

# Decolonizing Global Health

Paula Akugizibwe  
8 September 2020



## (Purse) Strings Attached

From Dependency to Decolonization in Global Health  
PAULA AKUGIZIBWE • AUGUST 14, 2020 • AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020 • SPECIAL ISSUE: COVID-19

# COVID-19 has amplified pre-existing conversations on the need to decolonize global health.

The East African NEWS BUSINESS OPED SCIENCE & HEALTH MAGAZINE SPORTS

## Ghosts of (colonial) vaccines past: Why East Africans shun clinical trials

TUESDAY MAY 19 2020



## French doctors' proposal to test Covid-19 treatment in Africa slammed as 'colonial mentality'

Lagos, Nigeria (CNN) — World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has condemned controversial comments made by French doctors about testing a Covid-19 potential treatment in Africa, calling the remarks a "hangover from a colonial mentality."

OPINION // CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## Medical colonialism in Africa is not new

Remarks about testing coronavirus drugs on Africans part of pattern where some bodies are dehumanised, others protected.

by Karsten Noko



## OPINION: The Ghosts Of Colonialism Are Haunting The World's Response To The Pandemic

Abraar Karan Mishal Khan • May 29, 2020 11:55 AM ET



THE LANCET  
Global Health

EDITORIAL | VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5, E612, MAY 01, 2020

## Decolonising COVID-19

The Lancet Global Health

Open Access • Published: May, 2020 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30134-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30134-0)

INSIDE DEVELOPMENT | GLOBAL HEALTH

## The activists trying to 'decolonize' global health

By Andrew Green // 21 May 2019

blog

## #DecolonizeGlobalHealth: Rewriting the narrative of global health

By Renzo Guinto on February 11, 2019

The history of the field of global health is always traced back to tropical medicine, an earlier discipline

## Is COVID-19 magnifying colonial attitudes in global health?

By Amruta Byatnal // 19 June 2020



A medical worker takes a sample for COVID-19 during a community testing in Abuja, Nigeria. Photo by: Afolabi Satunde / Reuters

NEW DELHI — A paper called "The Impact of COVID-19 and Strategies for Mitigation and Suppression in Low- and Middle-Income Countries" was recently released in the journal Science. It lists 49 authors, from 5 prestigious universities in the U.K. and United States. Missing conspicuously was local representation from the countries that the paper talked about.

theafricareport HOME CORONAVIRUS POLITICS BUSINESS IN DEPTH

SEEKING GUINEA PIGS

## Coronavirus: Ending Europe's colonial approach to medicine in Africa

## Beyond Global Health Equity: The Case for Decolonizing Global Health

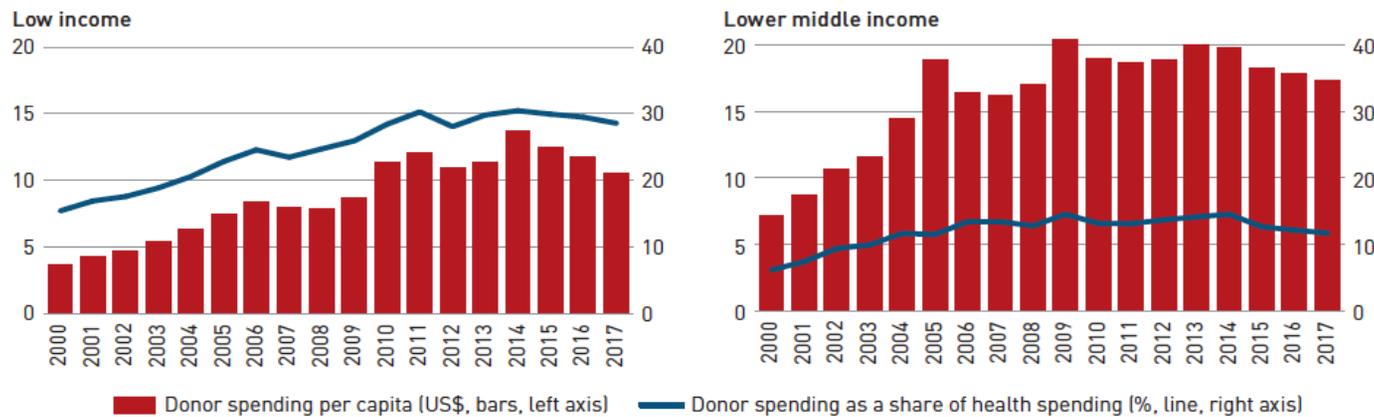
Andrea Koris

Mar 5 · 4 min read

Written by Andrea Koris, Laura Mkumba, Yadurshini Raveendran, Cordelia Kenney, and Ali Murad Büyüm

