



HEALTH IN ALL URBAN POLICIES

Lessons from Latin American Cities



Policies and interventions across sectors can significantly impact the health of people living in cities. The Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach provides a framework for understanding how urban environments affect health, and how urban policies that affect these environments can be leveraged to build healthy, inclusive cities.

The Salud Urbana en América Latina (SALURBAL, or “Urban Health in Latin America”) Project works to build understanding about the social and environmental determinants of health in Latin American cities, and about the health impacts of urban policies and interventions across sectors.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) promotes and supports local and national-level actors across the Americas seeking to implement a HiAP approach to policymaking. The Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals highlights the importance of intersectoral action and community engagement for addressing the social determinants of health.

Key points

- The HiAP approach recognizes that health is determined by much more than healthcare and emphasizes the need for integrated strategies that address the social and environmental determinants of health.
- In order to effectively promote health, cities must address challenges across diverse sectors, including urban planning, transportation, housing, food environments, education, energy, engineering, and the economy. [1]
- In addition to promoting health, a HiAP approach can have environmental and social co-benefits and promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within a planetary health framework. [2]
- Research and technical experience across sectors demonstrate that a HiAP approach can be used to enact policy change within the many areas that influence health and health equity.
- Additional evidence regarding the health impact of policies and interventions from multiple sectors is needed to support an effective HiAP approach.

Health in All Policies provides a useful framework for promoting health and environmental sustainability in cities.

What is Health in All Policies?

Health in All Policies is a public policy approach that cuts across sectors (e.g., education, work and employment, environment, urban planning, parks and recreation) to systematically consider the health implications of all policy decisions in order to improve population health and health equity. [3] HiAP involves identifying opportunities for policy development across sectors with potential implications for health and health equity, assessing the potential impacts of existing policies, and then advocating and negotiating for changes. [4]



Why is HiAP Important for Urban Health?



Health beyond healthcare

A HiAP approach recognizes that healthcare provision and coverage are only two of many aspects of urban environments that influence physical and mental health. [5] While Ministries of Health are often considered the primary actor responsible for health, policy actions across sectors have a large impact on the health of people, and all sectors should consider health throughout their policymaking processes. Characteristics of the social environment and the physical environment are all important determinants of health in cities. Large differences in these characteristics exist in Latin America, both between and within cities, and these differences often result in significant health inequities. [4, 6] Addressing the root causes of these inequities requires action from multiple sectors. [6, 7]

Elements of the social and physical environment

socio-economic status

employment

education

social cohesion

housing conditions

security

transportation accessibility

greenspaces

parks

air pollution

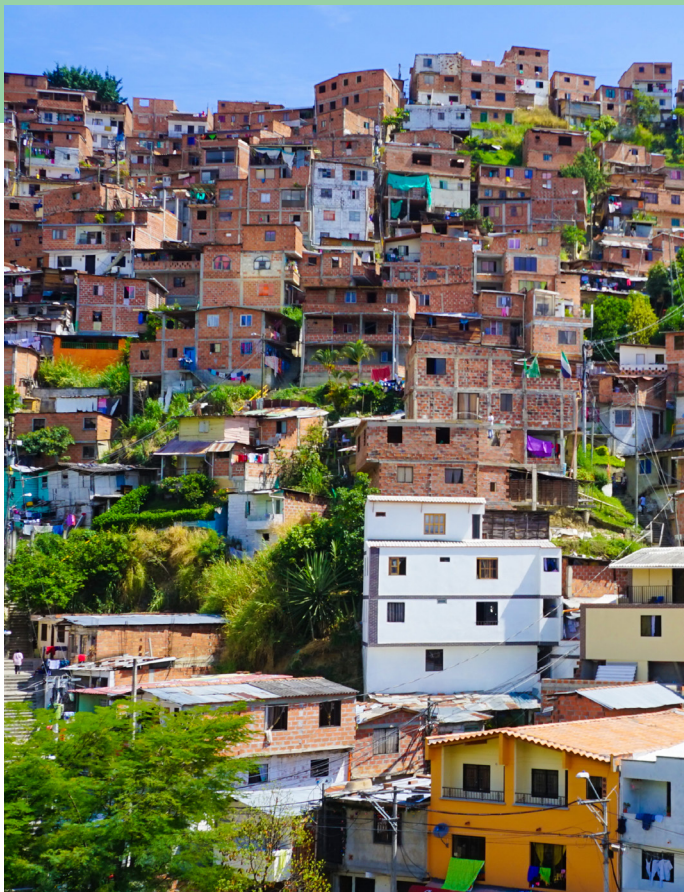
Why is HiAP important for Urban Health?

