royale on January 31st, 2020.



Our Work towards Adolescent Girls, Young Women & HIV/AIDS Risk

The year 2020 marked a climax of implementation of the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) project, a three-year program implemented by The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) that sought to reduce new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24 years. The program was implemented in 40 selected districts in Uganda (Kasese, Ntoroko, Rubirizi, Kisoro, Buikwe, Kalangala, Buliisa, Masindi, Hoima, Kagadi, Kyankwanzi, Kiboga, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Luweero; Iganga, Jinja, Kaliro, Mayuge, Busia, Buyende, Buvuma, Namutumba, Kayunga, Luuka, Bugiri, Kamuli, Namayingo; Tororo, Dokolo, Kitgum, Bukwo, Mbale, Otuke, Kole, Amuru, Pader, Lamwo, Alebtong, Amolatar).

To better address the impact of HIV on women, particularly on young women and adolescent girls, the School of Public Health has been following the surveys conducted under this project identified approaches needed to consciously adopt the perspectives of women in all their diversity. *See details: <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/our-work-towards-adolescent-girls-young-women-hiv-aids-risk>*



Ms. Irene Murungi Technical Advisor-TASO, (standing) stressing a point at a national social and behavior change communication [SBCC] consultative meeting in Kampala.



Ms. Ruth Musekura, social and behavior change communication [SBCC] Consultant presenting the SBCC strategy at the national validation meeting in Kampala



Dr Matovu emphasizing a point at the national SBCC validation meeting at the Uganda AIDS Commission, Kampala, Uganda. File Photo



PERFORM2Scale Project Extends Services to Jinja, Buikwe & Luuka

COVID-19 inevitably impacted on the PERFORM2Scale programme's progress this year but headway has been made, focusing on three areas: expanding the reach of the Management Strengthening Intervention (MSI) to new districts, leading the districts through the MSI process and developing strategies for its implementation, and scaling-up the intervention.

PERFORM2Scale is a multi-country project that supports efforts to increase the numbers of health workers as well as improving health workforce performance. It is currently running in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania. In Uganda, the MSI was initially tested in Jinja, Kabarole and Luwero districts. This has been facilitated by the national research teams from Makerere University School of Public Health who supported District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) in identifying workforce-related problems and developing integrated strategies to address those issues, largely using available resources.

Since May 2018 PERFORM2Scale has been working with six District Health Management Teams from Luwero, Nakaseke, Wakiso, Kabarole, Ntoroko, and Bunyangabu to support the improvement of their workforce performance.

In February 2020, three more districts - Jinja, Buikwe and Luuka - were added to the intervention districts. The PERFORM2Scale MaKSPH project team introduced the Management Strengthening Intervention concept to the extended District Health Management Teams where we explained key processes and activities of the MSI.



The Principal Investigator of PERFORM2Scale, Prof. Freddie Ssegooba, giving the opening remarks for a workshop with the DHMTs from Luwero, Wakiso and Nakaseke at Esella Hotel.

PERFORM2Scale Leading the districts through the Management Strengthening Intervention process

The PERFORM2Scale MaKSPH team, joined by project resource team members from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, and Health Service Commissions, facilitated short workshops with the DHMTs to identify and analyze their workforce problems and to develop strategies to address them. Good progress has been made and the districts have now started implementing the work plans that the district health teams have produced.

Evaluation of the Management Strengthening Intervention (MSI) in the districts so far has shown improved health workforce performance by solving problems such as poor supervision, high absenteeism and ineffective staff appraisal systems. Managers have since started reporting increased confidence among staff and better teamwork while those involved in the MSI have reported becoming better managers – they report feeling empowered.

The project team believes that the Management Strengthening Intervention is convenient for the District Health Management Teams, fitting in with their busy schedules, and promoting exchange and mutual learning, both within and across district teams.



MakSPH Shaping Uganda's Family Planning Research and Learning Agenda

Over the years, MakSPH has made significant contributions to the SDG3 agenda, which focuses on health. We have implemented several projects targeted at improving access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning.

In partnership with Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S), the School has been supporting efforts to find evidence to inform policy in areas of family planning. R4S is a five-year implementation science project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Led by FHI 360, the project is conducting implementation science research to improve the efficiency, cost effectiveness, and equity of family planning programs. For the year 2020 the MakSPH-R4S Team conducted a country consultation workshop to generate stakeholder views and consensus towards developing the Uganda FP research and learning agenda.

The Family Planning Research and Learning Agenda (FP RLA), developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, was shared with the Family Planning Technical Working Group (FP TWG) and has been incorporated in the revised 2021-2025 costed implementation plan. It will contribute towards informing; expanded development, adoption and implementation at scale of client-driven approaches; improved understanding of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of scaling proven and promising service delivery practices;

and increased understanding of how proven and promising practices enhance equitable access to high quality, voluntary FP.

In order to provide policy makers and program implementers with actionable information about service delivery gaps in the country, the team also analyzed population data to map the differences in access to family planning as a result of variations in wealth, social and environmental dimensions and over time. Findings from this exercise emphasized the need to focus on reducing unmet need among rural, uneducated women as well as youth.

The team also conducted an inventory of High Impact Practices across 16 organizations in Uganda. The result of this exercise is a comprehensive list of data indicators that are currently being used by family planning (FP) programs in Uganda to monitor and evaluate the eight-service delivery High Impact Practices (HIPs) included as part of the USAID, UNFPA, IPPF, and WHO-supported HIP initiative. The most commonly implemented HIPs in Uganda include community health workers, Mobile Outreaches, Post abortion FP and the integration of FP and immunization. There is need to explore the potential of drug shops for promoting self-care, post-partum family Planning, social franchising and social marketing as high impact practices. *Read more; <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/covid-19-pandemic-family-planning-uganda>*



37 Apply for MakSPH Social Innovations in Health Initiative's Local Solutions

At least 37 submissions were received by Makerere University Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) Uganda Hub, a project at MakSPH in response to a nationwide call for solutions that are enabling Ugandans to access quality healthcare.

