



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

Evidence to Policy Impact

APHRC @20 Symposium

May 23, 2023
APHRC Campus



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Executive Director's Welcome Note



The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) celebrates twenty years since it started independent operations. APHRC is focused on nurturing a cadre of African experts to bridge the know-do gaps in addressing the myriad of challenges affecting the African continent.

We remain committed to incorporating the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) approach into all our work to drive innovation and policy impact. Critical to this process is the creation of new knowledge through research and utilization of existing knowledge, and sharing experiences and best practice by thought leaders in this area.

Our 20 year anniversary celebration is a great opportunity to engage with experts, researchers, partners, and a wide range of stakeholders to provide valuable insights towards achieving this goal. This symposium covers a myriad of issues critical to the African continent and the place of evidence in decision making. We hope that you will share freely, learn and make your voice heard.

As we look to the next 20 years, we hope that you will accompany us on our journey as we grow and learn together.

Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi

Executive Director

About the Evidence to Policy Impact - APHRC @20 Symposium

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is a leading Africa-based, African-led, international research institution headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and engaged in multidisciplinary, evidence-based policy research. Our researchers address important issues and challenges facing Africa in areas such as education, health, population, aging, urbanization, and well-being. We engage with policy-makers in the region to disseminate our research findings to influence policy decisions and improve the quality of life in Africa.

As we celebrate our 20 years of existence, we invite our partners including but not limited to policy makers, civil society organizations, and academia and research institutions to jointly reflect with us on the role of evidence in decision-making.

We recognize the need to encourage and promote evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) in Africa, thereby contributing to the development of effective public policies, efficient implementation of services, as well as joint learning on interventions that tackle development challenges in African countries.

Objective

To share lessons learned and explore opportunities for the application of EIDM in Africa and to build a community of relevant institutions, organizations and professionals to advance the use of evidence in decision making in Africa.

Methodology

An interdisciplinary one-day conference targeting high-level decision makers and evidence practitioners to be delivered through presentations, panel discussions and poster presentations.

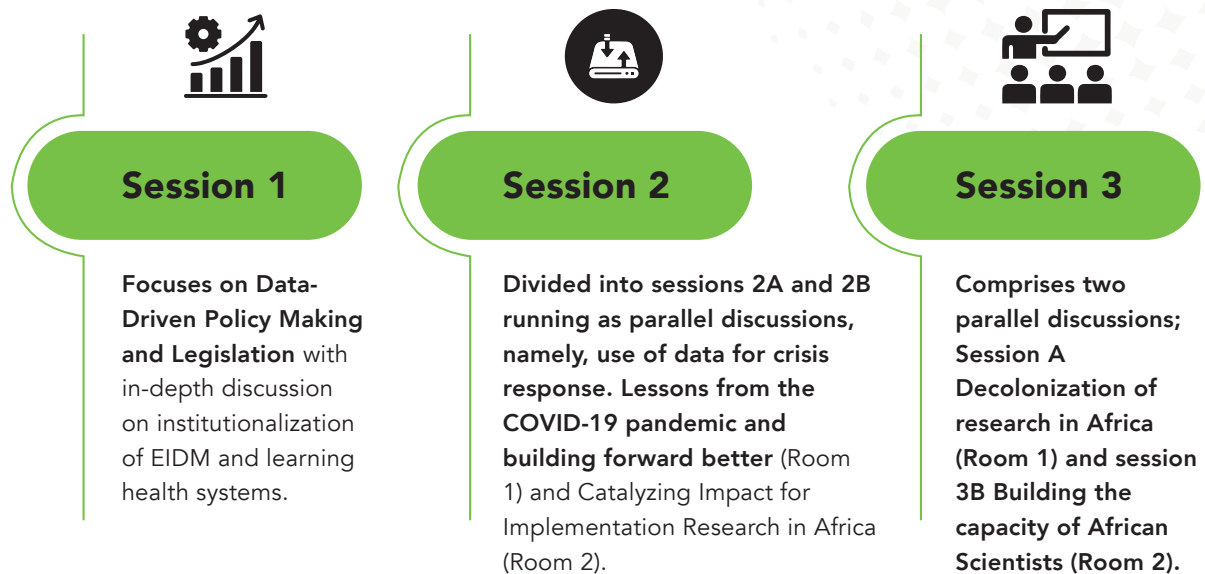
Program

TIME	ACTIVITY	MODERATOR	
08:00-09:00	Arrival & entertainment	Larry Asego	
	Preliminaries Welcome and acknowledgment of guests	Evelyn Gitau	
Overview and methodology of the conference Dr. Evelyn Gitau			
Overview of APHRC Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi, APHRC			
09:30-11:00	Session 1: Data-Driven Policy Making and Legislation: Institutionalization of EIDM and Learning Health Systems Dr. Mohamed Sheikh, NCPD Kenya Dr. Rose, Oronje AFIDEP Dr. Rhona Mijumbi, ACRES Dr. Caroline Kabiru, APHRC <i>Mode: Presentation, Panel discussion and Q&A session</i>	Anthony Ajayi & Nicholas Etyang	
11:00-11:30	Health break/ Photo session		
11:30-13:00	Room 1 Session 2A: Use of data for crisis response. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and building forward better Mr. Leonard COSMAS, WHO Dr. Abdhahah Ziraba, APHRC Dr. William Ogallo, IBM Research Africa <i>Mode: Panel discussion and Q&A session</i>	Room 2 Session 2B: Catalyzing Impact for Implementation Research in Africa Dr. Gerald Mboowa, Africa CDC Mr. Bright Simons, APHRC Board Member Mr. Martin Mbaya, APHRC Board Member Dr. Evelyn Gitau, APHRC <i>Mode: Panel discussion and Q&A session</i>	Room 1. Agnes Kiragga Room 2: Daniel Ochiel
	Lunch Break		

	Room 1	Room 2	
14.00 -15.30	<p>Session 3A: Decolonization of Research in Africa (R&D Ecosystem) Dr. Sam Oti, IDRC Kenya Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi, APHRC Dr. Kui Muraya, Pop Council</p> <p><i>Mode: Panel discussion and Q&A session</i></p>	<p>Session 3B: Building the Capacity of African Scientists Prof. Pam Fredman, APHRC Board member Dr. Fiona Wanjiku Moejes, Mawazo Institute Prof. Sharon Fonn, University of Wits Dr. Alphonsus Neba, Science for Africa Foundation Dr. Rose Opiyo, UoN (CARTA Fellow)</p> <p>Mode: Presentation, Panel discussion and Q&A session</p>	<p>Room 1: Lynette Kamau Room 2: Florah Karimi</p>
15.30 -16.00	<p>Closing ceremony Dr. Joseph Gichuru, APHRC</p>		
16.00 -17:00	<p>Evidence gallery walk (Thematic poster exhibitions) Heads of themes and units (APHRC)</p>		<p>Florence Sipalla</p>
17:00	<p>Cocktail Reception</p>		

Session structure and speakers' profiles

The conference is organized into five sessions combining presentation, panel discussions and interactive question and answer sessions with high-level decision makers and evidence practitioners whose profiles are shared here under.