Need for improved understanding of the impact of urban policies on health

Designing and implementing coordinated, effective policies across the whole of government to promote health and reduce health inequities requires an understanding of the impacts that policies beyond the health sector have on health. Historically, limited funding and resources have been dedicated to investigating the social determinants of health and the impact of policies on health and health inequities. [8]



A 'systems thinking' approach that integrates the knowledge and perspectives of policymakers, researchers and community members can support further understanding and help close important knowledge gaps to guide future policies and interventions. [6]



Co-benefits for the environment and sustainability



Chronic illness, health inequities, and healthcare costs are interrelated with climate change and environmental and planetary health. [9]

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting urban health require intersectoral collaboration and a focus on equity. [10] An effective HiAP approach guides integrated structural and policy changes, to support human health and development while promoting environmental health and sustainability, maximizing co-benefits and mitigating unintended negative consequences. [5] Examples of this approach promoting co-benefits can be found in Table 2.

Key Concepts



Health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. [11]



Urban Health is the health and well-being of people living in cities and urban areas, as influenced by multiple characteristics of the urban social and built environment, and by policies related to land use and planning, transport, housing, employment and income, education, energy, water and sanitation, and other sectors. [6]



Social Determinants of Health are the daily conditions in which people grow, live, and work, and the social and economic structures, systems, policies and processes that affect people's health throughout their lives. [5]



Determinants of Urban Health are the characteristics of the social and physical environments and the policies that shape health in a city or urban area.



The **Social Environment** is composed of characteristics of the social structures and communities in which people live, including income, employment, education, safety, social cohesion, social services and institutional and workplace organization, as well as discrimination, segregation, and inequalities. [12, 13]



The **Physical Environment** refers to characteristics of the built environment in which people live and to physical factors they may be exposed to. It encompasses land use and population density, the design of buildings and streets, transportation systems, parks and green spaces, and exposures to heat, air pollution, and other factors. [12]

Key Concepts

Health care refers to the allocation, financing, quality and delivery or receipt of health services. [14]



Health equity exists when everyone has a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential, and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential. [15] Achieving health equity requires eliminating obstacles to health by addressing the social determinants of health. [16]



Health inequities occur when unfair and unjust differences in health exist and create additional disadvantages for already disadvantaged groups. [14]



Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. [17]



The 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, outlined in 2015 by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and adopted by all United Nations Member States, seek to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, promote economic growth, and develop sustainable cities for all while addressing climate change and environmental preservation. The SDGs are interconnected and indivisible and mark an important shift towards intersectoral action that can achieve fairer and more sustainable economic, environmental, and social development. The HiAP approach in urban settings enables progress towards the SDGs, and in particular SDG 3 and SDG 11. [18]



Planetary health is the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which this civilization depends. A planetary health framework seeks to improve understanding of the connections between natural systems and health and promote the highest available standard of health, wellbeing, and equity worldwide. [19]



Health in All Urban Policies: How does it work?

The PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action on Urban Health 2011-2021 recognizes that an intersectoral approach is necessary for addressing the social determinants of health unique to urban areas, building collaborative action in “reducing poverty and gender inequality, promoting sustainable development, advancing the protection of migrants and indigenous populations, and improving quality of life.” [7]

As many cities have already recognized, a HiAP approach to urban planning, policymaking and governance requires that policymakers from different sectors consider the health implications of their decisions and seek synergies between their actions that directly promote health and mitigate negative health impacts.