The March 2020 call had targeted individuals, community organizations, health workers, government workers and students in the country. Of the 37 applications, 15 were eligible for review. The final review identified three top health innovative solutions that included; the Ishaka Health Plan,

My Pregnancy Handbook project and Saving lives through Community Health Insurance, a facility-based health insurance scheme supported by Uganda Protestant Medical bureau.



Ishaka Health Plan (Community based health insurance scheme) facilitates access to quality and affordable health services to communities in Bushenyi district.



SIHI Uganda team lead by Dr. Phyllis Awor (hub Director) and Dr. Geofrey Musinguzi (member of SIHI expert panel) meeting with "My Pregnancy Handbook" project team at Makerere University Department of Nursing in September 2020.

University based call for social innovations in health in Uganda

In September 2020, SIHI Uganda hub ran an open call for health innovative solutions from Makerere University. The call targeted professors, lecturers, research associates, non-academic staffs and students at Makerere University who were implementing community-based solutions that had made healthcare more accessible, affordable, inclusive or better. The aim of the call was to recognise social innovators from Makerere University.

A total of 12 submissions were received and four were eligible for review. The independent experts panel selected SEEK-GSP (Social, Emotional and Economic empowerment through Knowledge of Group Support Psychotherapy) project as the top health social innovation from Makerere University. This project is currently being implemented in Kitgum district. This solution has not only shown it improves the treatment of depression among people living with HIV through group support psychotherapy sessions but also their adherence to ART treatment.



Dr. Phyllis Awor (Left) with SEEK-GSP project team and the project beneficiaries in Kitgum district

The SIHI Uganda team visited the SEEK-GSP implementation sites to get deep insights about the project and how it is improving the health of people living with HIV in Kitgum district. Key informant interviews were conducted with the PI, Project Coordinator and the district official. Three FGDs were held with beneficiaries of the project.

SIHI Uganda hub launched partnership with SIHI hubs in Nigeria and Ghana

SIHI Uganda hub provided technical support and guidance to the establishment of SIHI Nigeria and Ghana hubs. The two West Africa hubs also worked closely with SIHI Uganda hub to successfully conduct two open calls for health-related social innovations in Nigeria and Ghana in the year 2020.

Read more: <https://socialinnovationinhealth.org/uganda>



Dr. Phyllis Awor (right) with SEEK-GSP project team and the project beneficiaries in Kitgum district



MakSPH Boosting National HIV Reporting Systems

In the year 2020, the Makerere University School of Public Health's Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support (METS) Project had a number of achievements.

Overall METS program aims to strengthen health systems in Uganda through innovative capacity building approaches for an evidence based and effective HIV response. To achieve this, METS operates under four thematic areas which are known as Program areas of Monitoring & Evaluation, Health Systems Strengthening, Clinical Surveillance and Health Information Systems.



Recency Testing Implementation Rolled-Out in Six Districts

In 2020, METS program rolled out HIV Recency testing in the six districts in Uganda. They included the districts of Kassanda, Mubende, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi, Mityana, Luweero, Nakasongola and Nakaseke. The training was done electronically using Microsoft Teams as part of the adherence to COVID-19 control measures.

An HIV recency test is a laboratory-based Antibody test that detects whether an HIV infection is recent (less than six months) or not. Recency testing seeks to help to assess how HIV is being transmitted, describe behaviours that are facilitating HIV transmission and optimize HIV-related data collection and information on risk factors.

This innovative approach is being integrated into routine HIV surveillance in several countries across the world. In partnership with Ministry of Health and in collaboration with University of California San Francisco, Uganda Virus Research Institute and regional Implementing Partner, IP- IDI, METS conducted recency testing training of health workers in 22 high volume sites in central region (supported by Mildmay Uganda as an implementation partner).

Read more...

176 Health Facilities Activated to Implement HIV Recency Testing

Following relaxation of some COVID-19 measures, METS conducted site activation for recency testing at health facilities to kickstart implementation of HIV Recency.

This site activation involved refresher orientation of additional health workers at site level and working with them to build their capacity on implementation of recency, provision of data capture tools and provision of laboratory supplies required for recency Implementation

Read more: <https://mets.or.ug/hiv-recency-testing-in-uganda/>

MakSPH Support to National TB Reference Lab for Installation of Gene and LabXpert at facility level

In 2020, the School through METS project provided technical assistance to the National TB & Leprosy Program (NTLP) through the National TB Reference Lab to support laboratories within the network to access real time information and also guide the program to use data for decision making. This enabled the National TB Reference Lab to link all GeneXpert machines country-wide, collect data from them, and save it to a central repository on Ministry of Health infrastructure at NTLP. For this process, a tool known as LabXpert was adopted. This was done in the regions of Ankole (16 facilities / Hubs); Kigezi (10 facilities); Rwenzori (10 facilities) and Bunyoro (12 facilities)

As a result, METS was able to configure and install LabXpert on GeneXpert machines at the hubs, orient the Laboratory officers at each site on the standard of data entry during test preparation and re-installation of LabXpert and uploaded all the previous test results from the time of each site's testing initiation.

We also added treatment and care feature to the LabXpert Software. This was in addition to installation and configuration of the software onto the GeneXpert Computers as well as testing to ensure that data reaches the central server at NTRL in Butabika. By determining recent infections among people newly diagnosed as living with HIV, Uganda will be able to identify the geographic areas and subpopulations where HIV transmission is happening and effectively interrupt HIV transmission by building evidence-informed policies, guiding resources to the right place and measuring the impact of HIV prevention programmes.

