

Harnessing the tenets of health promotion and wise reasoning in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana and similar contexts

Senanu Kwasi Kutor, Eunice Annan-Aggrey, Austin Dziwornu Ablo, Adjoa Afriyie Poku & Emmanuel Kyeremeh

To cite this article: Senanu Kwasi Kutor, Eunice Annan-Aggrey, Austin Dziwornu Ablo, Adjoa Afriyie Poku & Emmanuel Kyeremeh (2023) Harnessing the tenets of health promotion and wise reasoning in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana and similar contexts, African Geographical Review, 42:5, 607-616, DOI: [10.1080/19376812.2022.2092160](https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2022.2092160)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2022.2092160>



Published online: 22 Jun 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 109



View related articles [↗](#)






View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)



Harnessing the tenets of health promotion and wise reasoning in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana and similar contexts

Senanu Kwasi Kutor ^a, Eunice Annan-Aggrey ^a, Austin Dziwornu Ablo^b,
Adjoa Afriyie Poku^c and Emmanuel Kyeremeh ^d

^aDepartment of Geography and Environment, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada;

^bDepartment of Geography and Resource Development, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana; ^cDepartment of Geography Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana; ^dDepartment of Sociology, Toronto University, Canada

ABSTRACT

The emergence of COVID-19 in December 2019 produced new geographic spaces characterized by physical and social distancing with concomitant surprises. In Ghana, management of the first and second waves of the pandemic garnered mixed reactions from the populace. Against these perspectives, this commentary explored the critical role of health promotion and wise reasoning tenets in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, specifically through the following eight principles: intellectual humility; acknowledging uncertainty and change; perspective-taking of different viewpoints; integration of diverse perspectives; intersectorality; sustainability; empowerment and public health engagement; and equity. Our analyses demonstrate that wise reasoning and health promotion from Ghana's political authorities are critical to ensure citizens' compliance with the several measures that require a change of behavior.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 October 2021

Accepted 15 June 2022

KEYWORDS

COVID-19; Ghana; health promotion; intellectual humility; wise reasoning

Introduction

This commentary interrogates the critical role of health promotion and wise reasoning on the part of political leaders in dealing with the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana and similar contexts. Since the genesis of COVID-19 in December 2019, the global manifestation of the pandemic has astounded many. According to Simandan (2020), 'whether we are surprised by what transpires in our surroundings or we are surprising ourselves by leaping forward in impetuous deeds of reinventing who we are, the common denominator of these processes of becoming is that they produce geographical space and are produced by it' (p. 99). Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has produced new geographic spaces characterized by physical and social distancing with concomitant surprises. These surprises have manifested in how the pandemic has been experienced differently across the globe. As the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global health emergency, it rated Africa as the budding flashpoint, notwithstanding the comparatively low numbers of reported cases and deaths recorded at the time (Nuwagira & Muzoora, 2020). This concern is related to the perceived limited capacity to deal adequately with the pandemic, owing to the limited access to medical personnel and infrastructure such as intensive care units, inadequate workforce for critical care health professionals, deteriorated medical infrastructure, and limited research capacity on the continent.

Globally, the first and second waves of the pandemic devastated people's livelihoods and resulted in millions of deaths. In Ghana, management of the first wave of the pandemic generated mixed responses from the public. Broadly, the response to the early phase (first wave) of the pandemic in Ghana was acknowledged as one of the best in Africa (Quakyi et al., 2021), largely due to the government's policies. Specifically, the government's overall approach was systematized around five objectives: to limit the importation of cases; identify and contain cases; care for the sick; cushion the impact of COVID-19 on Ghana's economic and social life; and enhance domestic production as an avenue of deepening self-reliance (Ofori-Atta, 2020). Predominantly, the government and its allies were impressed with the first and second waves of the COVID-19 management amid criticism of lifting lockdown restrictions when cases were rising. In a meeting with the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) in April 2020, President Nana Akufo Addo emphasized that:

we are also looking at the demography of the disease itself, in terms of the sick, in terms of death. What we will like [*sic*] to do, as decision-makers, is to balance all these factors and to come to a conclusion and a set of solutions that will benefit our people and of course, protect the economy of our country. All of these have been the basket of issues that have led us to take this decision (As cited in Emmanuel, 2020, para. 1).

