

CONCEPT NOTE

4TH ARIN ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE On Climate and Health



06-08
NOV
2024



Virtual Event



THEME

**BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE GAPS: PROMOTING
TRANS-DISCIPLINARITY FOR CLIMATE AND
HEALTH RESILIENCE**

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN)'s annual international conference brings together an international community of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to reflect on the implications of the global challenges on the African continent and options for responding to these challenges inclusively and sustainably. This year, ARIN will hold its 4th International Conference whose theme will be Bridging Knowledge Gaps: Promoting Transdisciplinarity for Climate and Health Resilience. The conference will be held virtually from 6th to 8th November 2024, organized by the Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN).

ARIN is a consortium of over 200 researchers and policymakers with national focal points across 36 African countries. ARIN also draws from a database of over 3000 stakeholders from universities, think tanks, the private sector, and governments.



ARIN's mission is to promote research excellence and dialogue on best research and impact practices, by providing platforms for science-policy interface in Africa, building on evidence. ARIN recognizes that Africa is endowed with diverse researchers, innovation, and best policy practices that are not in the public domain yet are invaluable in the research and development agenda of the continent. ARIN therefore provides a peer review platform where best research and impact practices from different African contexts, are shared, profiled, and leveraged to inform transformative policy action. Among the areas that ARIN has pioneered path-breaking research are climate change, knowledge management, science technology, health and innovation. The network currently convenes research and policy platforms on climate action, drawing from the perspective of researchers on, adaptation, science and technology, and innovation status in Africa. Through the same approach, ARIN assesses opportunities for science-policy interface, through contextual projects on research commercialization, innovation, knowledge translation, and practice.

The Climate and Health conference emphasizes the need for stakeholders from diverse sectors and across the different government levels to work together to address the climate crisis that is greatly impacting health outcomes. It will provide a platform where groundbreaking research, policy, innovative ideas, and collaborative efforts converge to foster an understanding of how the actions of the various sectors contribute to climate change, which affects health outcomes, and the measures that need to be taken to safeguard global health.

The conference is structured around different sub-themes and allows scholars to present their work and engage with other experts that could ignite novel ideas and collaborations. The conference is a call to action for researchers, policymakers, CBOs, practitioners, funders, and all relevant actors in the climate and health space to shift from the silo working approach and explore potential ways of working together. Transdisciplinary approaches to climate and health foster holistic and innovative solutions by integrating knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines. This collaboration is crucial for addressing the complex and interconnected challenges posed by climate change and its impacts on health. By promoting transdisciplinary approaches, we can develop more effective and sustainable solutions to the intertwined challenges of climate change and health, ultimately leading to healthier and more resilient communities globally.



RATIONALE FOR THE CONFERENCE

Global developmental challenges have grown increasingly complex and multisectoral and cannot be effectively addressed by a single sector or institution. Given that the health impacts of climate change originate from diverse issues that interact with one another, a need exist to factor in aspects beyond the health sector. The interconnectedness of the components of the health sector highlights the complexities that must be unpacked if an all-inclusive health-climate adaptation is to be realized. However, climate change and health research is often compartmentalized across various disciplines, resulting in a fragmented landscape of specialized discussions. This compartmentalization hinders efforts to synthesize key findings aimed at identifying trends and gaps in the evidence.

Silo working can hinder progress in several ways:

Fragmented Understanding: When researchers and practitioners work in silos, they may have limited understanding of how climate change impacts health and vice versa. For example, climate scientists may focus on environmental impacts without considering health outcomes, while health professionals may overlook the role of climate in disease patterns.

Missed Opportunities for Synergy: Collaboration across disciplines can lead to innovative solutions that address both climate change mitigation/adaptation and health promotion simultaneously. Silo working misses out on the potential synergies that could arise from integrating expertise and perspectives from diverse fields.

Ineffective Policy and Interventions: Policies and interventions developed in isolation may be less effective or even counterproductive. For instance, a climate change adaptation strategy that doesn't consider health implications might inadvertently exacerbate health risks, such as heat-related illnesses or vector-borne diseases.

Limited Capacity Building: Working in silos can hinder capacity building efforts, as opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and skill development are missed. Building resilience to climate change impacts on health requires a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates knowledge from environmental sciences, public health, social sciences, and policy.

Consequently, to overcome silo working in climate change and health, it is essential to promote transdisciplinary approaches. By breaking down silos and fostering collaboration, we can better address the complex challenges at the intersection of climate change and health, ultimately enhancing resilience and promoting sustainable development. Promoting transdisciplinary climate change and health research in Africa is essential for addressing the continent's unique challenges, building local capacity, informing policy decisions, fostering innovation, and contributing to global efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change on public health.

