

EASA2022: Transformation, Hope and the Commons

The role of anthropology during the Covid19 pandemic in unstructured African contexts

As an anthropologist and head of community health programs in Mozambique for the international NGO Doctors with Africa CUAMM and as a UNICEF consultant in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the pandemic has led to an enhancement of the knowledge and practices of social anthropology in the field planning of services and reading of the cultural and social response of the population to the pandemic.

Working as a technical advisor at the Mozambican ministry of health, a renewed interest was captured in the applicability of anthropology in the definition of messages of prevention and replacement rituality, in the involvement of religious authorities and traditional leaders in order to generate common languages in able to reduce risk factors for communities, particularly in fragile contexts such as the Cabo Delgado crisis

In the context of the ten-year crisis of the Kivu, in DRC, the anthropological gaze has made it possible to identify key figures in extremely fragile contexts and to bring out priority social and behavioural determinants in the fight against the pandemic.

When vaccines became available, the anthropologist's skills became a priority in defining the communication strategy of vaccination campaigns, demonstrating how much in African contexts the pandemic has represented a possibility for the discipline to disengage from the epistemological bases in order to re-legitimize itself, thanks to his civic and on public health contribution, as the founding knowledge of a renewed social pact between institutions, academia and society.

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