Enhancing the Safety and Quality of Male Circumcision Services in Uganda: The Adverse Events Collaborative

Over the last 5 years, the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support (METS) Program has contributed to the strengthening of HIV Quality Improvement (QI) systems through reinforcing the national, district and health facility capabilities in QI for an efficient and effective public health response to the HIV epidemic. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -CDC-Implementing Partners, the program adopted a multi-pronged QI capacity building model for SMC services which includes, tailored trainings, post-training coaching and mentorship and periodic service and data quality assessments and learning sessions.

Overall, a total of 278 Safe Male Circumcision -SMC service providers from 82 CDC-supported SMC sites were trained in Adverse Event (AEs) identification, management, documentation and reporting. Following the training, 3 on-site mentorship and coaching visits were made to the trained sites. During the coaching visits, service and data quality assessments were done using the MoH service and data quality assessment tools.

As a result, the assessments showed significant improvements in identification, classification, management, documentation of AEs between Jan 2019 to June 2020: Post-operative follow up of clients that enables timely AE identification improved from 95% to 99.5%; correct AE classification from 29.7% to 85.5% and documentation of AE management increased from 11% to 98%.





Virtual Graduation Ceremony under the Governance, Leadership and Management (GLM) Fellowship

METS Program runs a medium - term fellowship in GLM for members of the District Health Team in the health regions supported by CDC. The goal of the fellowship is to enhance capacity of DHTs to efficiently and effectively deliver quality health services including those for HIV and AIDS. The 9 months program enrolls at least three members of the DHT from each of the participating districts.

The fellows spend 75% of the time attending face to face courses covering all the six health systems domains. As part of the training, fellows are provided with technical support to design and implement a project aimed at addressing a gap in GLM.

At the end of the program, METS organizes a dissemination workshop for the fellows to share project outcomes with stakeholders. Against this background, the second cohort of fellows (36) from 12 districts were graduated in a first ever virtual workshop with representation from the Ministry of Health, CDC, The School of Public Health and the district leadership.



The HSS Team Program Coordinator Rose Baryamutuma (2nd from left) together with her team and METS Deputy Program Manager, Charity Kyomugisha (in yellow) during the virtual GLM Graduation

This fellowship was designed to prepare the district teams for leadership with approval from CDC.

The Dean MakSPH Professor Rhoda Wanyenze was glad for the opportunity to gather in an efficient way to celebrate the fellows' achievements.



“There is need to allow us better access to internet to allow people to connect virtually, and I am sure the Ministry of health is prioritizing this to bring us closer and for Resilient health systems to address the current and future health emergencies. To achieve this, we need systems that are adapted to face these challenges and good leadership is what will drive these advancements. Strong leadership allows everyone to adapt to the changing times and to manage the challenges we face in our societies. I hope the fellows have benefited from the program because we need a new type of leadership for our systems to recover and thrive.”

Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, Professor & Dean MakSPH



“Refugee Lived Experiences, Compliance, and Thinking” (REFLECT) in COVID-19 study

In October, 2020, the Department of Health Policy Planning and Management -HPPM successfully held a dissemination under the Project titled “Refugee Lived Experiences, Compliance, and Thinking” (REFLECT) in COVID-19. This study was motivated mainly by three issues; Uganda’s open-door policy on refugee hosting; COVID-19; and the knowledge gap on COVID-19 impact in refugee communities.

Our researchers in partnership with different institutions in academia, policy and practice commenced on a study to contribute to increased compliance with the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 prevention guidelines. <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/researchers-embark-designing-interventions-increase-compliance-levels-around-covid-19-refugee>



Some of the participants of the REFLECT Study in a group photo at Makerere University (CTF1 Building) during the study launch and dissemination of preliminary findings.

Mak-RIF Studies

The School of Public Health continues to champion the Makerere University research agenda. In 2020, MakSPH was able to conduct and promote impactful public health research that addresses national, regional and continental needs. The current coronavirus pandemic fronted an opportunity to urgently address key evidence issues and with support from the Government of Uganda through the Makerere University Research and Innovation Fund (Mak-RIF), the school has been able to conduct crosscutting research to support government, especially the Ministry of Health in decision making. Several studies were conducted in 2020 and we bring you a highlight of a few of them.

What’s up with adolescent boys and young men’s health in Kampala, Uganda?’ study

On October 30, 2020 the research team on the ‘What’s up with adolescent boys and young men’s health in Kampala, Uganda?’ study, also known as the Adolescent Boys and Young Men (ABYM) study housed in the Department of Disease Control & Environmental Health disseminated study results conducted in Kampala.

This project under Mak-RIF examined the health risk-taking behaviours of ABYM (including use of alcohol and tobacco), sanitation and hygiene behaviours, Sexual and Reproductive Health, intentional and unintentional violence, dietary behaviours, mental health issues, and the effects of COVID-19 on the lives of ABYM. <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/makerere-study-routes-enhanced-health-programming-adolescent-boys-and-young-men>



Prof. Robert Wamala, Deputy Director Directorate of Research and Graduate Training -DRGT at Makerere University (2nd from right hand side), Dr. Isa Kabenge (2nd from left hand side) and researchers on Adolescent Boys and Young Men’s health in Kampala Uganda.

Children & COVID-19 Study: What children Know about COVID-19 and its Preventive Strategies in Uganda

In November 2020, the Department of Community Health and Behavioural Sciences (CHBS) held a dissemination Workshop under the study entitled: Exploring Children’s Understanding of COVID-19 and its Preventive Strategies in Uganda. This followed a study conducted between August and September 2020, among 372 randomly sampled children aged 10 to 13 years from 18 randomly selected villages from Mparo and Bujumbura Divisions in Hoima Municipality, Hoima District in mid-western Uganda.