The conference aims to encourage discussions, collaborations, and innovations across disciplines to advance understanding and action on the critical nexus of Climate Change and Health. It suggests a collaborative approach that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries to foster innovative solutions and enhance resilience in the face of climate-related health risks.



CONFERENCE OUTLOOK

4TH ANNUAL ARIN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Theme: Bridging Knowledge Gaps: Promoting Trans-disciplinarity for Climate and Health Resilience

Pre-Conference Events

CAPCHA Launch

Climate and Health Validation Workshop

Best Practices in C&H Policy Development

Conference

Sub-Theme 1 (Day 1)

Sub-Theme 2 (Day 2)

Sub-Theme 3 (Day 3)

- Main Plenary
- Side Events
- Research Papers

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

This conference will run as a virtual event. Delegates are required to register by clicking [this link](#) or scanning the QR code below.

Scan QR Code to Register



Conference Sub-themes

1. The Status of Climate Change & Health Research and Impact in Africa.
2. Opportunities for Enhancing Transdisciplinary C & H Research and Impact in Africa.
3. Strengthening Funding Opportunities for Transdisciplinary C & H Research and Impact in Africa.

PRE-CONFERENCE EVENTS

Event 1: Launch of CAPCHA: Consultative Platform on Climate and Health in Africa (CAPCHA) – 28th August 2024

The transformation needed to address the health impacts of climate change in Africa demands innovative approaches of mobilizing resources, working jointly, and applying knowledge. To efficiently address the diverse C & H challenges as well as the varied needs and interests of actors in the different sectors, research must be effectively interlinked with policymaking, planning, and action. The co-generation of data across disciplines is one approach that can foster such transformations. By providing timely and policy-relevant research, researchers can support evidence-based decision-making and effective implementation of climate and health policies.

The CAPCHA platform aims to bring together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from various disciplines and sectors working on the climate and health nexus. The platform will facilitate knowledge exchange, sharing of best practices, and collaboration on research and policy development. The platform will also be used to encourage regular communication channels such as meetings, conferences, and webinars to help foster dialogue and information sharing between different stakeholders. This will ensure that C & H stakeholders are up-to-date with the latest research, policy updates, and field experiences. Information on the connection between climate and health will equally be provided on the platform as most people view them separately.

Event 2: Climate and Health Validation Workshop: Enabling Transdisciplinary Research and Action in Health and Climate Change in Africa - 20th September 2024

Africa is subjected to multiple and complex human health challenges attributed to climate change. The increasing severity of climate change impacts on health-determining sectors (e.g. agriculture, food security, energy, disaster risks and broader social status) needs to be understood and tackled through multi-sectoral approaches. The climate and health policy discourse has particularly taken a paradigm shift- advocating for health to be at the centre of climate change decisions informative to integrated and multisectoral National health resilience plans and National Adaptation Plans. The needed multi-sectoral approaches require collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and implementation partners to address climate-related health issues. However, these collaborations remain nascent, particularly in Africa, where only a fraction of research funding; a meagre 0.5% of multilateral climate adaptation funds are allocated to the health sector, highlighting a stark inadequacy while climate and health stakeholders still work in silos (Turner et al., 2024). There is urgent need for TDR that informs integrated solutions.

The primary purpose of this event is to showcase some emerging examples of TDR research and action in Africa which can inform further research investments. The session will be inspired by the learnings from the Wellcome-funded consultations on Transdisciplinary Research and Action in Health and Climate Change in Africa. Authors drawn from different African contexts and have submitted abstracts submitted for the Conference will showcase their research ideas, rationale and impact opportunities.



Event 3: Best Practices in C & H Policy Development: 17th October

Advancing the Climate and Health agenda in Africa will depend on how well the linkages between research, policy, and society are strengthened in addition to tackling existing inequalities in research. C & H policy documents play a crucial role in guiding strategic action. They establish clear priorities and goals for addressing the intersection of climate change and health. They articulate the objectives of government agencies, international organizations, and other stakeholders in tackling climate-related health risks. Currently, however, African countries appear to have national climate change policy and national adaptation plan documents that only alludes to Climate and Health in barely a sentence/paragraph. Regional adaptation plans for different countries, therefore, have to be co-developed to facilitate policy interventions.

The aim of this webinar is to showcase example of African countries that have successfully integrated health considerations into their national plans and provide opportunities for cross-learning.

