PMAC PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2024

PL3

DECOLONIZING GLOBAL HEALTH

| BACKGROUND

Widening inequality, enduring patterns of extraction, persistent power imbalances, and ongoing marginalization of key groups stand in stark opposition to the goals of global health and the standard narratives of its triumphs. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional awareness to the inequalities within and between societies. It has also raised questions about why so much unfairness endures, and how to counter the historic injustices of the past that continue to shape today. These questions are shaped by the geographies of power: most prominent among the donor countries are the former colonial and imperial powers, which also house leading institutions of research, education, philanthropy, commerce, and international governance. In general contrast, formerly colonized countries remain poor, and formerly subjugated (and marginalized) people enjoy less health and fewer years of life. Similarly, prominent journals and leading authors of global health research remain largely associated with the United States (US), the United Kingdom, and other former colonizers, even though their work is largely concerned with formerly colonized places and their people. These and similar observations about the inequalities of influence and decision making have informed calls from many quarters to “decolonize” global health. These calls are part of contemporary geopolitics and seek to ensure that any new world order is built on fairness and recognition of equality.

| OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this session include clarifying some of the major definitions and concepts that inform calls to decolonize global health. The session will feature speakers who will draw attention to specific problems and experiences that inform their interest in decolonizing global health.

Speaker

Rhoda Wanyenze

Professor and Dean

Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH)
Uganda

Rhoda Wanyenze, MBChB, MPH, PhD, is a Professor and Dean at Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH). Rhoda has vast experience in infectious diseases research, program management, and capacity building, especially in HIV, TB, and diseases of epidemic and pandemic potential as well as sexual and reproductive health and health systems. Rhoda has been engaged in public health programming for 28 years, at various levels (clinical, program management, research, and policy development), has led large-scale service and research projects with multiple partnerships. She has served on various technical committees of the Ministry of Health and other agencies in Uganda and has served on Boards of several organizations in Uganda and globally. Within the African region, she has provided leadership for several regional networks including a recently concluded study to assess the Covid-19 response in 5 countries, currently leads the network to enhance analytical capacity and data use in Eastern and Southern Africa, and is Co-lead of the Center of Excellence for Sustainable Health (CESH), a collaboration between Karolinska Institute and Makerere University. Rhoda has been involved in various activities in relation to decolonization including recently concluded stakeholder interviews and a thought piece on Decolonization, Localization, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, implemented as part of the Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S) project with FHI 360.