The study was conducted by a team led by Dr. Christine Nalwadda and Ms. Lydia Kabwijamu from the CHBS department. Dissemination was held both physically in Hoima Municipality and virtually via zoom. The Hoima district authorities hailed Makerere University for its timely and cutting-edge research. Dr. Christine Nalwadda, was the Principal Investigator. <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/97-children-cannot-wash-hands-well-hoima-study>



Alcohol and Drug Abuse Surveillance System Developed

Substance abuse is one of the leading risk factors for high burden of disease globally. Although the highest levels of alcohol consumption are in Europe, Africa bears the heaviest burden of disease and injury attributed to alcohol.

Makerere University School of Public Health conducted a study titled; **“Setting up an epidemiological Alcohol and Drug Abuse Surveillance System,”** aimed at understanding the plight of alcohol and drug abuse in Rehabilitation Facilities in the Kampala Metropolitan Area. The researchers designed a tool for abstracting information from clients’ files, trained health workers to fill the tool and how to enter the data in a data base and how to report about it.

The study was successfully executed and disseminated at the School of Public Health in October, 2020 with funding from the Government of Uganda through the Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF). The study team consisted of Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, Assoc.Prof. Ponsiano Ocama, Dr. David Basangwa, Dr. Flavia Matovu, Dr. Catherine Abbo, Mr. Twaibu Wamala, Claire Birabwa, Cissie Namanda, and Ronald Twesigomwe. **Read more:** <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/news/makerere-researchers-develop-alcohol-and-drug-abuse-surveillance-system>



L-R: Dr. Catherine Abbo, Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye and Dr Hafsa Lukwata, the Acting Assistant Commissioner mental health at the dissemination in October 2020

PMA conducts Phase 1 baseline survey and result dissemination

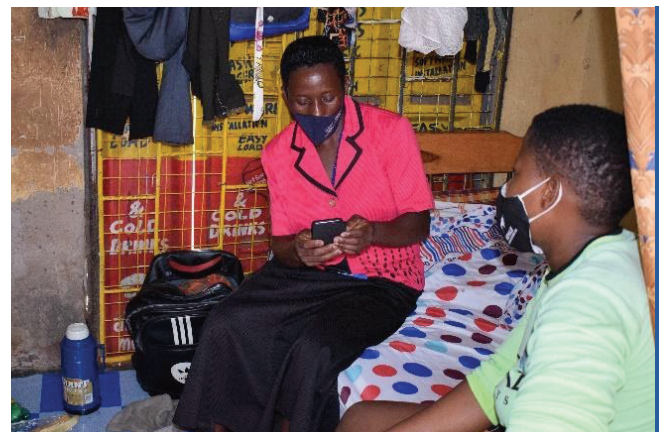
Between September and October 2020, Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA), a project fuelling a data revolution to guide family planning programs conducted a Phase 1 baseline nationally representative survey with resident enumerators deployed in 122 enumeration areas in all the 15 regions of the country.

The data collected measured demand and use of family planning methods, supply of and access to family planning services from the household, service delivery surveys and client exit interviews (CEIs) A follow up of participants from the client exit interviews is slated for the 1st quarter of 2021.

Questions on the COVID-19 pandemic were incorporated in the questionnaire to find out the effect of COVID-19 on household and women’s economic status and, on their access to and use of family planning. Also, the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on health facility FP service availability and interruptions. The survey comprised of 4,023 households, 3,939 female respondents aged between 15-49 years, 349 facilities and 2,397 clients exit interviews

Enumerator and supervisor training

Between August 24th to 30th,2020, the project trained 12 new Resident Enumerators that were being introduced to the PMA platform. The training equipped with skills and knowledge regarding the Resident Enumerator manual and using JHU Collect application - Open Data Kit (ODK). Also, a training on a new content and refresher training for 120 Resident Enumerators was held at Grand Global Hotel, Kampala from 24th to 30th August, 2020.



In photo (1); Resident Enumerators attending the refresher training in August 2020. In photo (2); An enumerator conducting a field practice activity to test the tools during training.



The Resident Enumerators were trained on the PMA survey content and tools (Household, Female, Client exit interview and the Service delivery point questionnaires), field work protocols, policies and procedures. The team also conducted a field practice, providing feedback for quality assurance of the ODK tools and processes.

PMA holds National Dissemination of Round Seven Family Planning Survey

Performance Monitoring for Action -PMA had a blended physical and virtual meeting via zoom to share the findings which was held on 14th December 2020, at Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala.

This session attracted key stakeholders from academia, Ministry of Health (MOH), Districts, several Government agencies, Family Planning implementing partners, Development partners, Family planning providers, media and consumer organisations.

A total of 129 stakeholders attended 75 (Virtual) and 54 (physical). The meeting was opened by Dr. Charles Olaro, MOH Director Health Services (Clinical), Chaired by Dr. Betty Kyadondo, Director Family Health at National Population Council and closed by Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, Director General National Populational Council. To read more on PMA visit: <https://www.pmadata.org/countries/uganda>



Front row L-R-PMA stakeholders, Dr Placid Mihayo, the Family Planning Focal Person at the Ministry of Health, Hon. Beatrice Rwakimari (Woman MP Ntungamo,) Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, the Director General of Uganda's National Population Council (NPC) Dr. Betty Kyadondo, the Director of Family Health at the National Population Council and Dr. Charles Olaro, Director Curative Services (MOH) with other stakeholders after the dissemination and dialogue meeting.

The Big Successes of ResilientAfrica Network (RAN)

With funding from United States Agency for International Development, UN Women, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and Government of the Republic of Uganda, the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) team has continued to nurture innovation ideas and accelerate them to tangible forms for community use to solve societal challenges.



Donor representative engagement at the Resilient Africa Network (RAN) Innovation Lab in Kololo.

Adding to the pool of 54 running multidisciplinary innovative enterprises, three unique innovations have thrived through the innovation ecosystem. Two innovations; Akatale Fresh <https://www.akatalefresh.com/> (an online store for ordering your daily Fruits, Vegetables, Spices and Herbs, Grains and Flour, Animal Products, Bread and Pastries, Dairy Products, Seafood and many) and MyLib www.facebook.com/myliblive (an interactive digital primary curriculum) with funding from Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and the Centres4Her application <https://twitter.com/centres4her?lang=en> (a mobile application that

links girls and women experiencing violence to available support services and sexual reproductive services) being funded by UN Women Uganda office.