The president's remark suggests that the government had taken an efficient approach to managing the pandemic.

However, a cross-section of Ghanaians, including some civil society organizations, frontline workers, NGOs in health, medical practitioners, and the opposition National Democratic Congress's task force on COVID-19, shared different views. For instance, on Monday, 5 July 2021, the minority group in Parliament through its Ranking Member on the Health Committee of Parliament, Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, requested the government of Ghana to be frank about the COVID-19 situation in Ghana. Specifically, he called on the government to 'revert to its initial plan on testing by conducting routine surveillance tests, enhanced contact tracing tests, and also effective testing of all incoming travellers not just at Kotoka International Airport but also across our seaports and land borders' (as cited in Arhinful & Opoku, 2021, para. 4). This submission reflects a call for a revised approach to handling the pandemic, suggesting that the existing strategy was not working well.

Empirical scholarship on the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana is growing. The nascent literature has explored the impact of the pandemic among older adults (see, Gyasi, 2020), wise reasoning and political decision-making amid COVID-19 (see, Kutor, Kyeremeh et al., 2021), and the effect of the pandemic on education (see, Adarkwah, 2020). Others have also examined the observance of COVID-19 safety among selected transportation stations in the Greater Accra region of Ghana (see, Bonful et al., 2020), and the COVID-19 and the geographies of blame (Owusu et al., 2022). Against these scholarly works on COVID-19 in Ghana, coupled with the contrasting perspectives discussed above, this commentary explores the potential role of health promotion and wise reasoning in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana. The commentary is built on the existing scholarship on wise reasoning (see, Grossmann, 2017; Grossmann & Brienza, 2018; Kutor, Kyeremeh et al., 2021) and health promotion (see, Saboga-Nunes et al., 2020; Viner & Macfarlane, 2005). We demonstrate that wise reasoning and health promotion on the part of political authorities are critical to ensure citizens' compliance with the several measures that require a change of behavior.

Wise reasoning is conceptualized in this commentary as 'recognizing the limit of knowledge, seeing the world in a flux, considering context, acknowledging others' viewpoints, and recognizing the importance of compromise' (Grossmann, 2017, p. 241). For emphasis, wise reasoning entails four integral components: intellectual humility, acknowledging uncertainty and change, perspective-taking of different viewpoints, and integration of diverse perspectives (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018). Health promotion, in turn, is operationalized as the 'science or art of helping people change their lifestyle to move towards a state of optimal health' (Viner & Macfarlane, 2005, p. 527). This presupposes that raising the health status of individuals and communities is paramount to health

promotion. The rest of the commentary is organized as follows. It commences by justifying Ghana as an interesting case to study. This is followed by a discussion of the role of wise reasoning and health promotion in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, as well as some concluding remarks.

Why the case of Ghana?

We applied Ghana's context in our analyses for two main reasons. First, there is increasing concerns in the media, especially from the opposition National Democratic Party (NDC), health practitioners and frontline workers, about the government's reluctance to take good counsel from the scientific community. Contributing to a media discussion on Joy Fm's super morning show, the Deputy General Secretary of the GMA and a member of the Infectious Diseases Committee, Dr. Titus Beyuo, echoed the sentiment of the association by reiterating that the GMA warned the government about the likelihood of a COVID-19 third wave several months earlier. Highlighting further, he emphasized that:

Yesterday, I heard the President say we have dropped our guards. When did GMA not talk about let's not drop our guard? Check our press statements way back. We appeal, and nobody would listen. . . . So if we said that this is going to happen, instead of looking at how to fix it, the next thing is people jump to defence and [organize] a press conference and tell us that everything is fine (As cited in Amoah, 2021, paras. 3, 5).

This suggests that to some extent the political authority sometimes ignores the scientific projections of healthcare professionals.

