



Africa at the intersection of Climate, Migration & Health challenges

International Conference GAPSYM17

Thursday-Friday 28-29 November 2024 at The Krook in Ghent, Belgium

1. Call for papers

The symposiums organised by the [Africa Platform of Ghent University Association](#) (GAPSYM) have been trendsetting in the Belgian academic landscape over the last 16 years, in the sense that they provide a unique interdisciplinary forum to showcase academic research taking place in collaboration with African-based partners.

This 17th multidisciplinary conference of the AUGent Africa Platform will be co-organised by Ghent University's International Thematic Network [CliMigHealth](#), which focuses on the nexus between climate change, migration and health(care), the United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies ([UNU-CRIS](#)) and the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees ([CESSMIR](#)).

The conference hopes to showcase how scientists, policymakers, artists, writers, opinion makers and educators reflect on present-day developments related to relevant Climate-Migration-Health topics in Africa. The conference will be a platform to engage explicitly on this topic, also beyond academic research, including the organisation of *writeshops*, round tables and seminars related to advancements in terms of education and outreach.

Although not exclusively, we invite contributions elaborating on themes that relate to the entire climate-migration-health nexus, as well as subthemes that focus on one of these dimensions, with emphasis on Africa.

Climate-focused stream

Refers to detecting and understanding climate change causes and consequences, including (anticipated) impacts on migration and health. Studies selected for this theme may help to understand how abovementioned impacts interact with each other, including its mediating factors. This can provide evidence to fostering mitigation and adaptation, as well as limiting loss and damage of climate change.

Possible topics.

- Fundamental studies on climate change, causes and consequences;
- Stakeholder mapping of climate change actors and communication tools for climate science to policy transformation, including a focus on infodemics;
- Understanding disaster risk reduction, response, recovery, and preparedness, for instance (but not exclusively) related to migrants and mainstream populations and communities;
- Evaluating the impact of loss and damage due to climate change and human action/inaction.

Migration-focused stream

Includes the roles of climate change and health-seeking behaviour as either independent or reinforcing drivers for migration and (im)mobility, as well as the impacts of migration on health care services and the environment. Studies in this stream add to the ongoing debate regarding the impact of climate change on global migration patterns, examining how climate change influences migration beyond the well-studied agricultural income channel, as well as the impact on health and healthcare access among (climate) migrants and their host communities.

Possible topics.

- Policy framing in the context of - climate-influenced - migration and mobility;
- Analysing the (cumulative) impacts of climate change and migration on health and their relationship with demographics, sociocultural, and socio-political contexts;
- Understanding voluntary and involuntary immobility, also in the context of climate shifts and the role of demographics.

Health-focused stream

Refers to healthcare interventions and responses to climate change and migration, as well as how to mitigate and adapt healthcare, and build more resilient health systems. Finally, contributions that help align health policy research to implementation on the ground are encouraged.

Possible topics.

- Evaluating the (physical and mental) health impacts related to climate change and migration;
- Preparing the health care sector (primary care, secondary care and public health) to respond to - migration and climate change-related - health challenges;
- Evaluating the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of health facilities and services;
- Developing solutions for an intersectoral approach to connect the health sector with other (health-determining) sectors.

Governance stream

Refers to the macro-level factors such as human rights, economic actors, and the geopolitical agenda, in addition to micro-level governance. Studies in this stream can contribute by identifying the governing factors that impact climate change, migration and health and investigate how research can benefit global diplomacy efforts. Contributions focusing on local governance structures, and their contribution to preexisting socio-economic and ecological vulnerabilities – potentially aggravated by the biophysical impacts of climate change, or – on the other hand – responsible for reducing social frictions in times of climate crisis, are welcome as well.

Possible topics.

- Translating global/regional/sub-regional governance into community interventions using the climate, migration, and health(care) perspective;
- Understanding and disentangling governance structures for creating climate-resilient systems and societies;
- Understanding local institutions, governance arrangements and power structures and their link with climate change;
- Analysing community-based initiatives, exploring how they can be upscaled and what can be learnt from vernacular practices;
- Supporting research to have an impact on policy and on legal decisions.

Stream on methodological complexities

Refers to research at the core of the climate-migration-health nexus and methodologies that can transcend conventional boundaries. Work which aims at advancing current research at the core of the nexus is essential, requiring novel and innovative methodological approaches such as systems thinking or complexity science. Additionally, transdisciplinary collaborations are deemed indispensable.

Possible topics.

- Embracing and understanding the complexity of responding to climate change through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration;
- Developing novel and innovative methodologies for policy reform in climate change, migration and health sectors and sub-sectors;
- Tackling the lag from when research is published to when it can have impact;
- Understanding 'climate ethics' – is our approach to climate science working?
- Exploring diverse modelling approaches for modelling the dynamics of the system and forecasting across the nexus components, including climate-related migration, health, and healthcare, extending beyond static relationships. This may involve agent-based, system dynamics, statistical extrapolation, and machine learning models, among others.

2. Scientific committee GAPSYM17

Charlotte Scheerens (organiser, UGent/UNU-CRIS), Annelies Verdoolaege (organiser, GAP UGent), Ilse Ruysen (UGent/UNU-CRIS), Ilse Derluyn (UGent), Floor Verhaeghe (UGent), Karen Büscher (GAP UGent), Amaury Frankl (GAP UGent), Nidhi Nagabhatla (UNU-CRIS), Geert Haghebaert (UNI-CRIS), Els Bekaert (UGent/UNU-CRIS), Carl Lachat (UGent), Nicolás Caso Castellón (UGent), Tomas Van Acker (UGent), Sorana Toma (UGent), Peter Delobelle (VUB/University of Cape Town), Hans Keune (UA), Bob Mash (Stellenbosch University), Guy Midgley (Stellenbosch University), and Christian Lueme Lokotola (Stellenbosch University).

3. Abstract submission

Abstracts should not exceed 500 words and must be written in English or French. Submissions should be sent by e-mail and before June 10th, 2024, to Annelies.Verdoolaege@UGent.be mentioning "GAPSYM17 – abstract title". In addition to submissions for full papers, we also welcome submissions for round tables, panels, writeshops or workshops, with testimonies on specific cases or with a focus on the sharing of expertise.

The full programme of the symposium will be made available in August 2024 to allow participants to make travel arrangements.