Scientific Workshop Report | Urban Climate-Health in LMIC Cities

1. Workshop Information

Full Title

Urban Climate-Health Research in LMIC Cities: Evidence Gaps and Interdisciplinary Pathways

Place and Date

University of Freiburg (MSc Global Urban Health Seminar Room), 15–16 October 2026

Number of Participants

On site: 29 (Day 1), 23 (Day 2); 30 different participants across both days

Online (if applicable): n/a

2. Workshop Summary

Background and Context

Cities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face growing climate-related health risks, such as extreme heat, flooding and air pollution. These risks fall hardest on people living in informal settlements, workers in precarious jobs, and places with weak health surveillance. Yet, the evidence base is uneven. Few studies capture how hazards combine and compound, and research is often split by discipline and concentrated in the Global North, so local and LMIC-based knowledge remains under-used. The workshop was organised and hosted by the MSc Global Urban Health (Faculty of Medicine), under Freiburg University's Centre for Planetary Health.

Objectives

1. Identify key scientific and methodological **gaps** in urban climate-health research, particularly in LMIC settings

2. Advance **interdisciplinary** approaches for analysing compound climate hazards, labour exposures, and intersecting social vulnerabilities

3. Articulate shared research and **policy priorities** to protect climate-exposed urban populations

4. Establish foundations for at least one follow-on interdisciplinary **collaboration** within the GLOHRA network

Methods

Formal Presentations (Keynotes) by: Jennyfer Wolf (climate-resilient health systems; WHO evidence work) and Vitor Pessoa Colombo (Swiss TPH; urban spatial inequality and health in Côte d'Ivoire) framed the two days. **Participatory Methods:** Expert inputs anchored three working groups: risks and vulnerabilities (Anh Vu, NatCen, UK), heat-health action plans (Andreas Matzarakis, Dennis Fila, Freiburg) and implementation in LMIC contexts (Oleg Lozan, NSPH Moldova; Nicole Weydmann, Furtwangen University). **Priority Setting:** All participants scored the groups' research questions by dot-voting on feasibility, interdisciplinarity, LMIC relevance and innovation; on Day 2, re-formed groups developed the two top-ranked questions into concept notes along GLOHRA's proposal criteria. Participants covered epidemiology, urban climatology, geography, medicine, nutrition, anthropology, health policy and municipal practice (ICLEI), with roots or fieldwork in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Findings

Discussion focused less on missing data than on the knowledge–action gaps: knowledge of heat and flood risks often exists, frequently held by communities, but does not reach local decisions. Groups asked “who is missing?”, separating absent evidence from evidence that exists but is not recognised, and named power relations as a central issue. Top-ranked questions addressed just and equitable knowledge-to-action pathways, learning from community knowledge, and how heat-health action plans (HHAPs) can become more adaptable, effective and just in LMICs. The tension between quantitative exposure science and qualitative, community-centred research was seen as a core interdisciplinary opportunity. Day 2 produced two project ideas: participatory research on community climate risk-coping knowledge in Brazil and/or Indonesia, and an 18-month study adapting HHAP guidance to LMIC cities (evidence mapping, Delphi consensus, global stakeholder consultation).

In the workshop evaluation (n=16), all respondents reported making new, useful connections and said they could imagine a future collaboration with someone they met.

Outlook

Participants agreed to develop the concepts into a possible joint application to the 2027 GLOHRA call. Organisers and speakers will co-author a short open-access publication of the discussions and prioritised research questions, available to researchers beyond the workshop. Interested GLOHRA members can contact Gabriela Pen Nasser (gabriela.nasser@mail.medizin.uni-freiburg.de) for further information.

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“This was a wonderful and engaging workshop with practical implications to prepare for a joint grant-funded project.” – Participant

“Thank you for connecting people, ideas and values.” – Participant

“I enjoyed the professional workshop, which was well organised in terms of both content and methodology. The atmosphere was excellent, and I learnt a lot.” – Participant

3. Additional Resources (optional)

- Photos: See below.
- Open-access summary of discussions and research questions (forthcoming)



Keynote Day 1 – Jennyfer Wolf

Expert Inputs – Day 1











Group Discussions



Group Presentation with feedback



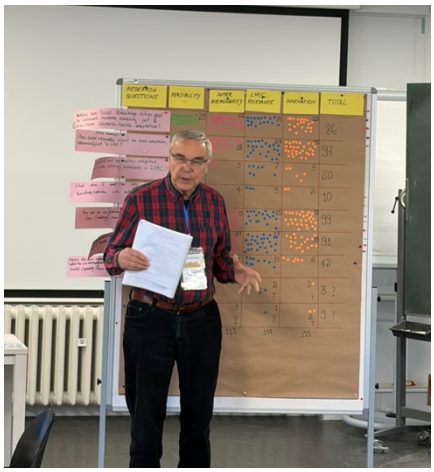
Dot-voting on top research questions



Workshop participants, 16 October 2026



Keynote Day 2 – Vitor Pessoa Colombo





Revisit Research questions to prepare Concept Notes



Group Discussion

4. Organizers and Partners

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Co-organizers:
Dr. Sonia Diaz-Monsalve (University of Freiburg); Dr. John Nyirenda (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg / University of Livingstonia, Malawi); Dr. Anh Ngoc Vu (National Centre for Social Research – NatCen, UK).

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We are grateful for the excellent opportunity to bring people from different disciplines, institutions and regions together.

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