



KATHLEEN KAHN

MBBCh (Wits), MPH (Harvard), PhD (Umeå)

Kathy is Personal Professor in the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, and Principal Scientist in the MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt). A physician with a PhD in public health and epidemiology, she has devoted over 30 years to working in South and sub-Saharan Africa.

Kathy partners with communities, public-sector departments, and collaborating investigators to undertake ethically sound and community-sensitive research, elevating rural priorities to policy and decision makers. Since inception of the Agincourt health and socio-demographic surveillance system in 1992, she led work on mortality and cause of death, using verbal autopsy to track transitions over a period of dramatic socio-political change and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She leads a research portfolio on adolescent and young adult health and development including HIV prevention, mental health and NCD risk reduction. More recently, she contributed to multicentre work on transmission dynamics of SARS-CoV-2; and examined the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the health and livelihoods of communities.

Kathy has a strong history of capacity building and mentorship. In 2009 she inaugurated an Interdisciplinary PhD Programme in Public and Population Health with ~100 students and 15 graduates on average annually. These efforts extend to sub-Saharan Africa, for example through the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA).

Kathy directs a WHO Collaborating Centre for Verbal Autopsy, and leads the WHO group on ethical issues for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). From 2010-15, she was a member of South Africa's Ministerial Committee on Health Data. She is a Board member of the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies at Wits, was deputy-chair of the Board of Trustees, Soul City: Institute for Health & Development Communication (2005-2014), and a Board member of the International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and their Health (INDEPTH) (2011-13).

She is a Faculty Member of the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies, and Research Associate of the Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA; and previously Guest Researcher in the Centre for Global Health Research, Umeå University, Sweden.

In 2020 she received the Alumni Award of Merit from Harvard University's T.H Chan School of Public Health, and was twice awarded the Wits University Vice-Chancellor's Academic Citizenship team award.