In an effort to carry on with capacity building, over 100 budding innovative solutions have continued to receive mentorship support as non-funded potentially innovative solutions and RAN still welcomes more innovators in need of mentorship support to book for pitch sessions at RAN premises. A number of students, faculty and community members were supported to boost their innovation potential and RAN has also increased its visibility as an Innovation Lab.

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Freshly Delivered



Co-Creation in Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Bulamu-Low-Cost Medical Ventilator: RAN coordinated a team from Makerere University and Kiira Motors, to design and develop a low-cost medical ventilator for treatment of severe Covid-19 cases. At a cost that is one-tenth of the cost of high-end ventilators, the BULAMU ventilator will substantially increase access to emergency respiratory support for intensive care patients in Uganda and the region.

The ventilator is now in its sixth prototype and has successfully completed the engineering and benchtop functionality assessment tests. It is currently going into animal tests, facilitated by the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-security (COVAB) at Makerere University. Thereafter, it will undergo clinical trials through the Department of Anaesthesia at the College of Health Sciences.

The Bulamu Medical Ventilator shall utilize a Standby Battery as a sustainable alternative source of energy. It is imperative to note that over 84% of electricity generation in Uganda is from Hydropower, a sustainable energy source. Since the ventilator is solar powered, it can be used in the lower health centres (district hospitals and health centre IVs) thus reducing on the referral delay processes to regional hospitals in Uganda.



Unveiling the Low-Cost Medical Ventilator to Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Otero, Uganda's Minister of Health on June 11, 2020. Looking on is Professor William Bazeyo, the Chief of Party at RAN and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance & Administration) and Dr. Vincent Ssematya, the Director Quality Assurance at Makerere University (Photo-Makerere University Research and Innovation Fund).

EpiTent: 'Next generation tent to provide treatment and Isolation units for COVID-19'

RAN brought to scale the EpiTent, an innovative tent for emergency service delivery in humanitarian settings. The tent had earlier been developed in response to the Ebola epidemic and consists of smart engineering solutions that substantially reduce heat stress in very hot and humid conditions without artificial cooling, while providing a more humane environment to patients that reduces social exclusion.



EpiTent in Use in Adjumani District, Uganda

The tent facilitated the establishment of emergency field hospitals. With funding from partners and in coordination with the Ministry of Health, EpiTents were established in 4 regional referral hospitals (Masaka, Mbarara, Mbale and Gulu). Another tent was established at the Busia border, to support the immigration surveillance activities for COVID-19. RAN also supplied 10 tents to the UPDF for the establishment of a COVID-19 field hospital in Bombo. An MOU for manufacturing of the tent was established with Luwero Industries (for the main structure) and Terpo Industries for the tent cover.

Pandemic Preparedness Course Introduced

In September, 2020, Makerere University in Collaboration with the East African Secretariat signed a Collaborative agreement to implement the Pandemic Preparedness Course, a short course aimed at contributing to the One Health Work force and Institutionalizing One Health in the East African region.

The Pilot course will be conducted in 2021 by the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources, and Biosecurity (CoVAB) in partnership with Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) with funding from the Federal Republic of Germany and implemented by Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in close collaboration with the EAC Secretariat.



Mak Donates 90 Lifebuoys to Uganda Police Marines

In October 2020, MakSPH donated 90 lifebuoys to the Uganda Police Force (UPF) Marine Unit, to aid the specialized unit in rescuing the drowning victims.

This was done with support from the Bloomberg Philanthropies. The school also pledged to support the police marine unit with a refresher short course focusing on the 'training of trainers' on search and rescue, with at least one trainer from each of the Marine Police detachments in Uganda. With this intervention, it is hoped that the Marine Police roles will be enhanced and many lives will be saved on the Ugandan water bodies.



Assistant Inspector General of Police Edward Ochom, the UPF Director in charge of Operations together with Engineer James Apora, the Uganda Police Marine Unit commandant receive 90 lifebuoys from MakSPH team represented by Mr. Abdullah Ali Halage and Dr. Olive Kobusingye, a Research Fellow and the Principal Investigator of TRIAD project at the Marine Base in Kigo, Wakiso District



AIGP Edward Ochom, Director of Operations Uganda Police Force delivering his note on behalf of the Inspector-General of Police -IGP John Martins Okoth Ochola at Kigo.



Dr. Olive Kobusingye speaking at the ceremony as Mr. Abdullah Ali Halage and AIGP Ochom looks on.



The Marine Police officers make test drills for saving life on water using the donated life buoys



Marine Police in a group photo with the TRIAD Project Investigators at Kigo Marine Police Headquarters after donating the life buoys



The Marine Police officers at the handover ceremony of the MakSPH donated items.



Leading the next decade of public health transformation in Africa: MakSPH students in Neglected Tropical Diseases awareness

In January 2020, MakSPH students under their umbrella organization called Integrated Community Health Initiative Organization (ICHIO), joined the rest of the world in commemorating the first – ever World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Day. To mark this important day, they organized a Community sensitization event in Katoogo, a zone in Gaba, Kampala, to raise awareness about NTDs.

The sensitization centered on the vulnerability of this particular community, to disease outbreaks; the residents mentioned their fear of bilharzia, cholera, and typhoid among others. Advice on boiling water for drinking, was emphasized. However, the residents worried about the decreasing levels of hygiene standards especially in rainy weather, citing an ever – increasing possibility of worse scenarios.



Mr. Abdullah Ali Halage and Dr. Olive Kobusingye, a Research Fellow and the Principal Investigator of TRIAD project during the handover of the donated items at the Marine Base in Kigo, Wakiso District.



