

## Pandemic Preparedness Project: public webinar

**Title** Shifting power in pandemics: connecting and supporting preparedness ‘from below’

The COVID-19 pandemic has catalysed new thinking about the place of local capacities in preparing for and responding to disease threats. Concepts such as ‘community resilience’ and ‘community-centred’ initiatives have entered the discourse of global institutions, alongside a recognition that preparedness for future epidemics will need to address longer-term systemic concerns, such as those related to health and social protection systems and political-economic conditions. Yet whilst there is much emphasis currently on improved surveillance and technical advances, such as vaccine platforms for immediate readiness, there is less attention to identifying and understanding preparedness ‘from below’ as a complementary effort to conventional preparedness investments. At the same time, discussions in decolonising global health point to a need for avoidance of inadvertent entrenchment of established power hierarchies and to ensure that better connections across scales of response can support inclusive and acceptable actions.

Through a Wellcome Trust-funded collaborative award, we have been researching preparedness ‘from below’ since 2019, asking ‘who is being prepared for what, and by whom?’ And, ‘what can the world learn from people living with multiple health-related uncertainties in African settings?’ In this online event we will share reflections and seek comment and further discussion on what kinds of efforts and global-local relations are needed to strengthen, build and integrate local level preparedness.

**Date** Wednesday 16 Nov 2022 from 12.00-15.00 GMT ONLINE in plenary

### **Programme**

#### **12.00-12.15 Introduction**

Welcome

Introduction to project and programme

#### **12.15-13.10 Session 1**

##### **Learning from and with communities**

Drawing on our recent research on pandemic preparedness, this session will focus on local level insights regarding how people navigate disease outbreaks in the context of often intersecting acute and chronic challenges and precarious livelihoods, amidst multiple uncertainties. These surface important insights about the place of local knowledge, diverse formal and informal public authorities, individual and collective agency and adaptability. These have implications for approaches to community engagement and understandings of the possibilities and limitations of community resilience.

#### **Format:**

Overview of findings

Presentations in via pre-recorded video from the local fieldsites in Uganda and Sierra Leone

*Discussants:* (3-5 mins each)

Nina Gobat, WHO; Dr. Guillermo Sequera, MoH Paraguay; Dr Amone Jackson, Uganda MOH;  
Dr Alfred Jamiru, Sierra Leone MOH.

Q and A from audience 10 min

### **13.10 – 2.05 Session 2**

#### **Technologies and systems**

The balance between technical, risk-based interventions in response to outbreaks and longer-term initiatives to strengthen health and social protection systems, ensure their agility and build relations of trust requires further attention. Furthermore, technologies such as vaccines, pharmaceutical treatments and diagnostic tools and the information about their use are not just neutral instruments but have important social dimensions, landing in particular historical and socio-political contexts. What might inclusive 'systems preparedness' look like in different contexts?

*Format:*

Overview of findings

Live presentations from 3 researchers and 1 pre-recorded video

*Discussants:* 3-5 mins each

Ann Kelly, Kings College; Thierno Balde, WHO; Julienne Anoko, WHO Regional Office for Africa; Cathy Roth, UK FCDO.

Q and A from audience 10 min

### **2.05 – 2.55 Session 3**

#### **FINAL PANEL: Connecting preparedness from below**

*Format:* summary of key messages and moderated discussion amongst panellist

Summary of key messages

Questions to panel:

How might global and regional efforts interconnect more effectively with preparedness 'from below'? What kinds of local capacities, global-local relations and mechanisms are needed for strengthening inclusive systems preparedness that is attentive to local realities? How might these concerns contribute to current global conversations?

*Panellists:* 5 mins each

Chikwe Ihekweazu, WHO; Sylvie Briand, WHO; David Heymann, Chatham House; Susan Erikson, Simon Fraser University.

Q and A from audience, direct to panel 20 mins

14.55 – 15.00 Close and forward plans