Participants will attend the sessions of their interest. The final session involves a gallery display of APHRC's programmatic successes over the last 20 years.



Session I

Data-Driven Policy Making and Legislation; Institutionalization of EIDM and Learning Health Systems- 09:30-11:00

Session objectives

- ◆ Highlight the role of research in improving the delivery of development efforts in Africa
- ◆ Assess the policy landscape on the continent and use of evidence in policy making
- ◆ Illustrate examples of cases where evidence is used in policy making
- ◆ Specify ways to institutionalize the use of evidence in policy making

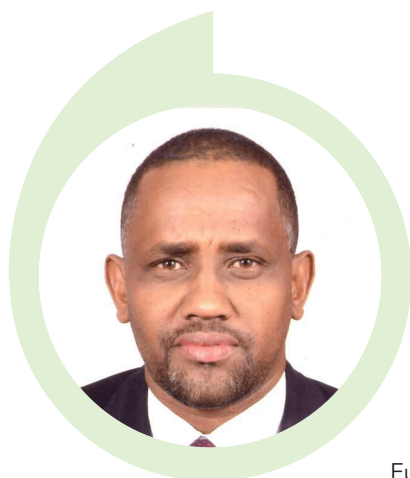
Key talking areas/key questions to be addressed

- ◆ The place of evidence in decision making in the health sector
- ◆ Institutionalization of evidence in Africa and the role of researchers in it
- ◆ Evidence networks and alliances in Africa and how to leverage these networks to improve evidence use in decision making. What opportunities exist in these networks?
- ◆ The place of rapid evidence synthesis in meeting demand for evidence
- ◆ The best approaches to engaging various policy actors especially governments in promoting evidence use
- ◆ Challenges and barriers to evidence use in Africa and how to mitigate them
- ◆ Key considerations/tips for researchers, especially early career researchers to facilitate the turning of findings into policy and practice
- ◆ The future of EIDM in Africa

Session format: Presentation, Panel discussion and Q&A

Session speakers' profiles

Dr. Mohamed Sheikh, National Council for Population Development (NCPD), Kenya



Dr. Mohamed Sheikh is the Director General for the Kenya National Council for Population and Development, a Semi-Autonomous Government Agency under The National Treasury and Economic Planning that is mandated to advise and coordinate population in Kenya.

He is a Medical Doctor and hold a Master Degree in International Public Health and Maternal and Child health. He has over 18 years years of experience in senior level health system management and leadership, starting his career as district medical officer and growing through the ranks to a Provincial Medical Officer (PMO).

He served as a Board Director of the Anti- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kenya and advisor of a multi donor trust fund for Global Facility Fund (GFF). He is currently serving as Board of Director of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and the executive member of Partner in population & development and the Chair of the Africa National Population Councils.

Dr. Caroline Kabiru, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

Dr. Caroline Kabiru leads the Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (SRMNCAH) Unit at the African Population and Health Research Center. Prior to her current position, she served as the senior technical advisor on the UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Evidence to End FGM research program, which was led by the Population Council. Caroline, who has a PhD in Health Promotion and Behavior from the University of Georgia in the United States, has over 15 years of experience conducting research in sub-Saharan Africa. Much of her research focuses on young people's health and well-being in low-resource and marginalized urban settings and covers topics ranging from sexual and reproductive health to mental health.



Dr. Rose Oronje,
 The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

Rose is a development policy and communications specialist with over 15 years' experience in designing and implementing public policy and governance research, knowledge translation, communication and evidence uptake interventions, and capacity development for enabling evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) in development efforts in Africa. With a strong background in science communication and policy analysis, Rose has extensive experience in conducting analyses of policies and policy environments, and translating and communicating research to policymakers and other general audiences (including the mass media). She also has extensive experience in designing and delivering capacity building programmes in knowledge translation, including research-to-policy communications, but also research utilisation by policymakers, media practitioners, and civil society.



At AFIDEP, Rose provides strategic leadership in the design and conduct of research on policy analysis, political economy analysis, and knowledge translation; and design and delivery of capacity development interventions aimed at enabling EIDM as well as knowledge translation and policy engagement interventions aimed at supporting evidence uptake in decision-making. Rose has designed and led implementation of multi-year, multi-country programmes with African Ministries of Health, African Parliaments and Parliamentary Networks, Universities and Research Consortia and Networks, and Media. Her publications have focused mainly on the areas of health policymaking, research-to-policy in the health sector, and capacity development for nurturing an EIDM culture.

Prior to joining AFIDEP, Rose headed the Policy Engagement and Communications unit at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) from 2004-2009. Rose earned her Ph.D. from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. She also has a Master's Degree in Communications from the University of Nairobi, and a Bachelor's degree in Information Science from Moi University.

Dr. Rhona Mijumbi,
 the Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES)



Dr. Rhona Mijumbi-Deve is a research scientist and health policy analyst whose focus has been on the science-to-policy nexus for more than 15 years. She is the founding director of the Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES) at Makerere University in Uganda, and is also a senior lecturer of public policy at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), in the United Kingdom. She is a scholar and advocate for research and all forms of evidence informing policy decisions and practice, and for the increased contextual understanding of knowledge systems. She has been involved in championing the evidence-to policy field in Africa and has been behind the pilot and scaling of several knowledge translation units, platforms and teams in the African, Asian, Latin America, and MENA regions. She is the current chair of the Africa Evidence Network, a network that brings together 3000 evidence scholars and practitioners across Africa.

Rhona trained as a medical doctor and holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery. She holds two Masters degrees - a Master's degree in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and a Master's degree in International Public Health, and also holds a Doctorate in Health Policy.