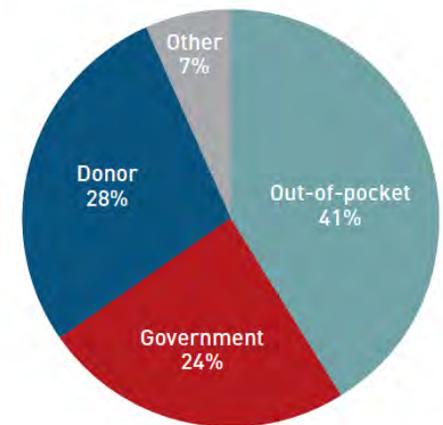
In low- and lower-middle income countries, donor share of health spending has increased over the past two decades.

Donor funding as a share of health spending for low and lower middle income countries



Shares of health spending, 2017

Low income



# Donor funding creates a fraught power dynamic whose reach extends beyond the health sector.

**Table 2.** Means of power exercised across the different stages of the policy process in Pakistan and Cambodia, as perceived by domestic policy actors

Stages	Routes of influence		
	Intersectoral leverage [influence from impact outside of health sector such as international tourism or trade restrictions]	Financial Resources [control of resource allocation, including time frame of resource availability]	Technical expertise [advantage through ability to produce, interpret and disseminate knowledge]
Agenda/Priority Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact on international reputation and tourism from failure to address donor priorities (<i>Cambodia</i>)</li> <li>Potential trade or travel restrictions (<i>Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donors select which health areas are provided funding for, thereby setting agenda</li> <li>Donors prioritize which research or surveys they fund to provide the evidence base to inform agenda setting (<i>Cambodia and Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>	
Policy Formulation			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donors have greater proficiency in using data from surveys/studies to develop policies</li> <li>Donors can commission surveys/studies to fill knowledge gaps</li> <li>Donors have better coordination to collaborate on policy formulation (<i>Cambodia and Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>
Policy Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial resources from donors shape the areas of work of non-governmental organizations (<i>Cambodia and Pakistan</i>)</li> <li>Control timing of availability of resources for programme implementation; sudden stops and starts (<i>Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>	
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donors set (M&amp;E) targets which must be met to maintain international standing (<i>Cambodia and Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donors set (M&amp;E) targets which must be met to receive funding (<i>Pakistan</i>)</li> <li>Donors influence which health areas receive funding to strengthen M&amp;E systems (<i>Cambodia and Pakistan</i>)</li> </ul>	

**Source:**

Khan M, Meghani A, Liverani M, Roychowdhury I, Parkhurst J (2018) How do external donors influence national health policy processes? Experiences of domestic policy actors in Cambodia and Pakistan, *Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 33, Issue 2, March 2018, 215–223, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czx145>

# The generation of scientific knowledge has long been corrupted by imbalances of power.

A few examples:

- Tuskegee Experiment (1932)
  - Henrietta Lacks (1951)
  - Pfizer Trovan trials in Nigeria (1996)
  - Placebo-controlled trials of AZT to prevent perinatal HIV transmission (late 1990s)
- and many more...

## Read:

Medical colonialism in Africa is not new. By Karsten Noko. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/medical-colonialism-africa-200406103819617.html>