Second, the recent allegations of malfeasance leveled against the government relating to the purchase of the Sputnik vaccine under doubtful arrangements make it an interesting case to explore. Specifically, it emerged that the government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Health, entered into an agreement with intermediaries to purchase the Sputnik-V vaccine – which is contrary to the WHO's recommendation that no country should purchase vaccines through middlemen. Additionally, it emerged that Ghana's Minister of Health, Kwaku Agyemang Manu, signed the Sputnik-V contract without parliamentary approval as stipulated by law. Apart from failing to follow due process, the Sputnik-V vaccine was not approved for use in Ghana by the Food and Drug Authority when the contract was signed (Starrfm Online, 2021).

Dealing with COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana: any insights from wise reasoning and health promotion tenets?

At first glance, the world's response to this pandemic seems far detached from wise reasoning and health promotion principles. We argue that while the actual war heroes in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic are doctors, nurses, virologists, and epidemiologists – whose several actions emphasize the preventative side of things (Van den Broucke, 2020) – wise reasoning and health promotion on the part of political authorities are critical to ensure citizens' compliance with the several measures that simply required a change of behavior.

To commence the debate on the critical role of wise reasoning and health promotion in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and thereby protecting the health and well-being of Ghanaians, we offer eight discussion points to broaden the scope of our endeavor: intellectual humility; acknowledging uncertainty and change; perspective-taking of different viewpoints; integration of diverse perspectives; intersectorality; sustainability; empowerment and public health engagement; and equity. For clarity purposes, these eight points are initial checklists to stimulate the discussion on the contribution of wise reasoning and health promotion in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and Ghana in particular.

Intellectual humility

Intellectual humility is critical in tackling the public health challenge of the COVID-19 in Ghana. Intellectual humility – one of the critical components of wise reasoning – elucidates that knowledge, wisdom, and expertise do not find expression in one individual or group of individuals. Specifically, Grossmann and Brienza (2018) denote intellectual humility as recognizing one's knowledge and manifesting it in real life by double-checking the accuracy of one's opinion on a matter before opinion formation. In this era of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, intellectual humility requires political leaders to heed advice from diverse scientific communities rather than relying on close associates of the government. However, as research demonstrates (see, Kutor, Kyeremeh et al., 2021), coupled with media narratives, the government of Ghana has failed to consult broadly on matters relating to the management of the first and second waves of COVID-19. Even though it is debatable what constitutes adequate or inadequate consultation, it is imperative that the government takes on board perspectives of the private sector, civil society organizations, citizens, academia, scientific communities, and health-related professional bodies. Indeed, such endeavors would invariably enrich the quality of counsel given and ensure inclusiveness and credibility. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the government to consult broadly in managing COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana.

Acknowledging uncertainty and change

The COVID-19 pandemic has surprised many on the one hand and is unsurprising to scholars and students of wise reasoning (see, Grossmann, 2017; Grossmann & Brienza, 2018; Grossmann & Dorfman, 2019; Kutor, Kyeremeh et al., 2021) and scholars of surprise (see, Mackenzie, 2007; Mills, 2013; Simandan, 2020), on the other hand. Embedded in this notion of surprise is the corollary notion of acknowledging uncertainty and change – both social and personal change, as demonstrated in this pandemic epoch. We conceptualize personal and social change by following Simandan's (2020) argument that personal change involves

all processes that describe and explain how a given individual becomes different than their earlier selves, either physically or mentally or both. . . . Social change [denotes] all processes that describe and explain how a given community, group, or society becomes different than their earlier iteration, demographically, geographically, culturally, politically, and economically (p. 101).

The uncertainty and change associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have been appreciated by governments all over the world. In the context of Ghana, this acknowledgment of uncertainty and change manifest in various forms, including the weekly updates on the pandemic situation from health officials and the office of the President. The essence of these updates centered on the notion that the pandemic situation is characterized by fluidity, hence the need for Ghanaians to be aware of these uncertainties associated with the COVID-19. Indeed, by letting Ghanaians become mindful of the COVID-19 volatility, they would be prepared to follow the safety protocols.