Session 2A

Use of data for crisis response. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and building forward better- 11:30-13:00

Session objective(s)

- ◆ To illustrate how relevant data or lack of it, influenced the COVID-19 response in Kenya and other countries in the region

Key talking areas/key questions to be addressed

- ◆ Reflect on examples where public health and other decisions were hinged on COVID-19 data,
- ◆ Quality and barriers to accessing and using data generated by use of public resources,
- ◆ Value of routine service and surveillance data and the status of systems that generate it,
- ◆ Long term investment in capacity for self-sufficiency in areas such as vaccine development

Session format: Panel discussion and Q&A

Session speakers' profiles

Mr. Leonard Otieno Cosmas, WHO Kenya Country Office

Leonard Otieno Cosmas is the Health Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Officer at the WHO Kenya Country Office. He holds a Master's in Public Health and Bachelors of Science in Statistics from the University of Nairobi and Certificates in Epidemiology from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health (USA) and Certificate in Global Burden of Disease from Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

He has over 15 years hands-on experience in offering technical support towards Database Design and Data Analysis, strengthening the National Health Information Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation of health sector performance, and strengthening the country's capacity to analyze and use health data and evidence to inform policy-making and monitoring of health situation and trends towards attainment of National, regional and global health goals including SDGs and UHC indicators. His main areas of focus include data management and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, Strategic health Information Systems including; Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems, Digital Health Systems, Routine Health Information Systems, Health Facility Assessments, Population-based surveys and Monitoring & Evaluation of Health Policies, Strategies and Interventions.



Dr. Abdhalah Ziraba, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)



Dr. Abdhalah Ziraba is an epidemiologist with over 15 years' experience in epidemiological research, health services research, disease surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, impact evaluations and policy analysis. Currently, he heads the Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases research unit at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC). His areas of interest include infectious diseases prevention including HIV/AIDS, emerging infectious diseases, and health systems strengthening and understanding how the systems respond to the major infectious diseases epidemics. He has managed over 20 research projects and published over 40 scientific publications and several technical reports. Prior to joining APHRC, he practiced clinical medicine in Uganda. He attained a PhD in Epidemiology and Population Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Masters (Epidemiology and Biostatistics) and Bachelors (Medicine) of Makerere University.

**Dr. William Ogallo,
IBM Research Africa**

William is a senior research scientist at IBM with a demonstrated history of leading cutting-edge research in healthcare Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. He manages the Discovery Science and Applications team at IBM Research Africa which develops novel AI techniques for accelerating discoveries in healthcare and life sciences as well as climate and sustainability. He is skilled in deep learning, knowledge discovery, data mining, and health informatics. His current research interests include developing and fine-tuning large biomedical foundation models to accelerate scientific discoveries and applying subset scanning techniques for detecting anomalous patterns in large-scale data. William holds a PhD in Biomedical Informatics from Columbia University in the City of New York and a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Nairobi.



Session format: Panel discussion and Q&A



Session 2B

Catalyzing Impact for Implementation Research in Africa -11:30 -13:00

Session objectives

- ◆ Understand the current status and gaps in implementation research in Africa
- ◆ Share perspectives and experiences on successful initiatives and models to strengthen capacity for implementation research
- ◆ How can we integrate and maximize efforts at continental level?

Key talking areas/points/key questions to be addressed

- ◆ Value of implementation research in accelerating the translation of research evidence
- ◆ Key priorities for strengthening implementation research capacity
- ◆ Overcoming barriers and challenges in conducting implementation research in Africa
- ◆ Establishing sustainable research platforms to facilitate inter-institutional collaborations
- ◆ Relationships between implementation research and R&D ecosystem

Session format: Panel discussion and Q&A

Session speakers' profiles

Dr. Gerald Mboowa, The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention



Dr Gerald Mboowa is a Bioinformatics Implementation Expert at the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ethiopia. Gerald earned a degree in BS back in 2009, MS in 2014, and later a Ph.D. in Genomics in 2019. He is interested in deployment of sequencing technologies in disease outbreak investigations, pathogen characterization as well antimicrobial resistance surveillance. His work also focuses on using genomic technologies and bioinformatics to track AMR to better understand genomic determinants of resistance and mechanisms. His work also broadly aims to contribute to areas in genomics, bioinformatics, & DNA sequence analysis to improve disease diagnosis, health, & cures for human diseases.

Mr. Bright Simons, APHRC Board Member

Bright Simons, a patent-holding enterprise technology inventor, is the President of mPedigree, an award-winning technology social enterprise reinventing the supply chain on three continents to enhance patient and consumer safety in such vital categories as medicines and agro-inputs. He is also honorary Vice President at IMANI, a think tank regularly ranked among the most influential in Africa. A Board-level Advisor to major science and technology companies and research institutions, with recent affiliations to Microsoft; Belgian biopharma company, UCB; Ashesi University; Africa Population Health Research Center; and the Center for Global Development's Study Group on Technology, he previously served on the World Economic Forum's Africa Strategy Group, having earlier been nominated a Young Global Leader by the same organization. His work in technology has been recognized with a TED Fellowship, Aspen Braddock Fellowship, and the 2016 CNBC African Innovative Business Leader of the Year award. In 2016, Fortune magazine named him on their 50 World Greatest Leaders list.



**Mr. Martin Mbaya,
APHRC Board Member**



Martin is a Doctoral Fellow at Strathmore University Business School in Nairobi, Kenya where he teaches, undertakes research and consults in the areas of Public Policy, Digital Learning, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Trade and Sustainability.

Martin is a Founding Director of Utawala Applied Research Institute the legacy of a 2013-2014 Ford Foundation grant to support Devolution on Kenya. He is a Governing Council Member of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and Trustee of its affiliated Endowment Foundation Trust. He also serves on the Board of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC). Martin is a co-founder of Nairobi Capital, an MIT incubated start-up and MassChallenge finalist, where he remains an investor. He is a Trustee of the Alliance High School Endowment Fund Trust.

Martin holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from MIT and a Master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Graduate School of Technology Management at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and IT where he is studying systemic barriers to digital learning innovation in Africa with a focus on universities. Martin is 2015 Tutu Fellow and a 2021-2022 cohort member of the Global Alliance for Ethics and Impacts of Advanced technologies (GAEIA) Network and Platform.

Martin has co-authored a chapter titled "Innovative Governance Systems – Kenya, Rwanda and the implementation of Africa's Agenda 2063 through the AfCFTA" in a newly launched book, "Innovation Ecosystems in Africa – Solving the Problems that we have".

**Dr. Evelyn Gitau,
African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)**

Dr. Evelyn Gitau is the Director of Research Capacity Strengthening and Acting Director of Research at the African Population and Health Research Center. Dr. Gitau earned her PhD in Life Sciences from the Open University/Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the UK, investigating neurological infections in children living in malaria-endemic areas. She has more than 15 years of experience in medical research.

Among her awards and accomplishments include a 2015 appointment as a fellow of the Next Einstein Forum, where she is the ambassador for the development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Africa.