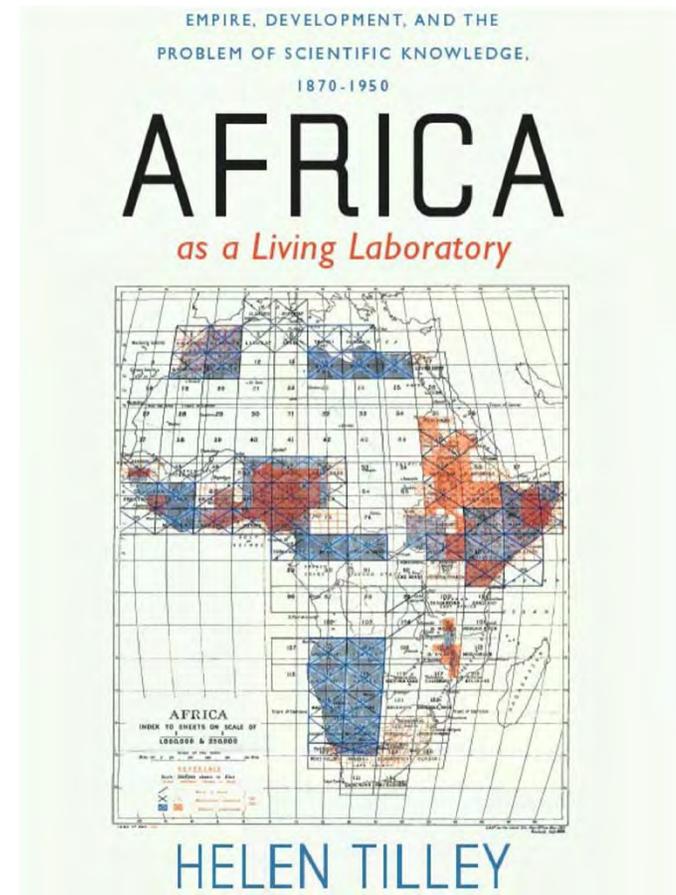
Ghosts of (colonial) vaccines past. By Verah Okeyo. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/scienceandhealth/Why-East-Africans-shun-clinical-trials/3073694-5557296-rydn28z/index.html>

Hellmann, F., Williams-Jones, B., & Garrafa, V. (2020). COVID-19 and Moral Imperialism in Multinational Clinical Research. *Archives of Medical Research*.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0188440920305713?via%3Dihub>

Wemos Health Unlimited (2017) Unethical Clinical Trials in Africa.

[https://www.wemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/JH\\_Wemos\\_Clinical-Trials\\_v5\\_def.pdf](https://www.wemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/JH_Wemos_Clinical-Trials_v5_def.pdf)



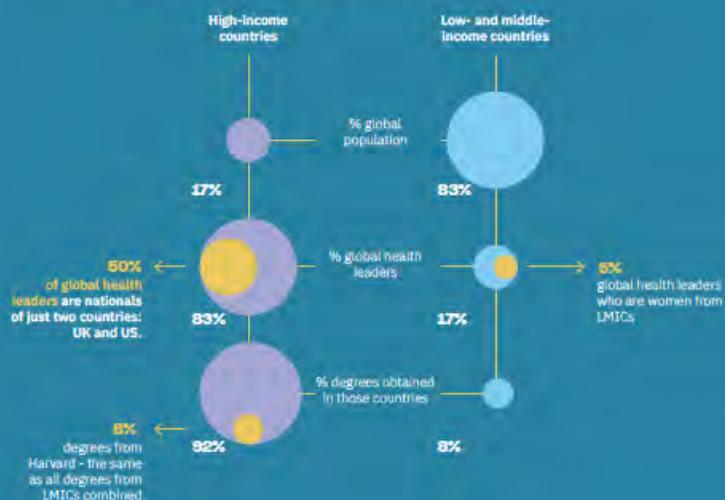
# At the institutional level, these imbalances – and the underlying racism that drives them—are further reflected and reinforced.

## Global organisations are led by and located in high-income countries<sup>3</sup>

Gender provides but one social identity through which to understand privilege, discrimination and inequality.

17% of CEOs and board chairs are nationals of low- and middle-income countries (home to 83% of the global population).

Figure 8. Population size versus leadership



92% of CEOs and board chairs completed their highest education in high-income countries (this includes 60% of nationals of LMICs).

The same number of leaders attended a single institution—Harvard (23)—as those who completed their education in all LMICs combined (23).

## The aid sector must do more to tackle its white supremacy problem

Racism is embedded in structures and power dynamics, so we should logically conclude that we are not immune



## Bearing witness inside MSF

'I resisted the idea that I could be significantly hampered by my race.'

Arnab Majumdar

Former learning and development specialist and project manager with Médecins Sans Frontières



## Sources:

Arnab Majumdar. Bearing witness inside MSF. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/first-person/2020/08/18/MSF-Amsterdam-aid-institutional-racism>

Global Health 50/50. The Global Health 50/50 Report 2020: power, privilege and priorities.

<https://globalhealth5050.org/2020report/>

The aid sector must do more to tackle its white supremacy problem. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/15/the-aid-sector-must-do-more-to-tackle-its-white-supremacy-problem>

Racism does not only distort global health responses, but also shapes the trajectory of global health crises, such as TB.

