



Swiss Society for African Studies
Société suisse d'études africaines
Schweizerische Gesellschaft
für Afrikastudien

Uncertain Perspectives and Changing Strategies towards a Pandemic: The Covid-19 Crisis in Tales of the Everyday in Africa

Panel and Round-Table discussion, University of Bern, 26 November 2021, 14h30-17h30

An event organised for the Swiss Society of African Studies by Tobias Haller, Didier Péclard, Chinwe Ifejika Speranza, Natalie Tarr

What is a pandemic in African contexts? How does the everyday of citizens look like, what are their ideas and how was their day-to-day influenced by measures imposed from above? Or how is it to live in a place where Corona is denied officially or does not seem to exist? How are the impacts of these measures perceived in the grey zone between discourses of epidemiological or political reason? What local and global disparities does the pandemic narrative hide or in contrary bring to light? What strategies did people adopt to maintain their livelihoods and wellbeing despite the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic and how effective were they? How do citizens react to and cope with the security response by public authorities?

The SSAS will organize a transdisciplinary event on these issues, providing a platform for diverse speakers presenting and discussing their perspectives on the insecurities, discourses and strategies linked to pandemics and especially the current Covid-19 context: A nurse in a large, state-run hospital in Burkina Faso or a researcher in an equally large university in Mozambique, NGO employees, a seamstress, workers at WHO, and taxi drivers tell their stories of how they have experienced and maneuvered Covid-19 at work and in their daily lives. They will present their views either in a series of short inputs in the first part or during a round table discussion at the end of the event. A detailed program will follow.

The event is planned in a hybrid format (both online and in person) to allow colleagues, partners, and stakeholders based in Africa to actively participate in the presentations, the round-table discussion and the plenary session.

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Hybrid Workshop COVID-19 in Africa (14:15-17:30)

14:15 – Introduction and 2 short videos from Burkina Faso (in French)

14:25 – Presentations

- (1) Eduard Gargallo, Centre of International Studies (ISCTE) at the University of Lisbon (Portugal) on COVID 19 Drylands Group (in person)
- (2) Kathrin Heitz-Tokpa, Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques (csrs), Abidjan (online)
- (3) Ursula Wüthrich, ZASB, Youth in Zimbabwe during Covid-19 times (in person)
- (4) Statements by doctoral student Doris Osei Afriyie of Swiss TPH: conducting research in Tanzania/Zambia during Corona times (not Covid-19 related; short input testimonial; online)
- (5) Sara Botero Mesa, MD, on The Graph Network (in person)

15:25 – Discussion (20 min)

15:45 – Coffee break (30 min)

16:15 – Round table

Moderation: Chinwe Ifejika Speranza

- Boniface P. Kiteme, PhD, Director of the Center for Training and Integrated Research in ASAL Development (CETRAD), Kenya (online)
- Carla Braga, Prof. of Anthropology at Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique (online)
- Eduard Gargallo
- Kathrin Heitz-Tokpa

17:00 – Discussion (30 min)

Refreshments

General Assembly of the Swiss Society for African Studies

The event is followed at 18:15 by the General Assembly of the Swiss Society for African Studies

Venue:

Unitobler, Lerchenweg 36, 3000 Bern, room F-022

Registration:

Please register via the online form <https://forms.gle/y9GD56mzauMnAmc68>

Access:

A valid COVID-certificate and proof of identity are required.

The regulations of the University of Bern <https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus> and the Federal Office for Health <https://www.bag.admin.ch/neues-coronavirus> apply.

Zoom:

<https://unibe-ch.zoom.us/j/62539342117?pwd=Zk9pa1huSWFKRzNTN0g1UmhZRlXQT09>