Dr. Gitau's vast networks have brought her positions on numerous advisory boards for organizations advancing the agenda of research and evidence generation in Africa. These include the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB), Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme College of Medicine, Blantyre, Malawi, University of Oxford (MSc International Health and Tropical Medicine) and the Investment Committee Grand Challenges Canada.





Session 3A

Decolonization of research in Africa (R&D Ecosystem) - 14:00 -15:30

Session objectives

- ◆ Demystify what decolonized research is and how achieve it
- ◆ Highlight the importance of decolonizing knowledge

Key talking areas/Key questions to be addressed

- ◆ African research is still highly dependent on donor or external actors funding. How do we decolonize research in such a landscape?
- ◆ There is always a debate on whether African research is informed by the Continent's needs or by the funders priorities. What is your take on this issue and how can research effectively change African lives?
- ◆ Research contributes to a knowledge base and sometimes, how knowledge and evidence is shared is limiting because of limitations around methodology and study participants.
- ◆ Research is part of an ecosystem, do you think all the actors appreciate the value of decolonization? If not, how can people's mindsets be changed? (COVID-19 example)

Session format: Panel discussion and Q&A

Session speakers' profiles

Dr. Samuel Oti, International Development Research Centre, Kenya



Dr. Samuel Oti is medical doctor and public health expert. He is currently a Senior Program Specialist at Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). He operates out of the Nairobi-based regional office for Eastern and Southern Africa, where he serves as the primary point of contact for IDRC's global health initiatives. In this role, Dr. Oti manages a diverse portfolio of research grants in the areas of pandemic preparedness and response, sexual and reproductive health, climate-resilient food systems, One Health, and the use of Artificial Intelligence in health. He is also a commissioner on the Chatham House Commission for Universal Health and a co-founder of the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa. Additionally, Dr. Oti hosts MedxTek Africa, a popular podcast that highlights digital health and health technology innovations from across the African continent. In 2020, Dr Oti co-founded the Global

Health Decolonisation Movement in Africa – a professional network that is seeking to mobilize a critical mass of African voices to speak out about what we perceive as the manifestations of coloniality in global health. Our mission is strongly aligned with the Africa CDC's call for a "New Public Health Order".

Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi is the Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center based in Nairobi, Kenya. She previously served as the Center's Director of Research and Head of the research Unit on Health and Systems for Health. Catherine has a medical background and is a trained epidemiologist with research interests in the interface between Non-Communicable Diseases and Health Systems Strengthening. She has led research projects on the epidemiology of NCD risk factors in Kenya, and designed and tested service delivery models for resource-constrained settings such as slum settings. She has also conducted research on the policy context for NCD prevention in several African countries.

Catherine is a strong advocate for the societal benefit of research beyond traditional research outputs. At APHRC, she has strengthened the Center's approaches to policy engagement and advocacy and supported the development of policy and advocacy models to ensure timely and effective uptake of evidence in decision making. She has published more than 150 peer-reviewed papers, sits on multiple national and global expert advisory panels.

Catherine is also the co-Director of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) – PhD and Post-doctoral fellowship Program to strengthen the capacity of eight public Universities in Africa to produce the next generation of African research leaders.

Catherine is a Joep Lange Chair at the University of Amsterdam and is working on Chronic Disease Management as an entry point to make healthcare systems more responsive to NCDs in Africa. She is also a fellow of the African Academy of Sciences and the co-Editor in Chief of PLOS Global Public Health journal.



Dr. Kui Muraya,
Population Council Kenya



Dr. Kui Muraya is an afro-optimist and a gender equity champion. Professionally, she is a senior gender and health systems researchers with over 15 years' experience in qualitative social science research. She is the thematic lead for Adolescent, Young Adults and Children's Health and Wellbeing Research at the Population Council Kenya. She is also a senior fellow of the Aspen New Voices Fellowship – awarded in recognition of her strong advocacy around gender equity and social justice more broadly. Kui was also a fellow of The Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders (IDeAL) from 2017-2019. Until recently she led the gender and health research portfolio at the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme. In recent years Kui has been an active voice in the Decolonizing Global Health Movement, advocating for equity, diversity, and accountability in global health partnerships; and in the way we undertake and fund health research.



Session 3B

Building the capacity of African Scientists - 14:00 -15:30

Session objectives

- ◆ To discuss the essential components needed to strengthen the capacity of research scientists in the Africa region'.

Key talking areas/points/key questions to be addressed

- ◆ Building a critical mass of research scientists in Africa and for Africa
- ◆ Promoting gender equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) (including the kind of environments that cultivate research leadership)
- ◆ Strengthening institutional support for research leadership in Africa
- ◆ Promoting equitable partnerships towards strengthened research capacity in Africa
- ◆ Mentorship and progress towards research leadership

Session Format: Presentation, Panel discussion and Q&A

Session speakers' profiles

Prof. Pam Fredman, APHRC Board Member

Pam Fredman, board member of APHRC, is professor emerita in Neurochemistry at University of Gothenburg. She has over 170 scientific papers in peer reviewed journals and during the last 10 years articles related to Higher Education on a global level. She has served on the board for over 10 years and been the president for the International Association of Universities, the global network of Higher Education institutions and official partner and Higher Education voice to UNESCO.

She has been board member of national and international scientific organisations and academies and served review committees including research project, higher education institutions and for scientific journals. She is a board member of the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundations, the largest private research funding agency in Sweden. She is also chair of several international and interdisciplinary centres at Karolinska Institute, University of Gothenburg, and director for the Gothenburg Centre for Sustainable Development.

She has extensive experience from academic leadership, as Head of Department of Neuroscience, Dean of the Faculty of Health Science and Vice chancellor (2006-2017) at University of Gothenburg. During the period as acting rector, she was the elected chair of the Swedish Rectors Conference for 6 years and in that position, she was also member of the European University Association, EUA, council, and the EUA Research Policy Working Group. Pam Fredman is the chair of the national leadership programs for incoming rectors and deans. She has also been engaged in CARTA with focus on academic leadership.

Pam Fredman has participated in political initiatives and policy development in Sweden and internationally. On behalf of the Swedish government, she led the investigation (reported 2019) on governmental steering and resource allocation to Swedish higher education institutions.



Dr. Fiona Wanjiku Moejes, Mawazo Institute



Dr Fiona Wanjiku Moejes is the CEO at [The Mawazo Institute](#). Fiona's passion is supporting African women to become thought-leaders and change-makers. She works to create space for their unique ideas and authentic perspectives to drive the development and implementation of holistic and sustainable solutions in academia, public sector, policy, and industry. She strongly believes that by embracing and supporting the immense diversity of our humanity - gender; ethnicity; experience, expertise and ideas - we will start to see real, lasting and impactful change in Africa and beyond.