Practically, various waves of COVID-19 experienced by countries worldwide have already demonstrated the need to recognize uncertainty and change. Therefore, governments, particularly that of Ghana, must recognize that the COVID-19 context will continue to change over time and be oriented toward open-mindedness about the direction of change (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018). That singular recognition will create the avenue to search for different solutions and alternative ways to deal effectively with Ghana's COVID-19 situation.

Perspective-taking of different viewpoints

Perspective-taking of different viewpoints encompasses open-mindedness toward different perspectives on issues, and a potential expression includes absorbing others' perspectives (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018). In an exploratory study that interrogates wise reasoning and political leadership among health workers in Accra-Metropolis, Ghana, amidst rising COVID-19, Kutor, Kyeremeh

et al. (2021) demonstrated that the government of Ghana had not shown wise reasoning in lifting lockdown restrictions when COVID-19 cases were surging; in particular, the authors noted that ‘participants’ opinion on the government’s decision to ease restrictions without taking stakeholders and interest groups’ perspectives into consideration is not consistent with the wise reasoning’s framework assumptions’ (p. 17). This empirical evidence is supported by the Deputy General Secretary of the GMA, Dr. Titus Beyuo, in his contribution to a media discussion on Joy Fm’s super morning show. Dr. Beyuo indicated that the GMA warned the government concerning the possibility of the country witnessing the third wave of COVID-19, but nobody listened. This perspective contradicts the position that the government always projected that their decisions regarding the COVID-19 are based on the available scientific data. This, therefore, raises a serious question: whose data was available to the government? This is critical because the GMA is a professional body composed of medical practitioners who work in various medical facilities across the country with a first-hand experience with the COVID-19 situation. With insights from Kutor, Kyeremeh, et al.’s (2021) study and the revelation by the Deputy General Secretary of the GMA, we suggest that to better deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, the government must be open-minded and take others’ viewpoints, especially those in the scientific community – especially the GMA, scientists, and the research community in Ghana. As argued elsewhere (see, Kutor, 2019), open-mindedness is a virtue of a wise person.

Integration of diverse viewpoints

The fourth component of wise reasoning stipulated by Grossmann (2017) is the integration of different viewpoints. Grossmann and Brienza (2018) define the integration of diverse viewpoints to denote a search for a compromise between diverse interests from different stakeholders. In the context of Ghana, deciding how best to manage COVID-19 since its genesis is fraught with controversies as to what approach is better suited to effectively manage the pandemic and thereby protect citizens’ health and well-being. Nevertheless, the government justified its COVID-19 decision-making based on science and data – suggesting that it involves the amalgamation of different viewpoints. However, numerous media reports in Ghana narrated concerns about how various stakeholders’ views are not incorporated in COVID-19 decision-making. Similarly, Kutor, Kyeremeh et al.’s (2021) study with frontline health workers in the Accra Metropolis provides insights into the government’s failure to integrate sufficient viewpoints in lifting the lockdown restriction amidst rising COVID-19 cases in Ghana. Thus, emphasizing the need for the integration of different viewpoints in decision-making

Drawing insights from the above, we propose that going forward and to better deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, the government must consider amalgamating different viewpoints and consider the likelihood of compromise to ensure that desired solutions culminate in most of the interests being satisfied (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018). The subsequent section illustrates the insights that can be gleaned from health promotion principles in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, we discuss four of Saboga-Nunes et al.’s (2020) five proposed discussion points on health promotion: intersectorality, sustainability, empowerment and public engagement, and equity.

Intersectorality

According to Saboga-Nunes et al. (2020), intersectoral actions are critical to tackle the public health challenge of COVID-19 and encompass the mobilization of collaborative actions from both government and the larger society. Within the context of Ghana, this denotes collaborative efforts from all critical government departments and agencies in tackling the menace of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborative efforts suggest that departments can supplement the weaknesses of other departments regarding the COVID-19 management. Embedded in the notion of intersectorality is information sharing. Information sharing, both among government institutions and with the

public, is critical in this pandemic period to increase awareness about the virus and how the public can best attain individual and community protection from exposure to the virus. The government of Ghana's effort in information sharing, transparency, and community approach is commendable. In the early phases of the pandemic, the Ministry of Health and its related agencies, and the Presidency constantly updated Ghanaians on measures and actions the government took to combat the threat of the COVID-19. This information, in turn, was disseminated by various departments and agencies at the lower echelons of government bureaucracy. Intersectorality also entails a community-oriented approach—where community surveillance is prioritized. Predominantly, the essence of community surveillance focused on the urgent contact tracing of the case, people, and family members within a 1–2 km radius of cluster of cases (Odikro et al., 2022).