There are many ways in which urban governments are implementing and adapting the HiAP to different contexts. Table 1 presents key elements that can guide HiAP implementation in a city and provides examples of what these look like in practice.



How is PAHO supporting HiAP implementation in the Americas?

PAHO



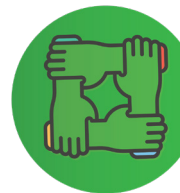
Pan American
Health
Organization



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
Americas

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) provides technical support to local governments, policymakers and other stakeholders who seek to implement a HiAP approach. The recently-adopted PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion within the Context of the SDGs 2019-2030 aims to address the social determinants of health through social, political, and technical actions, underlining crucial action at the local level. [18] The Regional Plan of Action on Health in All Policies [4], adopted in 2014, supports the implementation of specific strategies for intersectoral collaboration by national and local governments throughout the region and bolsters the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on Urban Health of 2011, which highlights the importance of intersectoral and participatory approaches. [20]

Table 1. Elements of a Health in All Policies approach for local governments



Key elements [1]	What does this look like?
<p>Clear goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work with representatives of multiple sectors to outline clear goals for achieving health, equity and sustainability.
<p>Political commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Include HiAP in local development plan. •Pass a local HiAP ordinance. [21] •Identify priority policy changes and programs for implementation on multiple time scales. •Develop and distribute a local HiAP action plan.
<p>Formal structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish a HiAP task force to provide technical assistance and serve as conveners/facilitators, lead research and document drafting, and coordinate stakeholder engagement. [9] •Establish a HiAP team with representatives of (at minimum) the Mayor's office, health and environment departments, and explicit time and resource commitment from each office.
<p>Participation of other sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review existing policies, programs, and other interventions with health relevance. •Identify barriers to collaboration between sectors. •Contact representatives from other sectors or departments. •Coordinate HiAP training sessions; request materials and technical support from PAHO. •Establish regular meetings of intersectoral working group. •Identify expectations for each sector or department's participation.
<p>Separate budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify required funding for specific elements of the HiAP action plan. •Identify concrete contributions (financial, time, and other resources) from participating departments/sectors. •Request support from local businesses and other organizations. [22]
<p>Engage other stakeholders and the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Organize workshops with community members and other stakeholders to draft HiAP ordinance and other planning documents. [21] •Establish formal check-ins and community engagement throughout HiAP action plan implementation process.
<p>Evidence of results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify existing records and health-relevant data collection processes. •Establish partnerships with local research institutions to support monitoring of health impacts.

Understanding Health in All Policies in Practice: The SALURBAL Approach



Evidence of the impact of urban policies in multiple sectors on health and on health equity is critical to a HiAP approach but this knowledge is lacking for many contexts. [14,5] Salud Urbana en América Latina (SALURBAL), or Urban Health in Latin America, is a multi-country project that studies how urban environments and urban policies affect health throughout Latin America.

The Latin American context is especially relevant to generating an evidence base for HiAP because of its rapid urban growth, the diversity of urban environments and the often innovative policies developed throughout the region. The SALURBAL project is generating evidence relevant to HiAP by compiling, harmonizing and analyzing existing data on health and the social and physical environment in cities. The project is also evaluating the potential health and environmental impacts of urban policies and interventions.