She previously led community-led research-based marine conservation projects in the Comoros and Kenya, has an industry-based PhD in microalgal biotechnology and is a proud [Women for the Environment \(WE\) Africa](#) Fellow, an [African Marine Conservation Leader](#), and sits on the Executive Committee of the [International Society of Applied Phycology](#).

Prof. Sharon Fonn,
 University of the Witwatersrand

Sharon Fonn is a full professor in the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand. She has been the Head of the School of Public Health and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand. She was the President of the Association of Schools of Public Health in Africa (ASPHA) from 2014 to March 2017. In 2015 she was awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa Medicine from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In 2011 she was awarded the University of the Witwatersrand Vice-Chancellor’s Academic Citizenship Team Award for “evidence of influencing academic citizenship beyond their core responsibilities to re-build and strengthen capacity of African universities and enhancing communities of practice across Africa”, and in 2005 was awarded a Distinguished Scientist Award – for contribution to the quality of life of women by the South Africa Government, Department of Science of Technology. She currently co-leads the Consortium of Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA), and was a panel member of the Market Inquiry in to the private health care sector for the Competition Commission of South Africa from February 2014 – October 2019. She has published over 80 peer reviewed articles and book chapters, as well a number of training curriculums and a range of technical reports, policy documents and publication for non-technical audiences. Her areas of expertise include: Policy development and implementation; Health systems research; Gender; Human rights; Reproductive health; Research training and curriculum development.



Dr. Alphonsus Neba,
 Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation)

Alphonsus recently joined the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation) as its Deputy Director of Programmes and Programme Manager for the DELTAS Africa programme, a multi-million US Dollar programme funded by Wellcome Trust and the UK’s Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office that builds research leadership capacity on the continent. The SFA Foundation is a pan-African, non-profit, and public charity organization that supports, strengthens, and promotes science and innovation in Africa. The SFA Foundation is committed to improving the quality of lives of African people and to promoting the uptake of research in communities, industry, and the public sector. Prior to joining the SFA Foundation, Alphonsus worked at the AESA Platform at the African Academy of Sciences as Deputy Director of Programmes from 2018 to 2021. He also held previous roles at the University of Botswana’s Office of Research and Development as Assistant Director for Research Commercialization



and Technology Transfer and as Acting Assistant Director for Research Funding and Grants Administration. Alphonsus holds a PhD degree in Science, and a Master's degree in Environmental Biotechnology from Rhodes University in South Africa, with additional degrees including a Master in Information Sciences from the University of Ibadan and BSc Hons in Microbiology from the University of Lagos, both institutions in Nigeria. Alphonsus' other qualifications include certificates in Innovation Policy from the World Bank Institute in Washington, Bio-entrepreneurship from the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and Certificates in Innovation Readiness, and in Converting Technology to Wealth (CTW) from the Innovation, Creativity and Capital (IC2) Institute at the University of Texas at Austin the US.

His key professional interests include issues on gender diversity and inclusiveness, balancing equity with excellence in research funding initiatives, professionalising research management, research leadership capacity development on the continent and innovation and technology transfer from Africa's research institutions to support Africa's sustainable development efforts.

Dr. Rose Opiyo, University of Nairobi, CARTA Fellow

Rose Okoyo Opiyo is a Public Health Nutritionist, Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Public and Global Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi. She holds a PhD in Human Nutrition, (University of Nairobi, CARTA PhD Fellowship) MSc. Applied Human Nutrition (University of Nairobi, GTZ Fellowship) and B.Ed. (Kenyatta University). In addition to teaching and administration, Rose also supports nutrition training and research at the East Africa Kidney Institute of the University of Nairobi, CARTA capacity building activities and the Ministry of Health's, Nutrition Technical committees. She is also a member of St Paul's University Research Ethics Review Committee. As a researcher, Rose has about 20 publications in peer reviewed scientific journals and two book chapters.



APHRC thematic poster gallery

Showcases APHRC's high impact intervention in the R&D ecosystem over the last 20 years. It is organized accordingly to APHRC's thematic areas and will be led by the Heads of Themes who will present their respective posters.



Abstracts for Posters

Operations Division

Abstract No: 001 - APHRC TRIUMPHS @20

Authors: Janet Moraa, Lillian Okoth, Joseph Gichuru
African Population and Health Research Center

Over the past twenty years, the Center has endeavored to keep true to its vision of transforming lives through research and lived up to its core values (fairness, integrity, respect and excellence). We strive to be a global centre of excellence and are peerless in Africa. APHRC was recognized among the top global think tanks for five years in a row (2016 - 2020) in the Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports produced by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the Lauder Institute in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania. In the 2020 report, the Center emerged the best in Africa and 11th in the world under the Domestic Health Policy Think Tank category. In addition, the Center has won national and international awards in recognition of its sterling performance in the different areas of its work specifically in conducting robust research, excelling in financial management, good governance, and being a healthy workplace to name but a few. Some of the awards are displayed below and include:

1. **2015:** The 2015 United Nations Population Award
2. **2016:** Recognition on outstanding support for Breast-feeding women at work
3. **2022:** Winner of the Global Healthy Workplace Award, becoming the first African winner
4. **2022:** Achieved the Platinum Tier certification of the Good Financial Grant Practice
5. **2022:** Won the Champions of Governance NGO/Humanitarian Sector Award

Abstract No: 002 - Streamlining Work Processes through Automation (Automating the Workplace)

Authors: Paul Odera, Morris Mbogo, Henry Kamau, Joshua Muthama, Michael Lumula, Joseph Gichuru, Allan Aluda
African Population and Health Research Center

Workplace automation has become increasingly essential in today's business landscape, with many organizations relying on Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems to automate and streamline their processes. This poster presentation aims to highlight the benefits of workplace automation through ERP systems.

ERP systems have automated several business functions, including inventory management, accounting, human resources, resource booking, and more. By integrating these systems, the Center has streamlined its processes and reduced the amount of manual work required. This has led to increased efficiency, productivity, and accuracy in various areas of the business.