CHIO Chairperson, Maxencia Nabiryo (Left) and Executive Director, Tadeo Tumusiime (Right), advocating for the fight to Beat NTDs



Community Women Leader, giving opening remarks during the community awareness event on NTDs in Katoogo zone, Ggaba, Kampala



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

MakSPH, Partners Commended for Supporting Antimicrobial Stewardship in Uganda

In November 2020, the Public Health England, an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care in the United Kingdom gave an award for exceptional performance to MakSPH for its outstanding role in strengthening antimicrobial stewardship in Uganda. The award was in recognition for the collaborative work on antimicrobial stewardship with Nottingham Trent University, Buckinghamshire NHS Healthcare Trust and other partners. This recognition was received at the Antibiotic Guardian Shared Learning and Awards 2020 (UK) under the category of Multi-Country Collaboration held via zoom.



School of Public Health Takes Lead as Makerere University is Awarded Grant for Mobility of Students and Faculty with NTU, UK

Makerere University in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University (NTU), UK have been awarded 716,004 Euros from the British Council as part of the International Credit Mobility (ICM) programme of the European Commission. This grant will support the mobility of students and staff between the 2 institutions from 2020 to 2023. The project will be implemented as part of the 10-year partnership between Mak and NTU that is led by the School of Public Health.

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two universities (2018 – 2023) was signed by the Vice Chancellor Professor Barnabas Nawangwe and NTU Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) Prof. Cillian Ryan during the latter’s visit to Uganda in 2018.



Vice-Chancellor (International) Prof. Cillian Ryan during the latter’s visit to Uganda in 2018

International Conferences

Evidence Based Advocacy Head Lines Annual SET-SRHR Programme Conference

Between November 18 and 19th 2020, Makerere University School of Public Health organized a two-day research conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Africa. The conference was held at Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel, Entebbe in partnership with project’s key implementing partners; Rutgers, Netherlands and; Nsamizi Training Institute for Social Development.

This conference that was both physical and virtual attracted participants from all over the world including South Africa, Eastern Europe, West Africa, Ethiopia and Latin America Netherlands, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda.

During the conference, health stakeholders called for evidence-based advocacy as a ploy of addressing sexual reproductive and reproductive health challenges across the continent.



Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, the Minister for Primary Health Care joined by Ruth Van Zorge, a representative to the Dutch Ambassador to Uganda, Mr. Mondo Kyateeka, the Assistant Commissioner, Children and Youth (MGLSD) at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in a group photo at the SET-SRHR international conference.



The conference provided a great platform for African researchers, trainers, policy makers and practitioners to disseminate and exchange innovations, ideas and outcomes of their SRHR endeavours. The conference was officially opened by Hon. Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, the Minister for Primary Health Care and graced by Ruth Van Zorge who represented the Dutch Ambassador, Mr. Mondo Kyateeka, the Assistant Commissioner, Children and Youth at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and Dean-School of Public Health. At Makerere University, Dr. Elizabeth Nabiwemba leads SET-SRHR Programme.

Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, the Minister for Primary Health Care joined by Ruth Van Zorge, a representative to the Dutch Ambassador to Uganda, Mr. Mondo Kyateeka, the Assistant Commissioner, Children and Youth (MGLSD) at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in a group photo at the SET-SRHR international conference.

Higher education under examination: are we ready to train the future healthcare workforce?

In October, 2020, Dr. David Serwadda, represented Makerere University Uganda at a virtual international conference organised by The Universitat Obertade Catalunya -UOC's eHealth Center and the Globalization and Cooperation area, as the leaders of the SDG 3 cluster within the International Association of Universities (IAU) Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development. The webinar was organized in collaboration with the IAU to discuss the challenges facing the higher education system in the training of healthcare professionals in an age marked by COVID-19.

Speaking at the conference, Dr. Serwadda, a Professor of Infectious Diseases, and former Dean MakSPH observed that COVID-19, by way of catalysing e-learning in education institutions has transformed the way health training is taking shape on the continent. He said ICT will go a long way in ensuring students continue to learn and imparting knowledge beyond the pandemics. He highlighted that while many education institutions in Africa and Uganda in particular were already on the move to adopt eLearning, there remains structural disparities citing that ability to access to internet is not well geographically distributed

as well as the cost of internet as major hinderances to this effort. According to Dr. Serwadda, in order to move governments to invest in technology platforms for eLearning, scientists and researchers need to generate evidence to the effect that investing in digital platforms for education increases access to education as it provides level ground for more people access to cheaper and more people can be trained as well as a knock-on effect on all other aspects of healthcare, including an opportunity for patients to access healthcare through digital platforms.



Albert Barberà, Director of the eHealth Center, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya alongside Dr. David Serwadda, a Professor at MakSPH.



Caption: Titi Savitri, Associate Professor in Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, Public Health and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Madah, Albert Barberà, Director of the eHealth Center, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Virginia Schmied, Professor in School of Nursing and Midwifery at University of Western Sydney, Pam Fredman, President of the International Association of Universities, Marta Aymerich, Health Sciences professor and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Maria Niemi, Associate Professor at Karolinska Institutet and David Serwadda, a Professor at Makerere University



COVID-19 Rapid Assessment Training

Between November 2020 to January 2021, the Uganda Field Epidemiology Training Program, a project in the Health Policy Planning and Management Department at Makerere University School of Public Health with funding support from TEPHINET, implemented an emergency capacity building project.

On the whole, 20 residents and alumni were trained on conducting rapid assessment; implementing of the First Few X (FFX) cases and contact investigation protocol, including the Go.data application and on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for workplaces.

Under the stewardship of Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa-Kiracho, the Program Director and Principal Investigator, the project team, Using the Go.data application, conducted contact tracing of COVID-19 cases at the first 25 public and 25 private workplaces, in Kampala-Uganda, that confirmed COVID-19 case following relaxation of the national lockdown.

