



African Contributions to Global Health

Video Transcript

Urban health in Africa

TANJA: Welcome! This week, we will explore the relationship between spatial development and public health in different African cities. As we will see, the experience of African cities provides invaluable insights into South-South knowledge circulation, especially for other regions dealing with rapid urbanisation. My colleagues Akuto Akpedze Konou and Vitor Pessoa Colombo will be this week's experts. Akuto and Vitor are PhD candidates from Lausanne's Institute of Technology in Switzerland. They are currently working on the impacts of the urban form on public health in the context of rapidly growing African cities.

AKUTO: This week, we will investigate how the spatial and socioeconomic dimensions of urbanisation are interlaced, and how they relate to public health.

VITOR: As we will see, many African cities have to deal with challenges originating both from their colonial heritage and from more recent trends, notably the speed of their spatial and demographic growth.

AKUTO: The particularities of this rapid growth of African cities also pose public health challenges. These challenges have a particularly profound effect on socioeconomically vulnerable populations living in informal settlements.

VITOR: To face these challenges, several promising solutions have emerged from different perspectives: from more inclusive data collection methods to alternative land-use practices that address food security in vulnerable urban areas.

TANJA: There is a vast amount of literature on urban planning and public health in Africa which looks at both past and present experiences. For example, Carlos Silva's "Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial and Post-Colonial Planning Cultures" focuses on various town planning models established in different African countries. This edited volume stresses the specificities of each region, providing useful arguments against the generalisation of African urban issues.

AKUTO: Another example is the author Ambe Njoh. His monograph "Planning Power: Town Planning and Social Control in Colonial Africa" focuses on public health aspects of planning, also in the context of



different African regions. Njoh emphasises the influences of colonial heritage and the issues around socio-spatial segregation. In the end, he points towards sustainable sanitation and hygiene strategies.

VITOR: There is also the book "Learning from the Slums for the Development of Emerging Cities", edited by Jean-Claude Bolay, Jérôme Chenal and Yves Pedrazzini. It focuses on a phenomenon observed in most cities in the Global South, namely the high prevalence of informal urbanisation processes. In this edited volume, various authors present their view on experiences from different parts of the world that address the flexible and resilient spatial dynamics of informal settlements.

TANJA: This week, we will explore many of these aspects of urban health in Africa.

AKUTO: For example, would you like to know how spatial development and urban planning can play a significant role in global health? And how African cities are relevant case studies to understand the relationship between urban living and public health?

VITOR: Then join us this week as we discuss these questions!