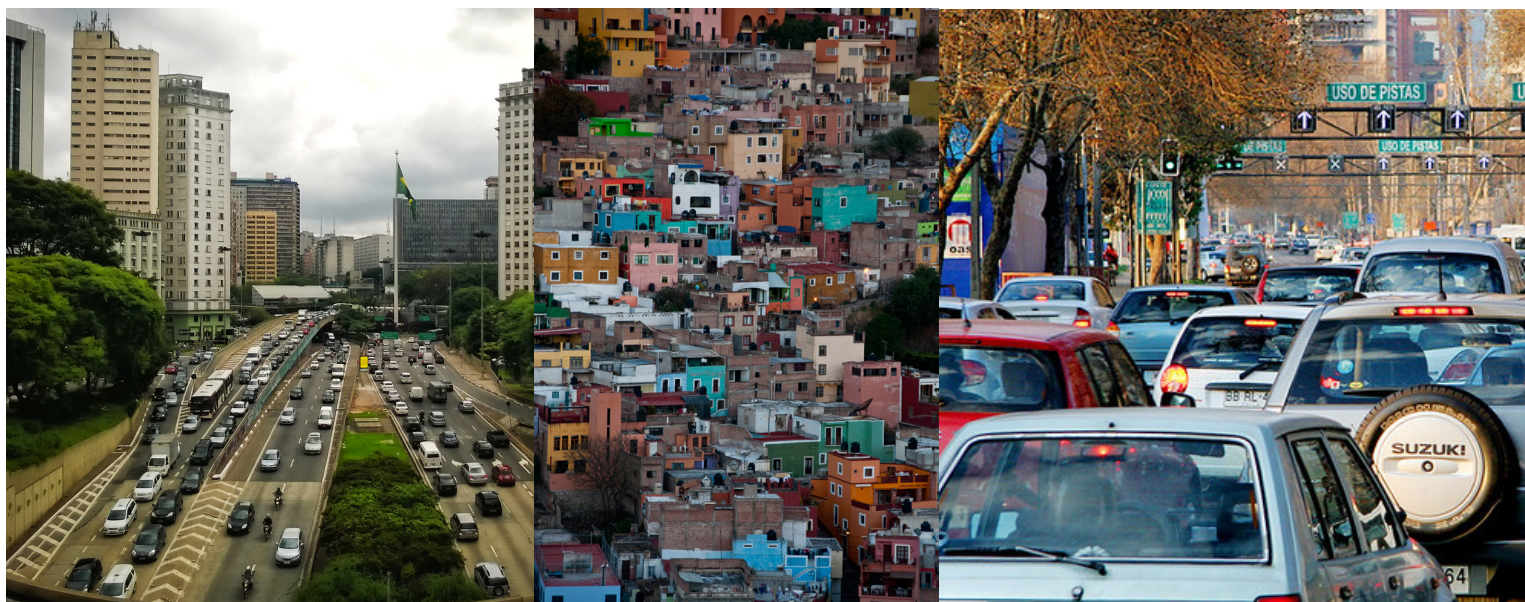





Table 2. HiAP in Practice: The SALURBAL Approach to Evaluating Health and Environmental Impacts

TRANSPORTATION

	Potential Health-Related Impacts	Potential Environment-Related Impacts
 <p>TransMiCable <i>Bogotá, Colombia</i> Cable car system connecting the low-income, peripheral neighborhood of Ciudad Bolívar to a main station in Bogotá, and significantly reducing travel/commute time for residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑social cohesion, and well-being ↓homicide and violent injury rates ↓risks for respiratory diseases and associated mortality ↑sense of physical security ↑opportunities for physical activity ↑accessibility/mobility/safe travel behavior 	
 <p>Visión Cero <i>Mexico City, Mexico</i> Stricter speed limit restrictions and enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓automobile crash risks/rates and related mortality ↑awareness of safe driving practices ●impacts on respiratory health ●support for environments that are friendlier to active transport modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓energy demand and consumption through biking ↓greenhouse gas emissions ↓air pollution (PM2.5 and eBC)
 <p>Ecobici <i>Mexico City, Mexico</i> Large-scale bikeshare program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑physical activity ↑safe travel behaviors ↓injury and associated mortality 	

HOUSING

 <p>Vila Viva <i>Belo Horizonte, Brazil</i> Comprehensive and community participatory housing and neighborhood improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓housing-related mortality and morbidity ↓risk factors for asthma ↓risk factors for violence and injuries ↑awareness and prevention of dengue and other vector borne diseases ↑security, life satisfaction and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑waste management and ↓associated greenhouse gas emissions ↓contamination of soil, water and air ↑greenspaces and parks – reduced runoff, erosion, and heat island effect, carbon capture
 <p>Programa de Regeneración de Conjuntos Habitacionales <i>Santiago and Viña del Mar, Chile</i> Integral and participatory housing and neighborhood regeneration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓risk factors for respiratory conditions ↑mental health ↑security and social cohesion 	