Benefits of ERP automation:

- 1. Reduced errors and increased accuracy:** With automation, businesses can eliminate manual errors that result from human input, such as data entry errors, misplaced documents, and forgotten tasks. ERP systems can ensure that data is accurate and up-to-date, and streamline workflows, reducing the risk of human error.
- 2. Improved decision-making:** ERP systems offer real-time data analysis and reporting, allowing businesses to make informed decisions quickly. Managers can monitor operations in real-time and take actions based on current data.
- 3. Increased productivity:** By automating repetitive tasks, employees can focus on more complex and value-adding activities, leading to higher productivity levels.
- 4. Better collaboration:** ERP systems allow departments to work together seamlessly, facilitating better communication and collaboration across teams.
- 5. 3rd Party Applications:** The ERP is the main application for running the operations in the organization. Other applications developed outside the ERP are integrated to allow them to use the ERP data. This means that the ERP is the one source of information that effectively avoids multiple inputs.

Challenges of automating the Workplace:

- 1. Job displacement:** Automation can lead to job loss for workers who perform tasks that are being automated.
- 2. Training:** Companies may need to invest in training their employees to work through automated systems.
- 3. Cybersecurity:** As companies rely more on automated systems, they become more vulnerable to cyber attacks.

Conclusion:

ERP automation is a powerful tool that has helped the Center streamline its operations, increase productivity, and improve its bottom line. By embracing workplace automation through the ERP system, the Center will stay competitive in today's fast-paced business environment.

Policy Engagement and Communication

Abstract No: 003 - Mbeteza Board Game – a policy-to-action advocacy tool

**Game developers: The Policy Engagement and Communications (PEC) Unit
African Population and Health Research Center**

'Mbeteza', a policy-to-action board game developed by the Policy Engagement and Communications team at APHRC has been used successfully to gather and influence stakeholders through vibrant and interactive play sessions. It was developed for a wide audience with a regional African focus. The game seeks to create a new inclusive space for promoting the use of evidence in decision making and design and implementation of practical solutions for real life issues.

Set in a bustling informal settlement in any country in sub-Saharan Africa, the game enables policy actors to experience the everyday lives of the urban poor and the diverse issues and challenges they face from infancy to old age. The game creates an atmosphere of openness and excitement so the players are able to let go of inhibitions and speak openly about sensitive issues such as NCDs, teenage pregnancy, abortion and aging.

Abstract No: 004 - The Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI)

African Population and Health Research Center

The Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI) was a five-year (2016-2021) advocacy project implemented in three sub-Saharan African countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Kenya, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project's goal was to strengthen and amplify local voices represented by civil society on the right to equitable access to vaccines through increased domestic resourcing for immunization programs.

The partnership program worked collaboratively with eight civil society organizations (CSOs) in the three countries to use evidence so that they are stronger interlocutors with the government. In addition to advocacy, the model of implementation had a capacity-strengthening component. The project integrated three-pronged approach design to improve the programmatic, institutional, and financial management of partner organizations; reinforce civil society networks; and establish a platform for constructive dialogue with government institutions on immunization. As a result, there was a more enhanced policy advocacy and communications skills among the immunization partners, elevated and strategic engagement with immunization stakeholders and stronger and more efficient financial management systems for the IAI sub-grantees that has attracted more funding.

Abstract No: 005 - Bringing researchers and decisions makers together in the MNCH sector in six countries

▶ **Authors: Lynette Kamau¹, Carolina Kern²**

Institutional affiliations: ¹Policy Engagement and Communications, APHRC, Nairobi, Kenya and ²Southern Hemisphere, Cape Town, South Africa.

The Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa (IMCHA) Initiative was an eight-year partnership co-funded by Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and Canada's International Development Research Centre. The Initiative sought to improve maternal, newborn, and child health by using primary health care as an entry point to strengthen health systems and ensure they are more equitable. APHRC led the East Africa Health Policy and Research Organization (EA-HPRO) in the Initiative, working with 13 research teams in six countries. Our role was to strengthen individual and institutional capacities, facilitate national ownership of research and evidence by supporting its translation into policy and practice, and facilitate linkages with maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) networks nationally and regionally. The EA-HPRO succeeded in coordinating a large network of researchers and linking them to regional and global summits policy discussions which translated into tangible policy outcomes in our focus countries. This work helped raise awareness of research funded by the IMCHA Initiative and enhanced collaboration between researchers working on MNCH issues across the region. The EA-HPRO also delivered training to fill skills gaps that enhanced the quality of research outputs. Specific achievements have been highlighted below.

Achievements

- 1. EA-HPRO helped researchers gather and translate their evidence more effectively:** To sharpen and further develop research capacity, we worked with research teams to identify key skills gaps and delivered training to meet these needs. Since 2016, we have held workshops and trained over 300 researchers and policymakers on a range of topics to help researchers work better with qualitative data, conduct gender analyses, improve scientific writing skills and manage systematic reviews. We also trained researchers to communicate their findings more effectively, both in scientific journals and in more 'policy-friendly' formats. This training raised the standard of research in terms of data collection, presentation and communication of evidence. It has also helped researchers engage more meaningfully with some of the more complex issues that affect MNCH.
- 2. EA-HPRO provided strategic inputs into high-level health summits:** At the Health Ministers Conference, convened by the East, Central, Southern Africa - Health Community in 2018, we contributed to passing two critical action points to be implemented by 10 member states. One focused on strengthening health systems to advance respectful maternity care, while the other dealt with monitoring and evaluation of reproductive, neonatal, maternal, and adolescent and child health goals. Our strong evidence-based engagement with key actors played an important role in getting these issues on the agenda.
- 3. Worked with regional bodies to enhance accountability:** Realizing that resolutions were not being systematically monitored at the Health Ministers Conference, as well as at the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health, we worked with these bodies to fill this gap by developing an accountability framework. What was lacking was a central coordination mechanism to help countries involved in these summits track progress. Our work is helping to monitor the implementation of resolutions and enhancing accountability around maternal and child health outcomes and other health issues.

- 4. EA-HPRO worked with its embedded policymakers to refine policy engagement approaches:** We leveraged the policymakers embedded in our research teams by gathering insights from them to help shape research and its dissemination. One of the specific ways we did this was through a ‘policymakers survey’, in collaboration with our counterpart consortium – the West African Health Organization. The findings from this and other ongoing engagement have helped us create stronger links between our research teams and the policymakers working with them. The survey results informed national policy engagement strategies and fed into our capacity building work as well.

Abstract No: 006 - Decolonizing Global Health

Authors: Michelle Mbuthia, Issabelah Mutuku
African Population and Health Research Center

Podcasts have increasingly become more prominent on the African continent. At the same time, there is a call to overhaul the global health system from its current Global North-first approach to one that recognizes all people as equal. In the realm of research, podcasts as a tool to decolonize global health holds lots of potential in terms of research uptake. The Decolonizing Global Health Podcast (DGH Podcast) is a tool that seeks to spur interest in African research and potentially impact local and regional health policies.