According to Rahimi and Abadi (2020), 'transparency and clear governmental and national guidance and coordination on how to manage the pandemic is of utmost importance to avoid public confusion and, importantly, to encourage or otherwise enforce compliance' (p. 1367). Relatedly, a community-oriented approach can facilitate the support of vulnerable members of the communities to warrant equity and shield them from infection (Saboga-Nunes et al., 2020). In line with the above discussion, we propose paying attention to the community-level transmission. Evidence in Ghana suggests that community transmission appears to have significantly surged with attendant gaps in community-level testing and contact tracing (Quakyi et al., 2021).

Sustainability

The COVID-19 pandemic calls for Ghana's political leadership to ensure the sustainability of the public health infrastructure. According to Saboga-Nunes et al. (2020), sustainability in this context hinges on the need to fortify the resilience of public health, social services, and disease care. They further stress that sustainability 'goes beyond protecting the scarce resource of hospital staff: it also concerns strengthening the primary care and community-based health and social services and enhancing the role of health promotion and disease prevention in achieving sustainable population health and wellbeing' (p. 4). This implies that sustainability, one of the key principles of health promotion, can contribute significantly to addressing the COVID-19 threat at different levels (Brownson et al., 2010), including: the upstream level (centering on policies that affect the whole population); the midstream level (concentrating on mediations that impact communities and organizations); and the downstream level (focusing on individual behavioral alteration and disease management; (Van den Broucke, 2020). We posit that political leadership has a critical role to play in addressing the pandemic in these diverse strands.

The pandemic has tested countries' health system and infrastructure, including Ghana. With this recognition, the government of Ghana has put in place a number of measures to make Ghana's healthcare system sustainable in anticipation of future pandemics. Notable among such measures, included the establishment of the Ghana Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Infectious Centers, and agenda 111 hospital projects. The agenda 111 projects involve the design, procurement, building, and equipping of 101 District Hospitals, 6 Regional Hospitals in newly created regions, 1 Regional Hospital in the Western Region, 2 Psychiatric Hospitals in Kumasi and Tamale, and a renovated Accra Psychiatric Hospital. Even though these initiatives are in the right direction, action they say speak louder than words. This is rightly so because the agenda 111 project which was initially earmarked to be completed within 12 months had suffered completion delay. Delivering his 28th address to the nation on measures taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19, President Akufo-Addo reiterated that agenda 111 is currently underway, and by the end of his second term of office on 7 January 2025, all 111 hospitals would be completed (Joy Online, 2022). The continual shift in the completion date of the agenda 111 projects makes it prudent to question the feasibility and sustainability of Ghana's health system and infrastructure. Thus, raising concerns about whether Ghana can have robust and sustainable health systems should a next pandemic strike.

Based on the above, we posit that considering the anxiety among the citizenry regarding the threat of COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, political leaders ought to ensure the sustainability of health infrastructure to provide a gamut of health and social services (Saboga-Nunes et al., 2020).

Empowerment and public health engagement

One of the fundamental principles of health promotion espoused by Saboga-Nunes et al. (2020) is the element of empowerment and public health engagement. According to the authors, empowerment and public health engagement must include both the individual and community. Thus,

empowering people to act and gain control over the situation requires effective communication about the risks of contamination, about the ways to protect oneself and others, and about the ways to cope with living in confinement. This communication should consider the fact that there are subgroups within the population that suffer from low health literacy (Saboga-Nunes et al., 2020, p. 5).