This was in addition to rapid assessments, for selected workplaces, to determine their capacity to implement recommended COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures. Residents presented the assessment findings at each workplace and with the help of a workplace manager or administrator, they identified and trained three to five IPC focal persons for each workplace.



Peer educators sharing their experiences during the weekly mentorship meetings. In attendance are the MakSPH Researchers and the Kisenyi Village Health Team members during the study.



Peer educators sharing their experiences during the weekly mentorship meetings. In attendance are the MakSPH Researchers and the Kisenyi Village Health Team members during the study.

MakSPH Conducts Study on HPV Vaccine Uptake among Urban Poor through Peer Participation

Through the 2019 Small Grants Program from Sabin Vaccine Institute, Doreen Tuhebwe, a Research associate at Makerere University School of Public Health was awarded a research grant to implement a study titled “Exploring how to improve HPV vaccine uptake through peer group participation among adolescent girls in the urban poor settings of Kisenyi, Kampala, Uganda”.

The study run from August 2019 and ended in March 2020. Doreen Tuhebwe was the study Principal Investigator while Steven Ssendagire and Christine Adyedo were Co-investigators.

The study aimed at training and empowering vaccinated adolescent girls aged 10-14 living in Kisenyi to effectively advocate for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine uptake among unvaccinated girls in their neighbourhood using a peer-to-peer education approach. The principles of human centered design, persuasion, social networks and repeat socialization were applied in the study.

In the reporting year, the HPV V-UP study team conducted peer educator mentorship meetings with 18 girls in Kisenyi. Through the study, a total of 145 girls who had not received the HPV vaccine were identified by the peer educators and interested to take up the vaccine. After a period of 12 weeks follow up, 88/145 girls from Kisenyi had received their first doze of the vaccine.

The main facilitators of success in the peer-to-peer education approach were a peer educator being able to effectively communicate the benefits of the vaccine to the unvaccinated girl(s) and being able to inform the caretaker of the unvaccinated girl(s) about the safety of the vaccine. Some of the barriers to the peer-to-peer education approach were challenges of vaccine refusal at the last minute often times driven by the caretaker of the girl and weak network connection between the peer educator and some of the unvaccinated girls which affected extent of repeat socialization and follow up.

With the evidence at play, the study team at MakSPH is convinced that using the peer education approach in programs such as immunisation is feasible in the urban poor context and peer educators can improve the attitudes of girls and their caretakers towards the HPV vaccine and potentially increase acceptance. Through a peer-to-peer education approach, unvaccinated girls can be identified, engaged, convinced and supported to overcome vaccine refusal.

They recommend that during demand creation for the HPV vaccine all key influencers of the “vaccination decision making pathway” should be engaged especially the caretakers.



MakSPH in efforts towards Reducing Malaria mortality Among children

Through the Community Access to Rectal Artesunate for Malaria (CARAMAL) Project, MakSPH has made big strides in ensuring improved community management of suspected severe malaria cases.



CARAMAL PI Dr. Phyllis Awor (centre) with research assistants before start of health care and household surveys. Photos by Irene Angiro

In 2020, the project conducted a **Patient surveillance system (PSS)** to assess severe febrile illness/ suspected severe malaria incidence, case fatality rate and related clinical patterns, diagnoses, treatment and treatment outcomes from first point of contact to the point of recovery or death (before and after roll out of RAS). It involved all children below 5 years of age seeking care for a current or recent illness episode at the community-based care providers ie CHWs or primary health facilities in the study areas.

Nearly 7000 children diagnosed at the community level with severe and or suspected severe malaria were then enrolled in the PSS and tracked at the referral health facility and at the child's home 28 days later after initial diagnosis by the study nurses. Further more, all children under five years of age seeking treatment directly at the referral facility were also enrolled to evaluate treatment seeking, diagnosis, treatment and disease outcome.

In October 2020, the project team also conducted the **Health Care Provider survey (HCPs)** to establish the availability and uptake of QA RAS at all levels of health care (CHW and health facilities) and health providers' knowledge, attitude and practices towards RAS before and after roll out of RAS in the districts of Kole, Kwania and Oyam.

The study team conducted facility interviews with the different cadres within the health facilities specifically; the hospital in charges, directors, doctors, clinicians and nurses on management of febrile case management, treatment guidelines, experience in implementing malaria management and prevention guidelines, provision of post-referral treatment, focusing on aspects relevant to the implementation of pre-referral RAS and



A Research Assistant conducting the malaria test in Kwania District in December 2020.



Research Assistants listing households in one of the villages with guidance from LC1 chairperson (in yellow t-shirt) in Oyam district.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

post-referral treatment of severe febrile illness. In addition, we filled in facility based structured checklist that assessed the availability of essential medical supplies including rectal artesunate and equipment, human resource capacity and infrastructure. We also interviewed CHWs and filled the community workers indicator forms among others.

In the months of November and December 2020, the CARMEL project conducted a **Household survey** to assess treatment seeking, caretaker's knowledge and attitudes towards RAS and malaria intervention coverage at community level before and after roll out of RAS.

Several activities were undertaken during this exercise. These included; village mapping, listing of all households within the village clearly indicating whether there exist children under five in the households and drawing the sketch map of the village showing how the houses are distributed.

In each household, household heads and parents/ caretakers of children under 5 years of age were considered to be eligible to participate in this survey. However only 32 households were to be visited therefore these households were selected using the random table of numbers. Research assistants reached out to these households conducted interviews for about 30 minutes and tested children under five for malaria and Hb levels. Treatment with ACT was provided for children found to be sick.

Prior to the start of the project the Community Health Workers were trained by UNICEF on identification of suspected and danger signs of severe malaria among children and provided them with equipment that they need for successful implementation of their activities. They were also taught on how to report through sending SMS via Mtrack system in case there is case of severe malaria in the community and where to refer the caregivers for full treatment. The project currently supports health system improvement at all levels of the health system.