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### **The Exploitative History of One of the World's Deadliest Diseases**

Combating the tuberculosis epidemic means confronting its social and economic roots

[Paula Akugizibwe](#)

#### **The Roots of an Epidemic: Part 1**



Image credit: [Darren Garrett](#)

**Source:**

Paula Akugizibwe. The Exploitative History of One of the World's Deadliest Diseases.

<https://howwegettonext.com/the-exploitative-history-of-one-of-the-worlds-deadliest-diseases-925fcef89071>

By the early 1900s, TB was a leading cause of death in Europe, but was rare in southern Africa—until the arrival of British-owned gold mines.

api.parliament.uk

HANSARD 1803-2005 → 1900s → 1902 → October 1902 → 29  
 October 1902 → Commons Sitting → QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
 CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

**Transvaal Mines—Mining Labour—Phthisis, &c**

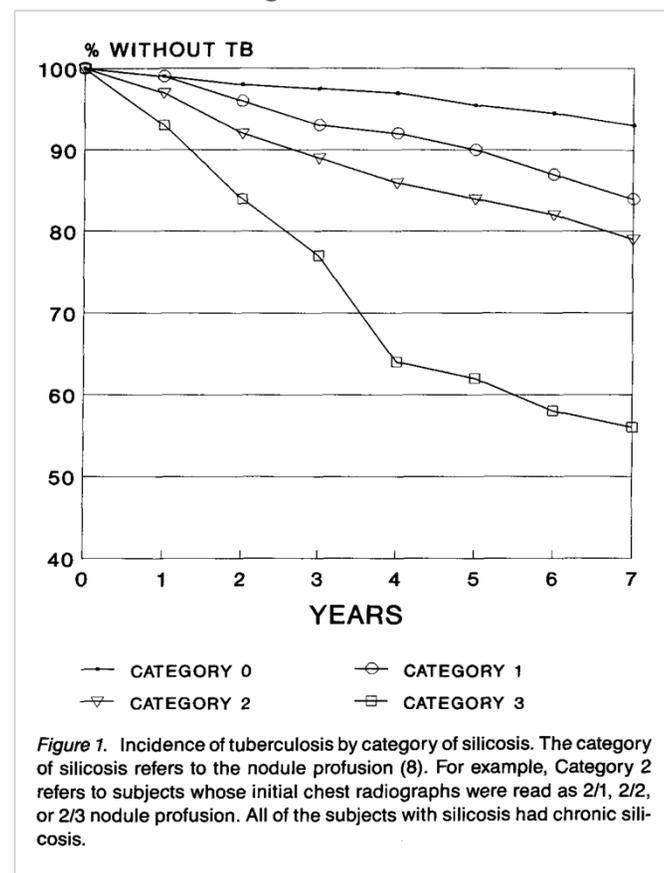
HC Deb 29 October 1902 vol 113 cc1068-70 1068

**MR. CAINE** To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the number of cases which have occurred of miners' phthisis, with the deaths resulting therefrom, from the re-opening of the mines after the war to some recent date: what number of these are Europeans, and what number native, and what has been the average number of European and native miners employed on the Rand during each month of the period covered.

**MR. CAINE** To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if his attention has been called to the discontent prevailing among British miners in the Rand in consequence of the attempt on the part of several mine managers to compel miners to take over and work three rock drills instead of two as heretofore; if he is aware that this attempt has resulted in a strike on the part of the miners where this change is being enforced, and that a deputation of Rand miners waited upon Lord Milner to ask him to constitute a Board of Arbitration, but without effect: and, in view of the death rate from miners' phthisis in Johannesburg, and the fact that miners return home to this country incapacitated by this disease, will he state what action the Transvaal Administration propose to take in the matter.

(Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.) I propose to answer the four Questions of the hon. Member together, as they are all connected with the same subject, and I need hardly say that I am fully alive to the importance of all matters affecting the health and safety of the miners. As I informed the hon. Member on the 21st instant, I am in communication with Lord Milner on the subject of the alleged prevalence of miner's phthisis, but at present I possess neither statistics nor the other information for which the hon. Member has asked. I will, however, address further inquiries to Lord Milner on these matters.

TB incidence in gold miners with silicosis



**Sources:**  
 Cowie RL (1994) The epidemiology of tuberculosis in gold miners with silicosis. <https://doi.org/10.1164/ajrccm.150.5.7952577>  
 Hansard Parliamentary Records. <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1902/oct/29/transvaal-mines-mining-labour-phthisis-c>

By recruiting migrant labor from neighboring countries, the mining industry externalized the toll of TB, spreading it across the region.