In the Ghanaian context, information and messages related to the COVID-19 were accessed to a very large extent by populations in the urban areas. This was the case because these are geographical areas that were easily accessible to major media outlets. However, the extent to which information sharing and messages related to the COVID-19 empowered or failed to empower the citizenry is individual-specific since each person is expected to follow the safety protocols contingent on the information provided. However, in rural or remote areas where communication networks are a problem and there is limited access to media outlets, information and messages related to the pandemic are a great challenge for rural folks.

Irrespective of geographic context, when encouraging people to follow the suggested preventive measures, governments ought to present information and messages in a straightforward approach (Gray et al., 2012). The essence of presenting information in a straightforward manner is to avoid contradiction in message delivery and allow the information to achieve what Heymann's and Shindo (2020) called appealing to people's self-efficacy.

The threat of the COVID-19 pandemic to the successes chalked so far requires concerted efforts from Ghana's political leadership to promote health through empowerment and public health engagement. This, we suggest, is achievable through health literacy and COVID-19 health recommendations contingent on both scientific bases and culturally appropriate measures. Indeed, we concur with health promotion scholars that for information to be relevant, it must be comprehended, accepted, and practicalized (Van den Broucke, 2020) toward achieving comprehensive literacy among individuals and the community. Overall, synchronizing important messaging among relevant health sectors, agencies, and other sectors is critical in pandemic responses (Smith & Judd, 2020) such as to COVID-19.

Equity

Equity within the context of the current pandemic implies that no one should be left behind to combat the effects of the pandemic (Saboga-Nunes et al., 2020). While it is widely held that the virus knows no boundaries, there is a boundary between rich and socially marginalized neighborhoods when it comes to safeguarding persons' life against the pandemic. Empirical evidence demonstrates that the marginalized in societies are more profoundly affected by COVID-19 than their affluent contemporaries (see, Greenaway et al., 2020). By applying the notion of equity in the context of COVID-19, it does suggest that people in disadvantaged conditions and environments, including residents of informal settlements, people experiencing homelessness, migrants and minority groups, residents of border town, the elderly people, and persons with preexisting conditions must be given equal opportunity to safeguard their health by providing funds to cushion their livelihoods and making vaccination available to them where possible. As Smith and Judd (2020) have aptly articulated, response to the pandemic should be examined through an equity perspective. Relatedly, as

succinctly echoed by the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the question of equity in this pandemic is critical as it relates to information, innovation, essential medical equipment and supplies, medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics (World Health Organization, 2020).

Concluding remarks

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the world by surprise. These surprises have manifested in how the pandemic has been profoundly and differently experienced across the world. This partly culminated in new geographic spaces characterized by physical and social distancing protocols. This commentary examined the role of health promotion and wise reasoning in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana. In pursuant to the mixed reactions following the management of the first two waves of COVID-19 in Ghana, this commentary proposes that Ghana's political leaders and others in similar contexts adopt the tenets of health promotion and wise reasoning to deal effectively with the COVID-19 situation and thereby protect lives and citizens. Specifically, political leadership in Ghana and similar contexts ought to pay attention to the fact that: (a) knowledge and wisdom about life circumstances, (including pandemics) do not reside in one person or group of people; (b) the need to recognize that pandemics of whatever magnitude are embedded in uncertainty and change; (c) the need to seek different viewpoints in addressing complex life issues such as COVID-19 pandemic; (d) the need to ensure that health systems are robust and sustainable enough to combat future pandemics; (e) the need to ensure that information and messages disseminated are clear and devoid of any contradictory tendencies; and (f) the need to ensure that all vulnerable groups are supported in order to achieve equity. Not only are the principles of wise reasoning and health promotion essential for managing the pandemic, but wise reasoning is an important framework that can be employed in other disciplines. Such enterprise would create an avenue for dialogue among different academic fields (Kutor, Amoak et al., 2021).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Senanu Kwasi Kutor is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography and Environment at the University of Western Ontario, London Ontario, Canada. His research interests span migration and subjective wellbeing, geographies of wisdom, social theory, urban informality in cities of the developing world, international migration, and transnationalism. Senanu is a student member of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG).