A Research assistant (blue t-shirt) creating rapport with VHTs and LC1 before entering the community in Kole District.



Household interview with the caregiver in Kole District.

200 Research Protocols Reviewed in 2020 by the Higher Degrees Research and Ethics Committee

MakSPH undertakes to ensure quality and the ethics of research that we conduct. Through the Higher Degrees and Research Ethics Committee (MakSPH HDREC) office, we review protocols for the various researchers, monitor research studies that have been approved to ensure compliance with the national and international research guidelines. We also review students' research. Through our Higher Degrees component, we review graduate students' proposals and support them throughout the processes.

During the year 2020, the Institutional Review Board -IRB, a component under HDREC was able to conduct three site visits for the different studies approved initially by the Higher Degrees Research and Ethics Committee (HDREC) at the different sites. The sites visited include Crane Survey site in Kasangati, the African cohort study in Kayunga and A HASTE study, also located in Kasangati.

In the reporting year, the Higher Degrees Research and Ethics Committee was able to review about 200 protocols among which

included student and established investigator protocols. The COVID-19 outbreak presented an opportunity for the HDREC to improve its work and support the processes. Effective 1st October 2020, the unit enrolled and transitioned to the National Research Information Management System (NRIMS), an online system for reviewing different protocols. The HDREC held 12 virtual full board meetings to review initial protocols that were submitted throughout the year and at least one meeting was convened each month.



IRB Team Handover and Orientation Retreat 2020

On November 25, 2020, 19 members of the Higher Degrees Research and Ethics Committee were hosted for a handover by the old members and the new team, at a function organized by the HDREC Secretariat at Piato Restaurant, in Kampala Uganda.

The function was presided over by Dr. Noah Kiwanuka representing the Dean, School of Public Health. The retreat was mainly intended to orient the new committee members of the roles and Standard Operating Procedures for Protocol Review based on the different categories. The event was chaired by Dr. Suzanne Kiwanuka, Chairperson Higher Degrees Research and Ethics Committee. The event was a success with many action points recommended to enable smooth review process at MakSPH-HDREC



Dr Noah Kiwanuka, representing the MakSPH Dean handing over a certificate of appreciation for dedicated service to Dr. Nazarius Tumwesigye. Ruth Nagawa, the HDREC Administrative Assistant received the certificate on his behalf.

New Faces at MakSPH in 2020



Melody Kukundakwe, Joined the School as a Communication Officer, Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) Project

Melody Kukundakwe

She has vast experience working in the field of Cooperate and Development Communications, coordinating the development, implementation and review of efficient communication strategies for humanitarian, health and environmental initiatives. Melody holds a Master's Degree in Public Health Leadership and a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication from Uganda Christian University. Her interests are inclined to Health Communication with a bias towards Maternal and Child Health.



Davidson Ndyabahika, joined MakSPH as a Communication officer

Davidson Ndyabahika

Is an accomplished communications professional. With more than six years' experience working as a journalist in numerous media houses. He is also an excellent photographer, writer, and content developer with great interpersonal and computer skills. Prior to joining MakSPH, Ndyabahika written and published for and several other media houses with the Uganda Radio Network (URN) as the latest. He holds an Upper Second-Class Honours degree of Journalism and Communication of Makerere University and several postgraduate qualifications in line with his profession.



Max Walusimbi Retires from MakSPH

After a lifetime of dedicated service to MakSPH, Maxensia Walusimbi, popularly known as Maxie announced she would join retirement from the School of Public Health.



Maxensia Walusimbi (holding a plaque) in a group photo with the team at MakSPH at her farewell.

In an emotional farewell ceremony organised by the MakSPH on 18th December 2020, fellow departmental members poured in their exciting memories of Maxie.

Professor David Guwatudde said he had known Maxie sometime in 1996, even before she joined the School through a friend who was her workmate at Uganda National Association of Community and Occupational Health (UNACOH).

Professor Guwatudde described Max as a very dedicated, loyal hard worker and dynamic. "Our students will miss you when they hear you have left. We wish you very well in your retirement. Some of us are following very soon," says Professor Guwatudde.



Dr. Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Bio-statistics.

I have known Max for 15 years. I have worked closely with her for seven years and we had such a good working relationship. Maxie was always on top of her game when it came to issues of administration of the course. It made our work a lot easier. I had to oversee the academic component of the program. We used to share an office and I really can attest that Max was a mother to students. Thank you, Max, for that credible service for the program. We appreciate you as a department!"

Huthaifah Mutyaba Assistant Administrator (Academic Affairs) in the Department of Epidemiology and Bio-statistics. (MakSPH)



I would truly confirm that Maxie was a mentor and a counselor. I call upon all of you to support me in this role since I am new. I will keep disturbing you. Maxie, kindly don't get tired of my calls."

Dr. Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho, Head Health Policy Planning and Management (HPPM) Department



"Thank you for making a mark. Thank you for being committed to your work. We would always count on you. Whenever we would have an issue and I send an email, you always responded in a timely manner. As a department, we want to thank you and we wish you well in the next steps that you will be taking,"

Enid Kemaari Ahimbisibwe, the MPH Program Manager



"I have learned a lot from you. Being patient and persistent, a team player. It has been an honor to work with a committed, hardworking, and we will miss you but wish you all the best."

Dr. Joseph Kagaayi, Lecturer Epidemiology and Biostatistics



"I joined Epi-Bio back in 2014 not as Faculty then. I really knew very little in terms of procedural issues. Going around offices in the School. For me my go-to-person was Max. And I really admire the guidance she used to give me. She is a lady of great personality which is very difficult to find. She is very hardworking, always gives you an ear. I will really miss Maxie when she is gone. Thank you very much. Hope to meet soon."



MakSPH 2020 Publications

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