FOOD POLICY

 <p>Ley de Promoción de la Alimentación Saludable para Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes <i>Lima, Peru</i> Food warning labels for high sodium, sugar and saturated fats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑nutritional knowledge and decisions/practices ↓consumption of unhealthy products ↓obesity and related NCDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑consumption of natural, unprocessed foods and reduced food packaging
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Table 3. Enabling Conditions and Recommended Actions

Some social and political conditions facilitate the implementation of a HiAP approach. [23] These conditions relate - amongst other things - to political support, conflicts of interest and industry lobbies, community participation and empowerment, institutional structures, and financial and technical capacity. Table 3 identifies actions that policymakers can take to establish these enabling conditions in their local context.

Type	Enabling Conditions	Recommended Actions for Policymakers	HiAP in Action in the Americas
Political Support	Secure continuity in public and private support over time.	<p>Establish formal systems for monitoring and surveillance of health impacts.</p> <p>When possible, emphasize a combined health and economic argument when advocating for action across multiple sectors.</p>	<p>The Healthy Cities initiative in Medellín developed a set of indicators and a monitoring system in 2015. The aim was to show positive impacts of addressing the social determinants on health outcomes and other outcomes (e.g. socioeconomic status) over the project's implementation period. [22]</p> <p>Paipa, Colombia's "Human Social Network" model is an intersectoral initiative carried out by the municipal administration to integrate health within all policies. The model aligns with the Department of Boyacá's guidance on Healthy Cities, Environments, and Rural Areas. [23]</p>
	Address conflicts of interest and pressure from industry lobbies and other interest groups.	<p>Establish and enforce public transparency mechanisms.</p> <p>Seek regional government partnerships to promote accountability and collective bargaining power.</p> <p>Solicit technical and financial support from international organizations, financing agencies and other networks.</p>	<p>The Green and Healthy Environments Program in Sao Paulo (PAVS) partners with diverse regional actors, including PAHO/WHO. The Board of Directors for PAVS comprises a team of technical experts from government, non-governmental organizations, academia, and international organizations that aim to mitigate conflicts of interest and provide high-level support to local level actors. [24]</p>
Community	Build robust community ownership and empowerment.	Formally integrate community and civil society participation in planning and implementation of HiAP-relevant interventions.	The Social Violence and Crime Prevention Law in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, provides an example of a state law that was successfully implemented with social dialogue and community input. Through the integration of regional councils, neighborhood associations, and civil society organizations, the State developed locally relevant municipal implementation plans. [25]
Intersectoral Structures	Establish a collaborative intersectoral organizational culture.	Establish mechanisms (such as inter-ministerial commissions, working groups, round tables) to include representatives of multiple sectors in urban policymaking, planning and interventions.	The Life in Transit program, implemented initially across five Brazilian cities and recently scaled up across 32 cities, founded the Intersectoral Commission for Control and Prevention of Traffic Accidents in 2004. The initiative brings together the Ministries of Health, Cities, Justice, Transportation, and Education alongside local health workers, the municipal police, universities, and civil society organizations onto a single board for the development of intersectoral actions and projects. [26]
Technical Capacity	Fortify technical capacity and understanding across sectors, with a focus on broader health determinants.	Implement regular HiAP training and capacity-building activities involving civil servants from multiple sectors.	In 2015, PAHO/WHO collaborated to host the first HiAP training in Paramaribo, Suriname. Sixty-five participants from various ministries, non-governmental organizations, and policy advisors attended from across the Caribbean sub-region. These trainings continued through commitment from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [27]

Table 4. Recommendations for the Research Community

The research community supports HiAP implementation in cities in the Americas by garnering and communicating evidence. Interdisciplinary research teams can generate useful data and tools, produce and disseminate evidence, conduct evaluations, and share experiences that facilitate the adoption of HiAP by policymakers.