Eunice Annan-Aggrey is a Ph.D. Candidate of the Department of Geography and Environment at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. Her research interests include international development, the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality, local governance, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

Austin Dziwornu Ablo is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Resource Development at the University of Ghana, Legon. His research interests include urban studies, natural resource governance, energy, agriculture and development, and entrepreneurship and employment.

Adjoa Afriyie Poku is a senior lecturer in the Department of Geography Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. She received a Master of Philosophy in Development Studies (Specializing in Geography) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), and a PhD and Postdoctoral studies in Geography from Nottingham University. Her research interests and publications are on population, medical and health geography.

Emmanuel Kyeremeh is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto. He is a mixed method theoretically driven social scientist who specializes in understanding the multidimensional process associated with immigrant integration in destination countries. His current research examines changes in personal networks between the native-born American and foreign-born in California.

ORCID

Senanu Kwasi Kutor  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2637-4823>
 Eunice Annan-Aggrey  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3394-5062>
 Emmanuel Kyeremeh  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8435-3687>

References

- Adarkwah, M. A. (2020). "I'm not against online teaching, but what about us?": ICT in Ghana post covid-19. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(2), 1665–1685. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10331-z>
- Amoah, G. (2021, July 21). *Covid-19: We forewarned about third wave months ago – GMA*. Retrieved from: Joy Online. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/covid-19-we-forewarned-about-third-wave-months-ago-gma/>
- Arhinful, E., & Opoku, D. M. (2021, July 5). "Be candid with Ghanaians on COVID-19 situation" – minority to government. Citi Newsroom. Retrieved from <https://citinewsroom.com/2021/07/be-candid-with-ghanaians-on-covid-19-situation-minority-to-government/>
- Bonful, H. A., Addo-Lartey, A., Aheto, J. M., Ganle, J. K., Sarfo, B., Aryeetey, R., & Di Gennaro, F. (2020). Limiting spread of COVID-19 in Ghana: Compliance audit of selected transportation stations in the greater Accra region of Ghana. *PLOS ONE*, 15(9), e0238971. Article e0238971. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238971>
- Brownson, R. C., Seiler, R., & Eyler, A. A. (2010). Measuring the impact of public health policy. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 7(4), 1–7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2901575/>
- Emmanuel, K. (2020, April 21). *Nana Addo gives reasons and factors that led to lifting of lockdown*. Pulse.com. Retrieved from <https://www.pulse.com.gh/news/local/nana-addo-gives-reasons-and-factors-that-led-to-lifting-of-lockdown/br9hwsz>
- Gray, L., MacDonald, C., Mackie, B., Paton, D., Johnston, D., & Baker, M. G. (2012). Community responses to communication campaigns for influenza A (H1N1): A focus group study. *BMC Public Health*, 12(1), 1–12. Article 205. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-12-205>
- Greenaway, C., Hargreaves, S., Barkati, S., Coyle, C. M., Gobbi, F., Veizis, A., & Douglas, P. (2020). COVID-19: Exposing and addressing health disparities among ethnic minorities and migrants. *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 27(7), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jtm/taaa113>
- Grossmann, I. (2017). Wisdom and how to cultivate it: Review of emerging evidence for a constructivist model of wise thinking. *European Psychologist*, 22(4), 233–246. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000302>
- Grossmann, I., & Brienza, J. (2018). The strengths of wisdom provide unique contributions to improved leadership, sustainability, inequality, gross national happiness, and civic discourse in the face of contemporary world problems. *Journal of Intelligence*, 6(2), 22. Article 22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence6020022>
- Grossmann, I., & Dorfman, A. (2019). Wise reasoning in an uncertain world. In R. J. Sternberg, H. C. Nusbaum, & J. Glück (Eds.), *Applying wisdom to contemporary world problems* (pp. 51–79). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20287-3_3
- Gyasi, R. M. (2020). Fighting COVID-19: Fear and internal conflict among older adults in Ghana. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 63(6–7), 688–690. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2020.1766630>
- Heymann, D., & Shindo, N. (2020). COVID-19: What is next for public health? *The Lancet*, 395(10224), 542–545. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30374-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30374-3)
- Joy Online (2022). *Agenda 111 will be completed by end of my tenure – Akufo-Addo*. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/agenda-111-will-be-completed-by-end-of-my-tenure-akufo-addo/>. [10:05:2022]
- Kutor, S. K. (2019). *Wisdom and cross-cultural interaction: A geographical perspective* (Master's MRP. Brock University). doi:<http://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22926.61765>
- Kutor, S. K., Amoak, D., Owusu, B., & Kyeremeh, E. (2021). Theorizing "wicked concept" and reconceptualizing wisdom as wicked. *The Professional Geographer*, 73(4), 632–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2021.1933553>
- Kutor, S. K., Kyeremeh, E., Owusu, B., Amoak, D., & Ishola, T. O. (2021). Wise reasoning and political leadership amid COVID-19 pandemic: An exploratory study on Ghana. *International Journal of Public Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-03-2021-0018>
- Mackenzie, F. D. (2007). Cultural geographies in practice: The story(ing) of Jessie of Balranald: Research encounters of a surprising kind. *Cultural Geographies*, 14(3), 445–452. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474007078211>
- Mills, S. (2013). Surprise! Public historical geographies, user engagement and voluntarism. *Area*, 45(1), 16–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12001>
- Nuwagira, E., & Muzoora, C. (2020). Is sub-Saharan Africa prepared for COVID-19? *Tropical Medicine and Health*, 48(1), Article 18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41182-020-00206-x>
- Odikro, D. A. B. M. A., Frimpong, J. A., Malm, K. L., Asiedu-Bekoe, F., & Kenu, E. (2022). Strategies adopted by Ghana during first and second waves of COVID-19 in Ghana. *Journal of Interventional Epidemiology and Public Health*, 5(3), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.11604/JIEPH.supp.2022.5.1.1206>