Through the DGH Podcast we are creating a platform to share APHRC-generated evidence for public discourse and policy impact. It is also an opportunity for capacity-strengthening on broadcast communication for early career researchers. The DGH Podcast seeks to strategically position experts at the Center as thought-leaders beyond the research/academic community and act as a research vessel to unpack relevant and yet under-researched issues in global health within the African context. The podcast assimilates the Signature Issues Approach by translating evidence that aligns with local and global development agenda and impacts health and development in Africa into relevant discussions.

Research and Related Capacity Strengthening Division

Abstract No: 007 - CARTA Evidence Website

Authors: Jude Igumbor¹, Marta Marta Vicente-Crespo^{1,2}, Ann Waitthaka²

Institutional affiliation: ¹School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; ²RRCS, African Population and Health Research Center, Kenya

The CARTA Evidence Website is a collaborative effort between the University of the Witwatersrand and the African Population and Health Research Center to demonstrate the impact of the CARTA network by timeously tracking, collating, analysing, displaying, and enabling the uptake of empirical and theoretical evidence produced. CARTA Evidence seeks to identify and showcase human capacity and synergies within and outside the network to drive opportunities and research operational efficiencies. In this poster, we highlight the purpose of the platform, its unique features and how it works to meet its objectives. The poster discussion also features some of the milestones the website has so far realized since its launch in December 2022 such as policy briefs published and developed, summaries and an African-focused impact search.

Abstract No: 008 - APHRC Virtual Academy: Towards an Approach to Provision of Accessible, Flexible and Quality Individual Research and Related Capacity Strengthening in Africa

**Authors: Benard Ondiek, Patrick Owili, Hesborn Wao, Florah Karimi
African Population and Health Research Center**

The Virtual Academy fosters a collaborative and interactive learning environment that promotes learners' engagement while enhancing their learning experience. The Virtual Academy comes in handy to penetrate a wider audience by offering a range of accessible, flexible and quality courses and programs that support individual capacity building initiatives. It also capacitates facilitators with skills to design online curriculum and instructional materials that are self-paced while maintaining the APHRC quality standards. A survey was conducted among APHRC staff and stakeholders to determine the challenges of traditional online learning. The results formed the basis of developing the Virtual academy. The Virtual Academy currently operates using two platforms that include the Learning Management System (LMS) built on Moodle and the Community of Practice (CoP). The model used to deliver training is the Blended Bichronous Training Model. The model emphasizes on approaches which include in person training, hyflex, synchronous, asynchronous and community of practice. The participants are thus able take online courses that are relevant and responsive to the needs and the demands of the modern research environment. The course analytics and feedback from the participants ensure continuous improvement in course delivery. The Virtual Academy brings on board knowledge retention, cost cutting, and wider access with much quality controls towards strengthening capacities, capabilities and competencies.

Abstract No: 009 - **CARTA Institutionalization Process**

**Authors: Cavens Kithinji, Florah Karimi, Ann Waithaka
African Population and Health Research Center**

The Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) is an Africa-based, African-led initiative established in 2008 to address the critical gap in research capacity in public universities through a suite of interventions that enhance individual and institutional capacity for high quality research. It is a collaboration of eight African Partner universities, four African research institutions, and eight non- African partner institutions, jointly led by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Kenya, and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), South Africa. CARTA designed and developed intervention to address these gaps and after slightly over ten years of running them, a sustainability strategy was developed. This strategy aimed to institutionalizing CARTA interventions in research and research training to strengthen the capacity of CARTA partners to independently carry out these intervention. This poster highlights the designed process from preparation of resources to guide the institutionalization to mainstreaming of these interventions. It also highlights the milestones achieved this far (from CARTA and also Partner institutions), the process of institutionalization at the partner institutions, and the online resources mock site.

Abstract No: 010 - **Research and Related Capacity Strengthening Division**

**Authors: Ann Waithaka, Topistar Karani, Evelyn Gitau, Lisa Omondi, Hesborn Wao, Patrick Owili, Aypio Nyandwi, Marta Vicente-Crespo, Leah Mwangi, Patrick Amboka, Peterrock Muriuki.
African Population and Health Research Center**

The Research and Related Capacity Strengthening (RRCS) is one of the Programmatic Divisions of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), a premier research-to-policy institution. APHRC generates evidence; strengthens research and related capacity in the African research and Development (R&D) ecosystem; and engages policy to inform action on health and development. Through RRCS, APHRC strives to nurture African research leadership by building a critical mass of researchers to meaningfully engage policy actors in developing, reviewing, and implementing policies and programs relevant to Africa's development.

In line with the Center's new strategic vision, RRCS will leverage strategic partnerships to improve, strengthen or expand its capacity-strengthening approaches, to be all-encompassing and to go beyond a focus on researchers to all research-related professions, as well as support our partners to institutionalize some of our innovations. We seek to co-design capacity-strengthening initiatives that take a systems-thinking approach, exploring the interactions between social, technical, economic, environmental, and political forces to inform decision-making and shape strategy. We will achieve this through the following three approaches: Individual Level Capacity Strengthening; Institutional Level Capacity Strengthening; and Strengthening the Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem.

Research Division

Data Science Program

Abstract No: 011 - APHRC Data Science Program - *Progress and Plans*

Authors: Steve Cygu, Agnes Kiragga
African Population and Health Research Center

The field of data science plays a crucial role in harnessing the potential of extensive and diverse datasets generated by healthcare systems. At the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), the Data Science Program is an independent research initiative focused on enhancing the necessary architecture and infrastructure to support a robust data science program. The program aims to develop in-house platforms for data sharing, as well as no-code platforms to support both citizen and professional data scientists, which holds particular significance for countries in Africa.

Data Science Program at APHRC leverages the INSPIRE (Implementation Network for Sharing Population Health from Research Entities) framework to provide guidance to African data professionals on data harmonization, standardization, and FAIRification. This collaborative network aids in sharing valuable insights and knowledge to enable data-driven decision making in Africa. By leveraging African data, the Data Science Program has the potential to inform and improve health outcomes through evidence-based decision making.

By focusing on developing data sharing platforms, supporting no-code platforms, and utilizing the INSPIRE framework, the Data Science Program at APHRC aims to strengthen the value of African data in providing actionable insights for enhancing health outcomes in Africa.

