

# Dr. Alexander Kagaha

Medical Sociologist · Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Researcher

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## Qualifications

PhD (2021); MA Sociology (2008); MSc Development Management (2007); BA Social Sciences (2003).

## About

Alexander Kagaha is a medical sociologist and a Wellcome Trust postdoctoral researcher at Makerere University School of Public Health. His research interrogates the power and politics of medical practice and healthcare policy, as well as material technologies. His current research on malaria in infants and young children explores how boundaries of consciousness shape and limit malaria control and obscure understanding of how human entanglement with ecological materialities shapes bodies and bodily risks of disease.

His doctoral research investigated how power operates through the policy and practice of abortion care delivery in Uganda's restrictive moral, legal and policy context, revealing how risk emerges from surreptitious healthcare practices aimed at evading state regulation. His findings illuminated how injustice and healthcare inequity against certain social groups become concealed within institutionalised healthcare practice and are normalised by legal and normative frameworks that mediate health policy directions. In an instrumental world, Alexander illuminates how induced abortion care becomes an instrumental practice, appropriated by health workers involved, and how vulnerable women become materials in transactional healthcare practice, stripping it of ethical value.

He is also engaged in a project examining the influence and politics of absence in global health and postdoctoral training in Africa. This initiative highlights how global neoliberal frameworks foster a desire for symbolic dominance, create distance from local realities, and transform scholarship into a tool rather than a means of genuine expression of experiences. The project also reveals how colonial legacies persist, hindering the authentic articulation of African identity.

Prior to doctoral training and postdoctoral research, Alexander served as an assistant lecturer in the sociology of technology in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) in the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) at Makerere University. He also served as a postgraduate Research Fellow at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), had teaching responsibilities in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Makerere University (2009-2011), and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Gothenburg School of Public Health and Community Medicine (2022-2023).

## Research Interests

Sociological theory; Ethnography; Sociology of Health and Medical Systems; Social Inequality.

## Education

- 2021 — PhD, School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2008 — MA Sociology, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Makerere University, Kampala.
- 2007 — MSc Development Management, University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway.
- 2003 — BA Social Sciences, Makerere University, Kampala.
- 1998 — Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE), Jinja Senior Secondary School.
- 1996 — Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE), Budini Senior Secondary School.

## **Certification**

- Nov 2019 — Scientific writing and publishing, APHRC, Kenya.
- Nov 2018 — Advanced research methodology, APHRC, Kenya.
- Nov 2017 — CARTA JAS II, Research Methods in public and population health, APHRC & Wits.
- Jun 2017 — Philosophy of methods, Makerere University DRGT.
- Jul 2017 — Advanced research methods, Makerere University DRGT.
- Mar 2007 — Methods and challenges in qualitative gender and SRH research, Makerere University.
- Jul-Aug 2004 — Program monitoring, learning and evaluation, IRC, Kampala.
- May 2003 — Training of trainers in gender, policy analysis and advocacy, IRC, Kampala.

## **Honours and Awards**

- 2017 — 4-year PhD fellowship, CARTA.
- 2018 — 2-year Advanced Doctoral Dissertation and Research Fellowship (ADDRF).
- 2009 — Qualitative research fellowship, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.
- 2005 — NOMA scholarship, MSc Development Management, University of Agder.
- 1999 — Government scholarship, BA (Social Sciences), Makerere University.

## **Research Grants**

- Grant 225136/Z/22/Z, Reimagining Malarial Infection Control in Terms of Planetary Health Boundaries — GBP 340,000, Wellcome Trust UK (2022-ongoing).
- CARTA Covid-19 Mitigation Grant — USD 3,750, SIDA & APHRC (2021).
- ADDRf — USD 10,000, APHRC (2018).
- CARTA — USD 100,000, APHRC (2017).

## **Academic Appointments**

- 2023-Present — CARTA Facilitator, JAS 1 & 3, Makerere University School of Public Health.
- 2023-Present — Postdoctoral Researcher, Dept. of Health Policy, Planning and Management, School of Public Health, Makerere University.

- 2022-2023 — Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
- 2021-2024 — Honorary Researcher, School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand.
- 2013-2017 — Assistant Lecturer, CEDAT, Makerere University.
- 2009-2012 — Postgraduate Research Fellow, Dept. of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Makerere University.

## **Courses Taught**

- TEC 2101 Sociology for Technology — CEE, Biomedical & Mechanical Engineering.
- TEC 1201 Introduction to Sociology — Electrical and Computer Engineering.
- CIV 3101 Organisational Theory — CEE.
- SOC 2100 Social Research Methods I.
- SOC 2201 Social Research Methods II: Ethnographic theory and methods.
- SOC 3103 Social Inequality and Mobility.