1925

*“the Government Doctors here [in Lesotho] complain of the bad state of health in which the Basuto are sent back from Johannesburg; they say in some cases they are unfit for travel, and when they come here have to go into hospital and die or have to be kept for months. They say that the mines should bear the expense.”*

- Native Recruiting Corporation

2020

**Results:** The study sample comprised 2 758 Basotho former underground miners, with median age of 62 years and median length of service of 28 years.

Among ex-gold miners (n = 2 678), disease prevalence was high: radiological tuberculosis (consistent with previous or current disease) 60.9%, silicosis 42.5%, HIV 30.7%, silicotuberculosis 25.7%, and current active tuberculosis 6.8%. Of those with tuberculosis diagnosed microbiologically, 6.7% had no radiological evidence of tuberculosis and 54.1% did not report cough.

**Conclusion:** The findings have public health and compensation implications. There are large numbers of ex-miners with potentially compensable disease under both the statutory system and a settlement trust set up following litigation. This overlaps with a tuberculosis-HIV co-epidemic which requires screening and treatment for tuberculosis and HIV, and managing a considerable disability and care burden on families and the Lesotho health system. Coordinated planning and substantial resources are needed for these programmes to do justice to their mandates.

**Sources:**  
Jock McCulloch (2012) *South Africa's Gold Mines and the Politics of Silicosis*  
Maboso B, Moyo D, et al (2020). Occupational lung disease among Basotho ex-miners in a large outreach medical assessment programme. *Occupational Health South Africa* Vol 26 No 4 July/August 2020

# Due to the economic weight of the mining industry, its exploitative dynamics continue to this day.

*“The mining of gold is of supreme importance to the South African apartheid economy - this is the position today, as it has been for the past 100 years...The mining industry absorbs some 700,000 workers, and of these over 90 per cent are black and over 60 per cent employed on the Witwatersrand-Orange Free State gold mining complex.*

*Contributing some 18 per cent of South Africa's gross domestic product and financing well over one-half of the country's imports in 1980, gold production is, as it has been, the principal engine of overall economic growth and the dominating force shaping the dualistic structure of the-apartheid economy and its unique system of labour organization and control.”*

-- Vella Pillay, United Nations Centre against Apartheid; 1980



*Justice came too late: Thembekile Mankayi died six days before a court awarded him compensation for falling ill with lung disease*

In 2018, the first ever class-action lawsuit by miners for silicosis and TB —which was made possible by a Constitutional Court appeal launched by former miner Thembekile Mankayi— concluded with a a \$400 million settlement.

As of July 2020, no miners had received their payments.

#### Sources:

Pillay V, United Nations (1981) The Role of Gold in the Economy of Apartheid South Africa. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/al.sff.document.nuun1981\\_10](https://www.jstor.org/stable/al.sff.document.nuun1981_10) | South Africa miners reach \$400 million silicosis settlement with mining companies. By Ed Stoddard and Patricia Aruo. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-mining-silicosis/south-africa-miners-reach-400-million-silicosis-settlement-with-mining-companies-idUSKBN1I41B9> | Two years after landmark silicosis settlement, no one has been paid. By James Stent. <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/two-years-after-r5-billion-silicosis-settlement-no-one-has-been-paid/>

Similar examples of the intersections between economics, politics and health exist across the world. The harmful impact of racism on health is universal.

Richmond and Cook *Public Health Reviews* (2016) 37:2  
DOI 10.1186/s40985-016-0016-5

Public Health Reviews

REVIEW

Open Access

## Creating conditions for Canadian aboriginal health equity: the promise of healthy public policy



Chantelle A. M. Richmond<sup>1\*</sup> and Catherine Cook<sup>2,3</sup>

Accepted: 24 February 2018

DOI: 10.1111/min.12237

FEATURE

WILEY *Nursing Inquiry*

## Understanding access to healthcare among Indigenous peoples: A comparative analysis of biomedical and postcolonial perspectives

Tara Horrill<sup>1</sup> | Diana E McMillan<sup>1,2</sup> | Annette S H Schultz<sup>1</sup> | Genevieve Thompson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, College of Nursing, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

<sup>2</sup>Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

As nursing professionals, we believe access to healthcare is fundamental to health and that it is a determinant of health. Therefore, evidence suggesting access to healthcare is problematic for many Indigenous peoples is concerning. While biomed-

Decolonization of global health cannot be sector-specific: it requires a wider, intersectional confrontation of oppressive systems.