**Proposed outline of the session:**

An Activist Agenda for Health Policy and Systems (HPS) Research and Practise in Africa

Session format: Participatory World Cafe

Session chair:  Salma Abdalla

Session organiser: Leanne Brady

Session discussants: Okiki-olu Badejo, Kefilath Bello, Leanne Brady, Asha George, Lucy Gilson, Kenneth Munge, Shehnaz Munshi. In addition, we will seek to invite an activist and human rights lawyer based in Accra.

**Overview of session**

Session content

The 5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research started an important conversation recognising that ‘*our democracies are under threat, our societies more polarized, our ecosystem undermined, conflict and diseases such as Ebola continue without due political attention, and inequalities, including those related to gender and intersectionality increase. In the face of such massive challenges – social solidarity, breaking down siloes, smart use of scarce resources, and innovation are imperative*.’ 1

Other central ideas raised at the conference were the importance of politics in health systems, interrogating power structures in global health, and what a decoloniality lens can offer to the field of Health Policy and Systems (HPS) Research and Practice. The symposium also highlighted that in this field ‘*we have an activist agenda, seeking to promote equity and speak truth to power’* 1 and that indeed, ‘*academia is a practical place, that the ivory tower should have no walls, and that we should be open to, and influenced by the world around us*’2

Purpose

Recognising that this field is an ‘*important place for social action’* 2 the Emerging Voices (EV) 2018 Africa cohort would like to host an organised session that creates a platform to continue the conversation, take some of these important ideas further, and specifically interrogate what they mean for Africa.

The organised session would also create a platform to have an intergenerational discussion, allowing for learning from those who are already established in the field, and create a space for new ideas from those who have joined the field more recently. It would specifically seek to be a generative space that harvests ideas from all participants in the room as we co-create a set of ideas relevant to HPS research and practise in Africa. These ideas will be pulled together after the session by the organisers, and will be shared with all those in attendance to guide our work moving forward. We will also seek to publish this as an editorial to use as a touchstone to guide the work we do in the future.

Technical content (please see session outline for more detail)

1. The Liverpool statement: from ideas to Action— what does an Activist agenda look like?
2. Power in HPSR
3. Taking stock of HPSR in Africa — what work has already been done, and are the research priorities in Africa moving forward?

Target audience

While the Emerging Voices 2018 Africa would host this space, we will specifically invite leaders and thinkers in the field to share ideas (see session process below) and will also seek to invite activists working in relevant areas to contribute. The target audience would be all members of the HPS research and practice community at AfHEA, and would also specifically be an opportunity for the Health Systems Global Africa region to re-connect before HSR2020 as we co-create ideas to take forward.

**Summary of planned session process**

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| **Introduction** | | | 1. **minutes** |
| * Conceptual starting points of HPS research and practice * Research as a form of activism * Objective of the session is to think together,  co-produce ideas and discuss possible steps forward. * This organised session is part of a conversation focusing on how our work can centre equity, address power hierarchies and work towards shifting the agenda and building southern scholarship. | | | Salma Abdalla |
| **World Café (3 x 20mins)** | |  | **70 minutes** |
| TABLE TOPICS | KEY IDEAS/SUMMARY (discussant will give a 5 minute input at the beginning of each table discussion) | 2 KEY QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS | DISCUSSANTS | |
| 1. The Liverpool statement: from ideas to Action | A summary of the Liverpool statements will be outlined, with a focus on research as activism, and the political nature of HPS research and practise. | 1. What points are most relevant in the African context? What does an activist agenda that addresses equity look like? 2. How do we take these ideas forward? What are the next steps? | Kefilath Bello  Asha George  Activist/Human rights lawyer |
| 2. Power in HPS research and practice | Breaking down the “i-sms” (colonialism, racism, sexism, classism, heteronormativism) and how they play out in the field of HPSR with brief overview of intersectionality as a lens.  Unpack some of the mechanisms that maintain unequal power relationships (such as knowledge hierarchies, language, aid, health security, eurocentrism) in HPS research and practice. | 1. In your setting, how does power play out in health policy systems research and practice? Please give examples. 2. How do we guard against perpetuating power hierarchies in our research? (for example, how do we do meaningful engaged scholarship, and allow for public participation and “passing  the mic” in HPS research and practice? | Kenneth Munge  Shehnaz Munshi  Leanne Brady |
| 3. Taking stock of HPS research and practise in Africa | A brief overview of the work that has been done including highlighting existing gaps.  For example: very little exploratory work,  and very little work that looks at the politics of change has been done in HPS research. | 1. What are the essential steps towards shifting the research agenda despite existing funding patterns? How do we centre African priorities and co-produce research? 2. What are the research priorities for Africa moving forward? | Okiki-olu Badejo  Lucy Gilson |
| **Plenary closing** | | | **10 mins** |
| * Feedback from 3 tables and final inputs from participants * Outline next steps | | |  |

References

1. Liverpool statement from HSR2018.

2. HSG Lifetime achievers award acceptance speech. Lucy Gilson. Oct 2018