## **Committee Memberships**

2021 — Technical team member, COVID-19 Social Science and Policy Response Committee (CARTA), African Academy of Sciences, African Research and Impact Network (ARIN).

## **Manuscript Reviews**

- Jun 2021 — Social Science & Medicine: Medicalisation and manhood (Accra, Ghana).
- Oct 2020 — Social Science & Medicine: When abortion becomes public (rural Zambia).
- Dec 2019 — Social Science & Medicine: Cardiac Remodelling of Social Relations (southwestern Uganda).

## **Professional Association Memberships**

- Uganda Sociological and Anthropological Association.
- American Anthropological Association (AAA).
- Society for the Anthropological Study of Consciousness.
- Society for Medical Anthropology.
- Association for Feminist Anthropology.
- International Sociological Association.

## **Published Works**

- Kananura, R. M., Birabwa, C., Ssanyu, J. N., Kizito, F., Kagaha, A., et al. (2024). Increasing coverage and uptake of voluntary family planning in Uganda's emerging municipalities and secondary cities. PLOS One, 19(5), e0293351.

- Kagaha, A., & Manderson, L. (2022). Reproductive materialism and justice for women with abortion care needs in Uganda. *Global Public Health*, 17(12), 3476-3492.
- Kaunda-Khangamwa, B. N., Kagaha, A., Pillay, N., & Manderson, L. (2022). Power, visibility and sexual and reproductive health in Southern Africa. In *Sex, Sexuality and Sexual Health in Southern Africa* (pp. 111-126). Routledge.
- Kisaka, S., Makumbi, F. E., Majaliya, S., Kagaha, A., Thumbi, S. M. (2021). 'As long as the patient tells you it was a dog that bit him...' *PLOS ONE*, 16(7), e0254650.
- Kagaha, A., Manderson, L. (2021). Power, policy and abortion care in Uganda. *Health Policy and Planning*, 36(2), 187-195.
- Manderson, L., Chavarro, D., Kaunda-Khangamwa, B. et al. (2022). Containing COVID-19 and the social costs on human rights in African countries. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9, 347.
- Chavarro, D., Kagaha, A., Kaunda, B., Zakumumpa, H., & Manderson, L. (2021). COVID-19 policies: human rights approaches to protecting vulnerable groups in Africa. *African Academy of Science*, 10.
- Kagaha, A., & Manderson, L. (2020). Medical technologies and abortion care in Eastern Uganda. *Social Science & Medicine*, 247, 112813.
- Atkins, S., Launiala, A., Kagaha, A. et al. (2012). Including mixed methods research in systematic reviews. *BMC Med Res Methodol*, 12, 62.
- Chapman, C., & Kagaha, A. (2009). Resolving conflicts using traditional mechanisms in the Karamoja and Teso regions of Uganda. *Minority Rights Group briefing*.

## Works Under Review

- Kagaha, A., Manderson, L., Waiswa, P., & Bukuluki, P. Ecological Ruination: Absent Materiality and Child Health in East-Central Uganda. *Medical Anthropology Theory*.
- Kagaha, A., Manderson, L., Waiswa, P., & Bukuluki, P. Rethinking Syndemic Theory in an Era of Recurring Ecological Crises. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.
- Kagaha, A., & Manderson, L. Silence and concealment during and post abortion care in eastern Uganda. *Women's Reproductive Health Journal*.
- Kagaha, A. The power and politics of 'lack' in the context of infectious disease control. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*.

## Blogs

- Kagaha, A. (2021). Invisibility and futures during the pandemic and beyond. *Open Research, African Academy of Science*.
- Kagaha, A. (2022). Sexuality and reproductive health for invisible populations in Uganda's emergent towns. *MNCH Centre of Excellence, MakSPH*.

## Referees

**Professor Lenore Manderson** — Distinguished Professor of Medical Anthropology and Public Health, School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand. 27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193. Email: lenore.manderson@wits.ac.za · Phone: +27 11 717 3430.

**Dr. Isunju John Bosco** — Senior Lecturer, Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health, Makerere University School of Public Health. Email: [isunju@musph.ac.ug](mailto:isunju@musph.ac.ug) · Phone: +256 772 346 304 / 706 508 446.

**Professor Paul Bukuluki** — Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Makerere University. Email: [pbukuluki@gmail.com](mailto:pbukuluki@gmail.com) · Phone: +256 772 462 100.