



## **African Contributions to Global Health**

### Video Transcript

#### **South-South knowledge circulation**

TANJA: This week, we will explore South-South knowledge circulation and historical methodology. My colleague Andrea Kifyasi is a PhD Candidate from Tanzania, currently working on "Chinese Medical Assistance in Post-Colonial Tanzania". So, what is South-South knowledge circulation? In a nutshell, this expression describes the exchange of knowledge produced by actors in the Global South with other actors in the Global South.

ANDREA: In order to understand South-South knowledge circulation, it is worth taking a look at "Theory from the South". "Theory from the South" emphasises how Southern countries became centres for the production and circulation of knowledge and innovation, both within the Southern world and beyond Southern borders.

TANJA: It is hard to pin down what precisely is meant by the "Global South" and the "Global North". The terms, however, are alternatives to "Third World or Developing Countries" and "Developed Countries." These new terms leave behind the old tripartite and hierarchical divisions that were dominant during the Cold War period. The belief that countries of the Global South are the architects of science, technology and innovation is not new. Several Afrocentric scholars in the past have said as much.

ANDREA: For example, Cheikh Anta Diop claimed that Africans were the genuine architects of Ancient Egypt's civilisation, which then spread to the North and the South.

TANJA: "Theory from the South" takes these ideas and develops them further. It shows how knowledge produced in the Global South was then circulated within the Global South.

ANDREA: In the field of medical history, scholars such as Helen Tilley have discussed the ways in which the Global South became a source of "raw data" for the Global North. She explains how treatments were tested and plant knowledge exported to the North. Tilley adds that much of the knowledge that colonial authorities gathered from local experts and from their experiences in the colonies has been unacknowledged or silenced.



TANJA: "Theory from the South" shines a spotlight on the knowledge that has come from the South. By doing that, it proves that the South was also a site of theory building, not just one of collecting raw data, such as botanical specimens.

ANDREA: In my research I investigate some of these issues. I trace initiatives in knowledge production and circulation made by countries of the South, starting in 1955 and following the Bandung Conference and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization instituted in 1957. So far, scholars have not linked these organisations with the ongoing "Theory from the South" debate. I examine how these movements, which were formed at the height of the Cold War, conceived and developed the idea of helping one another. They did this in order to address several related economic, political, social and technological problems. I use China's medical assistance in Tanzania to examine the manifestations of a Southern solidarity agenda, based on the fact that China was among the leading architects and sponsors of the Afro-Asian movement.

TANJA: To take a closer look at knowledge production and circulation in the Global South, as well as to learn about the South as a site of theory building is crucial to understanding African contributions to global health. What examples of South-South knowledge circulation and collaborations do you know? Let us know in the comment section!