- Ofori-Atta, K. (2020, March 30). *Statement to Parliament on economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy of Ghana*. Republic of Ghana, Ministry of Finance. https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/news/MoF-Statement-to-Parliament_20200330.pdf
- Owusu, B., Kutor, S. K., & Ablo, A. D. (2022). COVID-19 Pandemic: Ghana and the geographies of blame. *GeoJournal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-022-10586-8>
- Quakyi, N. K., Asante, N. A. A., Nartey, Y. A., Bediako, Y., & Sam-Agudu, N. A. (2021). Ghana's COVID-19 response: The Black Star can do even better. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(3), e005569. Article e005569. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-005569>
- Rahimi, F., & Abadi, A. T. B. (2020). Transparency and information sharing could help abate the COVID-19 pandemic. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 41(11), 1366–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2020.174>
- Saboga-Nunes, L., Levin-Zamir, D., Bittlingmayer, U., Contu, P., Pinheiro, P., & Ivassenko, V. (2020). *A health promotion focus on COVID-19: Keep the Trojan horse out of our health systems: Promote health for all in times of crisis and beyond!* EUPHA-HP, IUHPE, UNESCO Chair Global Health & Education. <https://www.iuhpe.org/index.php/en/iuhpenews/1366-covid19-health-promo>
- Simandan, D. (2020). Being surprised and surprising ourselves: A geography of personal and social change. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(1), 99–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518810431>
- Smith, J. A., & Judd, J. (2020). COVID-19: Vulnerability and the power of privilege in a pandemic. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 31(2), 158–160. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.333>
- Starrfm Online. (2021, July 28). *Agyeman Manu signed Sputnik vaccine contract before seeking AG's advice*. <https://starrfm.com.gh/2021/07/agyeman-manu-signed-sputnik-vaccine-contract-before-seeking-ag's-advice/>
- Van den Broucke, S. (2020). Why health promotion matters to the COVID-19 pandemic, and vice versa. *Health Promotion International*, 35(2), 181–186. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaa042>
- Viner, R., & Macfarlane, A. (2005). ABC of adolescent health promotion. *British Medical Journal*, 330(7490), 527–529. <http://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.330.7490.527>
- World Health Organization. (2020, March 30). *WHO Director-Generals remarks for G20 trade ministers*. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-generals-remarks-for-g20-trade-ministers>