

EAN MONTHLY NEWSFLASH

February Edition

Interview with Dr. Grazia Caleo on her children's book *The Secret of the Bush*



Grazia Caleo, EPIET Alumna from cohort 2009, talks with us about her book *The Secret of the Bush*, published on March 10th. It tells a 'lived experience' story, based on Grazia's work in Sierra Leone with Doctors Without Borders, at the time of Ebola.

What inspired you to write the book?

Over the last years, while working on Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and subsequent outbreaks in the DRC, I witnessed stigma and fear toward patients, families, and survivors. Communities often found themselves in adversarial positions with public health responses, and lived experiences were frequently disregarded, contributing to epistemic injustice. This led me to question my public health practice and embark on a PhD on Ebola, hoping to generate evidence to inform new approaches that integrate humanity into public health.

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health practice could not tell. Children's books, however, offer a way to engage with challenging themes, reflect on our experiences, and deepen our connection to the world around us.

I met Kremena Dimitrova (illustrator), and this journey began. Art became a way to reconcile practice and science. We took a creative look at science and integrated elements of my PhD into the book. Additionally, we incorporated historical events related to colonialism. The tree that holds ancestral wisdom in our story is inspired by the Cotton Tree, a historic symbol in Sierra Leone, which collapsed in 2023. Many legends surround this tree, some say it was planted by freed slaves from a seed taken from the Caribbean.

What message do you hope to convey to children through your book?

The book gives visibility to children, the elderly, and okada (motorbike) drivers—groups that paid a high toll during the outbreak but have been largely overlooked in Ebola narratives.

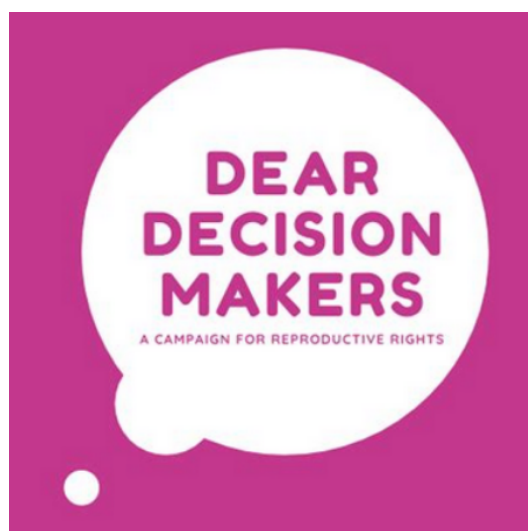
The story follows a 10-year-old child who survives Ebola and her emotional bond with her grandmother, a traditional healer, and the village tree. Through a poetic lens, the book explores the politics of silence and unknowing in today's world.

Ultimately, this tale seeks to inspire curiosity, foster learning, and enhance public health practices through the eyes and experiences of a child.

***The Secret of the Bush* can be purchased on [Amazon](#) and [Waterstones](#).**

Support to *Dear Decision Makers* Documentary

In 2020, *Dear Decision Makers* launched a storytelling campaign, providing a platform for women and others to share their anonymous experiences with Malta's anti-abortion laws. The campaign resulted in a publication featuring 48 first-hand accounts, highlighting the personal impact of the country's policies.



Now, *Dear Decision Makers* has partnered with two British producers to create a documentary that brings these stories to life. The film will feature excerpts in the women's own words and explore Malta's evolving conversation on reproductive rights, focusing on those advocating for change.

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sharing the fundraiser, or offering relevant skills to help finalize the documentary.

The *Dear Decision Makers* document can be accessed [here](#), and donations can be made [here](#).

Time Series Analysis Module 2024 at RIVM, the Netherlands

The Time Series Analysis (TSA) module 2024 took place from 9 to 13 December 2024 in Bilthoven, the Netherlands. Hosted by the Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (RIVM), the module welcomed 38 MediPIET, EPIET, EUPHEM, and PAE fellows, alongside 7 external participants and ToTs.

This TSA module featured a combination of interactive lectures, practical group work and discussions, with an extensive part dedicated to hands-on exercises using the statistical software R.

The module provided participants with experience in time-series analysis techniques, applied to public health surveillance and research projects, and included an exercise on outbreak detection. Key topics included trend identification, seasonality, forecasting and multilevel modelling. Participants developed skills in data preparation, addressing missing data, and performing regression models. The last two days of the module, MediPIET fellows and external participants followed a 2-day programme with a state-of-the-art and engaging lecture on GIS mapping from a senior epidemiologist working at the KIT Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam including a practical exercise on lymphatic filariasis in Ethiopia using QGIS. Dedicated facilitators with background in statistics and intervention epidemiology (from ECDC, RIVM, RKI, Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp and Direção-Geral da Saúde) guided participants through several topics. The inclusion of individual work sessions using participants' own datasets ensured that the training was practical and relevant.

On Tuesday, participants visited the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI). Primary tasks of KNMI are weather forecasting and monitoring of weather, climate, air quality and seismic activity. At KNMI participants learned more about several aspects of time series analysis, as well as the interdisciplinary approach and how to incorporate weather data, including an example on a modelling study done for the fire brigade predicting which geographical areas were prone to wildfires based on weather characteristics. We toured the weather station of the KNMI and were introduced to all the measuring instruments and learned how they changed over

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The TSA module provided an inviting atmosphere for participants to share their own experiences, discover how they could use their data in different ways and discuss the challenges in applying time-series analysis to their specific public health contexts. The social programme was very much appreciated and included an EAN gathering in an Irish pub where fellows and alumni could share their stories. This is the last time RIVM hosts a module at their campus in Bilthoven as the institute will move in 2025 to a brand-new sustainable building including offices and laboratories that was built in a clear and transparent glass cube design at Utrecht Science Park.

Barbara Schimmer, Tanja Charles and Pawel Stefanoff.



Be part of the community : ways to stay involved and connected!

Do what you love to do!

You'd like to get active on a project for our community? An experience you'd like to share or a topic you'd like to educate on? Please reach out to us at eanboard@gmail.com if you'd like to discuss your idea and want our support. We are available to help you bringing your ideas come to life.

Support us with mini-assignments

Our community lives from all of us and the capacities of the board alone are limited. Every now and then, we may reach out to ask for your help on specific tasks or activities to get the best out of it for all of us.

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Many benefits are lined up for active members of the network (GOARN requests of assistance, bulletins, discounts on mini-modules, access to specific resources on our website...).

Membership runs from Nov. 1 until Oct 31 of the following year - but you can activate your membership at anytime! **The annual membership fee is now €30 / £28. There is a 10-year membership available at €250 / £230.**

Fellows in their first and second year of training are exempt from paying membership fees. We have added a new payment option for credit cards to make membership renewal a bit easier. To use this option, please go to our website and follow the instructions there.

The details for how to transfer fees by online banking are also on the [EAN webpage](#); if you require any further information on membership payment, we kindly ask you to contact the EAN board (eanboard@gmail.com), putting "membership payment" in the subject line.

Please indicate your name and membership year as reference in the bank transfer and also send an email to eanboard@gmail.com with a copy of the receipt/invoice to inform us about your payment (sometimes names are not correctly transmitted with the transfer). Thank you for your support!

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