Abstract No: 014 - Intersectional Population Health Metrics

Sylvia Muyingo, Henry Owoko, Sally Odunga, Michelle Mbuthia, Jackline Syonguvi, Damazo Kadengye
African Population and Health Research Center

The IPeM Lab is dedicated to advance the understanding and application of intersectionality in population health research and metrics. We employ innovative methodologies and data-driven approaches to explore the complex interplay of social identities in shaping health outcomes and disparities. In this abstract, we present case studies that highlight the lab's research focus on three critical areas.

Firstly, we assess multi-faceted and intersectional Impacts of AI/digital systems on marginalized groups to enhance population health metrics. These models enable us to identify patterns, predict risks, and guide interventions tailored to specific populations.

Secondly, we support a research track to create an expanded evidence base for advancing women's leadership and influence in the health sector. By understanding the barriers and opportunities specific to women, we inform strategies positive changes in population health.

Lastly, we delve into the intricate pathways through which social determinants and intersectional factors impact disease outcomes. We uncover the nuanced mechanisms that contribute to health disparities, and mitigate their impact on vulnerable populations.

In summary, our case studies shed light on the multifaceted nature of health disparities and provide insights for evidence-based interventions. By embracing diversity and promoting health equity, we strive to create a healthier future for all.

Data Synergy and Evaluation

Abstract No: 012 - Enhancing Impact Evaluation (IE) Capacity at APHRC

Authors: Jonathan Izudi, Damazo Kadengye
African Population and Health Research Center

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is dedicated to producing high-quality scientific evidence relevant to the African context, developing strong African research leadership, and promoting evidence-informed decision-making. To this end, APHRC undertakes IE to determine causal effects of development projects across a broad range of disciplines such as health, education, water, and sanitation among others by employing both randomized and non-randomized IE methods. Evidence from provide a strong link for policy engagement. In this poster discussion, we highlight some of the IE related achievements over the years at APHRC. Our poster presents selected IE blogs, IE conferences/summits both attended and planned, successful development projects that have been evaluated, and IE publications that have the potential to shape policy formulation on the African continent. We conclude the poster discussion by highlighting the strides we are making in institutionalizing IE at APHRC with particular focus on corporate monitoring and evaluation unit, human resource strengthening for IE, and IE capacity building.

Abstract No: 013 - A Learning Health System for Improved Data Use to Optimise Public Health Response

Authors: Maureen Ng'etich, Damazo Kadengye
African Population and Health Research Center

APHRC hosts the Implementation Network for Sharing Population Information from Research Entities (INSPIRE) that brings together 11 Longitudinal Population Cohorts (LPCs) in East Africa. INSPIRE aims is to create a population-based health data sharing infrastructure, and an environment where data can be used effectively for decision

making. The goal of INSPIRE is to produce Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) data that can be used by researchers and policy makers by capacitating data users with skills and tools for appropriately using the shared data and metadata.

The INSPIRE Learning Health System project seeks to improve data use and analytical capacity for multiple sources of population health data to optimize public health response to infectious diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. The project comprises of organizational architecture that supports the formation of communities of data scientists, healthcare professionals, and policy makers, collaborating to explore large data collated from the LPCs to inform country-level decision making and planning. This involves training of sub-national and national data analysts and data producers to use data science tools and predictive statistical models to generate evidence products.

Health and Wellbeing Theme

Abstract No: 015 - Kinship, Nuptiality and Child Health Outcomes in a Low Income Urban Area

**Authors: Sangeetha Madhavan, Michael Wagner – University of Maryland
Estelle Sidze, Caroline Wainaina – African Population and Health Research Center**

Urbanization rates in Africa are some of the highest in the world. Kenya's impressive efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goals on child health mask uneven success driven by elevated risks for children in *low income urban contexts*, a pattern found in other African settings. The aim of this 3-year project is to identify models of family support that offer optimum protection for vulnerable mothers and young children particularly in urban African settings. Our specific aims are as follows:

- 1) Develop a time-varying measure of union formalization that captures the involvement of kin in the protracted process through which unions are formalized;
- 2) Examine the effects of union formalization and kinship support on children's physical growth and early childhood development (ECD);
- 3) Assess the extent to which union formalization *moderates* the effect of kinship support on physical growth and ECD outcomes and kinship support *mediates* the effect of union formalization on physical growth and ECD;
- 4) Assess the extent to which key intermediate outcomes, namely, breastfeeding/nutrition, maternal mental health, illness management, and child stimulation explain the relationships among kinship support, union formalization and physical growth and ECD.
- 5) Examine the change in child outcomes across 6 waves of data collection.

Human Development Theme

Abstract No: 016 - Human Development Education and Youth Empowerment

Authors: Nelson Muhia, Nyambura Thiong'o and Moses Ngware
African Population and Health Research Center

Kenya has made strides in ensuring that ALL children have access to quality basic education through implementation of the universal education policies at the primary and secondary level. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy launched in 2002 aimed to increase access to education opportunities specifically for the most marginalized children such as those from the urban poor and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands. However, children from the urban poor areas are not benefiting from the UPE policy due to the challenges such as inadequate public schools in slum areas leading to the growth of unregulated Low Cost Private Schools. We also know that education reforms such as the transition from the 8.4.4 curriculum to implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) allows acquisition of relevant skills that may not have been given enough attention during the implementation of the 8.4.4 curriculum. One aspect of the CBC curriculum that has received attention is parental engagement in their children's education to improve learning outcomes. Therefore this poster aims to share the Human Development's Signature Issue approach (SIA) to advocate for increased equitable access, quality basic education, and enhance parental involvement in education of children in Kenya.

Abstract No: 017 - Enhancing stakeholder engagement to improve early childhood outcomes

Authors: Patricia Kitsao-Wekulo, Margaret Nampijja, Silas Onyango
African Population and Health Research Center

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Unit, established under the new strategic plan period seeks to understand and promote contextual strategies to optimize early childhood and development. The Unit which falls under the Human Development Theme is guided by the nurturing care framework (NCF) and pursues research on: a) Childcare patterns; b) Integration of ECD into the healthcare system; and c) Early care and education (ECE).

Our stakeholder engagement activities are centered around two issues. The first is enhancing the quality of paid childcare, as much of the service provision is deficient across all the domains of the NCF. The second is promoting ECD outcomes through the health system, an area on which few studies have been done to investigate the effectiveness of integration.

Our policy messages focus on understanding parental perspectives of childcare services, the need for regulation of quality standards, integration of ECD content into healthcare service provision, establishment of "communities of practice" to enhance the childcare sector and improving the quality of childcare services to improve women's economic empowerment. The impact of our work is demonstrated through the establishment of formal and informal partnerships with various county departments and non-state actors, contribution to formulation of policies and revision of various legislative documents, and engagement in co-creation activities with different stakeholders.



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