Type	Policymakers Needs	How the Research Community Can Contribute	The SALURBAL Contribution
Evidence supporting HiAP	Evidence to support and advocate for HiAP approach.	Develop and support interdisciplinary research teams that generate locally-relevant evidence on the social and environmental determinants of health in various contexts.	<p>SALURBAL convenes a group of interdisciplinary researchers and experts on urban health. Through the compilation and analysis of existing data as well as policy evaluations the project is building an evidence base to promote understanding of the health impacts and potential co-benefits of urban policies.</p> <p>SALURBAL's policy engagement events allow project researchers to dialogue with local authorities and other stakeholders to improve the relevance and application of project results.</p>
Program Evaluation	Continuous evaluation of policies and interventions to maximize benefits and minimize harms.	<p>Work with governments to establish ongoing evaluations of the health and environmental impacts of urban policies and interventions.</p> <p>Develop Health Impact Assessments and cost-benefit analyses when possible, quantifying the benefits associated with a HiAP approach - and the negative impacts of inaction.</p>	SALURBAL's policy evaluations respond to a demand for better understanding of the health impacts of urban policies and are led by interdisciplinary research teams who engage regularly with local authorities and other public actors.
Knowledge Exchange	Technical capacity to effectively incorporate a HiAP approach at all levels and across all sectors.	<p>Provide evidence in simple, accessible formats to counter misrepresentations and to provide best practices for the institutionalization of health within laws and budgets across multiple sectors.</p> <p>Produce dedicated and locally tailored communications and training materials to present relevant and timely research results to audiences within different sectors and stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>SALURBAL develops policy briefs, data briefs, blog posts, and other materials to disseminate project results beyond the academic community.</p> <p>SALURBAL's policy evaluation teams engage with local policymakers throughout the policy implementation and evaluation process, and develop locally tailored communication materials to inform and engage local communities, public partners and other stakeholders.</p>
Network Building	Bridges between policymakers at all levels and community actors to safeguard the representation of diverse populations' needs.	<p>Support institutional and actor-mapping processes to connect policymakers with relevant and useful support networks and mechanisms.</p> <p>Organize dialogue with community and other urban actors to identify information needs and priorities for surveillance.</p> <p>Foster ongoing partnerships to build trust and respect with local communities.</p>	<p>The LAC-Urban Health Network for Latin America and the Caribbean connects diverse actors working on or interested in urban health across the region.</p> <p>SALURBAL's policy working group maintains an updated list of key actors and partners, informed by project researchers across the seven SALURBAL countries, to support targeted project communication, dissemination and engagement activities.</p> <p>SALURBAL's Group Model Building workshops, Knowledge to Policy Fora, and other stakeholder engagement events support network building and ongoing exchange of ideas, perspectives and priorities with actors from multiple sectors.</p> <p>The SALURBAL team uses citizen science to facilitate advocacy-building among community members, policymakers, and researchers.</p>

Additional Resources and References

- “An introduction to Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments” <http://www.phi.org/resources/?resource=hiapgguide>
- “Framework for Country Action” <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/frameworkforcountryaction/en/>
- WHO “Health in All Policies Training Manual” <https://bit.ly/2pntGxt>
- PAHO Health Promotion Virtual Course
- “Road Map for the Plan of Action on Health in All Policies” <https://bit.ly/2nQ3vPx>

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PAHO

The **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)** works with countries throughout the Americas to improve and protect people’s health. With the mission of leading strategic collaborative efforts among Member States and other partners, PAHO aims to promote equity in health, to combat disease, and to improve the quality of, and lengthen, the lives of all peoples of the Americas.



LAC-URBAN HEALTH

Urban Health Network For Latin America and the Caribbean



The **Urban Health Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC-Urban Health)** seeks to promote regional and multisectoral collaboration in order to generate evidence on the drivers of urban health and health equity and translate this evidence into policies to improve health across cities in Latin America and the Caribbean.



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Salud Urbana en América Latina (SALURBAL), Urban Health in Latin America, is a five-year project that studies how urban environments and urban policies impact the health of city residents throughout Latin America. SALURBAL’s findings inform policies and interventions to create healthier, more equitable, and more sustainable cities worldwide. SALURBAL is funded by the Wellcome Trust.

Learn more about LAC-Urban Health and SALURBAL

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