

**Autumn semester 2020**

**Takes place on Mondays, 5.15 – 6.00 pm**

**ZOOM LINK: <https://swisstph.zoom.us/j/93086072912>**

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21.09.2020

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“Studying perceived health impacts in communities around large natural resource extraction projects in sub-Saharan Africa“

**Background:** Natural resource extraction projects can have positive but also negative effects on the health of affected communities, governed by demographic, economic, environmental, physical and social changes. Health impact assessment (HIA) is a decision-support tool that aims at maximizing benefits and minimizing negative impacts on people's health. Yet, HIA is underutilized in sub-Saharan Africa, where about a third of the world's mineral reserves are located.

**Methods:** In the frame of a larger research project, this PhD project is a contribution to strengthen HIA in sub-Saharan Africa by generating scientific evidence about health impacts of mining industries on local populations. Specifically, the work presented focuses on the social determinants of health and health equity in communities next to industrial mining sites. To explore the communities' perception, we conducted participatory focus group discussions in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania.

**Results:** Based on the communities' perception, the implementation of the mine induced changes on various aspects of environmental, social and economic determinants of health, which consequently affected their health and well-being. Negative changes for their health and well-being prevailed, while particularly women were affected disproportionately. Positive changes were primarily related to interventions such as new health centers or water access points, yet benefits were not distributed equally among impacted communities. We found similar findings across countries and settings.

**Conclusion:** Overall, perceptions of communities affected by industrial mining projects are in dissonance with the project's contributions to development. Particularly health, as a cross-cutting issue, should be more explicitly and systematically in settings of industrial mining. Therefore, rigorous and inclusive management of health impacts should play a key role. Hence, fostering the institutionalization of HIA holds promise to act on the social determinants of health, which is needed to reduce health inequities and ultimately contribute to good health and well-being for all.

**Further insights (short video clips 😊)**

- Framing project (HIA4SD): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yznfib03nj8&>
- Insights from Tanzania: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcZ3viozbZw>
- Insights from Burkina Faso: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj6v5FMYYVI&t>