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PhD in Social Health Sciences
2021-2022

INVITATION to the Public defence of

Emmanuel KIMERA

To obtain the academic degree of

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES

Community development through participatory action research : towards interventions that facilitate living with HIV in Ugandan schools

The defence will take place on

Monday, 29 November 2021 at 1 p.m.

and will be organised **online** accessible through the following link.
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Summary of the dissertation

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) remains a public health challenge especially in countries of sub-Saharan Africa as a cure and effective vaccine continue to allude scientists. In Uganda, the prevalence of HIV has remained high in the general population and youth are currently on the radar for posting high incidences. Two routes of transmission contribute to HIV in youth: perinatal and behavioral transmissions. These two routes of transmission coupled with high fertility rate in Uganda have resulted into large numbers of Youth Living with HIV/AIDS (YLWHA). With increased access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), YLWHA can now live longer and are able to explore social contexts like schools. At school, YLWHA experience several challenges related to the management of HIV as well as the social reactions to HIV. However, schools are settings in which YLWHA can be supported. In this research, we took a community development approach to investigate how living with HIV/AIDS can be facilitated for YLWHA through exploration of the contextual challenges and resources/supports and documentation of HIV/AIDS-care and support strategies of Ugandan secondary schools.

The qualitative inquiry identified HIV-aggravated and HIV-specific challenges within the social ecological system of YLWHA as well as supports/resources to enhance quality of life of YLWHA. Available strategies in schools to support YLWHA were general, providing a safe net for all vulnerable students and the absence of HIV-specific support strategies led us to conclude the schools are not inclusive to the growing number of YLWHA. To promote quality of life of YLWHA in Ugandan schools, we propose school-wide interventions involving all school stakeholders and following the HIV-competent school framework.

Curriculum Vitae

Emmanuel Kimera, Doctor of Social Health Sciences, Master of Public Health (MSc), and Bachelor of Science in Education (BSc. ED), is currently a lecturer at Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), Uganda in the Department of Public Health. He teaches occupational health, medical ethics, biological basis of public health, disasters and emergency management, culture as a determinant of health as well as sexual and reproductive health. Previously, he was a teacher in secondary schools in Uganda. He therefore possesses experience and skills on school health programs.

He has been involved in a number of school health services in secondary schools of Uganda such as psychosocial services, health education, and sanitation. Emmanuel also has research experience and skills, since he has participated in a number of research programs with the World Health Organization, Uganda National Expanded Program on Immunization, and various research projects at MMU. He draws on a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods common in the public health discipline and on the medical approach to HIV/AIDS that he has trained in. For the PhD thesis, Emmanuel was involved in research projects aimed at improving the quality of life of youth living with HIV in Ugandan schools.