CONFERENCE SUB-THEMES

Day 1: The Status of Climate Change & Health Research and Impact in Africa

There is increasing awareness of the interconnectedness between climate change and health across the globe. However, Africa remains to be a continent extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which significantly affect public health. The region experiences extreme weather events, fluctuating temperatures, and varying precipitation patterns, all of which contribute to health challenges such as the spread of infectious diseases, food insecurity, water scarcity, and increased incidence of heat-related illnesses. Currently, there are ongoing efforts to enhance research and action to mitigate the health impacts of climate change. National and regional bodies are beginning to prioritize these issues in their agendas. Various countries have launched national climate and health action plans. For instance, South Africa and Kenya have developed frameworks addressing the health impacts of climate change. However, more still needs to be done.

This sub-theme will aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of climate change and health research in Africa, emphasizing opportunities for impactful interventions and collaboration to build resilient health systems in the region. It will inspire stakeholders to prioritize this critical intersection in their agendas and foster dialogue towards sustainable solutions.

Keynote Questions

? How crucial do you believe transdisciplinary research and action is, in addressing climate and health challenges? In your view, is there currently a strong presence of transdisciplinary approaches in this field, and what opportunities do you see for enhancing such research and collaboration?

Panel Questions

? In the context of Africa, what does transdisciplinary research entail when addressing the health impacts of climate change, and why is this approach crucial for tackling complex challenges on the continent? What key research areas within climate and health should be prioritized for a transdisciplinary approach?

? How can multisectoral determinants be effectively integrated into transdisciplinary climate and health research? Are there existing tools and frameworks that facilitate this integration?

- ? What strategies can enhance locally-led research and data collection to ensure meaningful co-creation with vulnerable communities? Can you provide examples where this approach has been successfully implemented?
- ? Given the existing sectoral silos in climate and health issues, what steps can be taken to strengthen transdisciplinary research and foster greater collaboration across sectors?

Format



Day 2: Opportunities for Enhancing Transdisciplinary Climate & Health Research and Impact in Africa

Enhancing transdisciplinary climate and health research and impact involves addressing unique regional challenges and leveraging diverse expertise to improve resilience and health outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of transdisciplinary research collaborations between environmental scientists, public health experts, policymakers, and community stakeholders among others. Integrated approaches can generate holistic solutions to complex climate-health challenges.

This sub-theme aims to stimulate dialogue and collaboration among diverse stakeholders interested in advancing transdisciplinary approaches to address the complex challenges of climate change and health in Africa. It emphasizes the importance of integrated research, inclusive partnerships, and practical strategies for achieving meaningful impact.

Keynote Questions

- ? How can we effectively leverage existing networks at the climate-health intersection to enhance collaboration between climate and health organizations and bridge the gap between research and actionable outcomes?

Panel Questions

- ? What innovative strategies can strengthen partnerships between academia, government agencies, NGOs, and local communities to effectively address climate and health challenges in Africa?
- ? What are the most effective pathways for translating research findings into actionable policies and interventions that enhance climate and health resilience across Africa?
- ? How can capacity-building initiatives be designed to develop transdisciplinary research skills among African researchers and practitioners, fostering collaboration across sectors?
- ? In what ways can collaborative research platforms and networks be optimized to facilitate data integration across diverse disciplines and geographical regions?
- ? How can indigenous knowledge and local perspectives be integrated into transdisciplinary research to enrich our understanding of climate change and health in Africa?

Format



Day 3: Strengthening Funding Opportunities for Transdisciplinary Climate & Health Research and Impact in Africa

Securing funding for transdisciplinary climate and health research and impact in Africa can be challenging but is crucial for addressing complex environmental and public health issues. It plays a critical role in advancing transdisciplinary climate and health research and action in Africa by providing the necessary resources and support to tackle complex challenges. It enables the development of context-specific interventions and adaptation strategies tailored to local needs and conditions.

This sub-theme aims to explore practical strategies and actionable recommendations for enhancing funding opportunities for transdisciplinary climate and health research in Africa. It encourages stakeholders to collaborate, innovate, and advocate for sustainable funding solutions that can contribute to addressing pressing challenges in the region.

Keynote Question

? What challenges do researchers face in securing funding for transdisciplinary climate change and health research projects?

Panel Questions

? What strategies can be employed to increase and diversify funding for transdisciplinary climate and health research in Africa? How can these funding opportunities be made more accessible to researchers and organizations across diverse regions of the continent?

? What approaches can optimize coordination mechanisms, such as funders' consortia, to ensure sustainable and impactful resource allocation beyond the scope of individual projects?

? How can we reinforce principles of equity and ethics in the allocation and management of climate and health funds to ensure fair distribution and accountability?

? What role can innovative funding instruments, including Public-Private Partnerships, play in enabling action-oriented organizations to secure government funding and implement high-impact projects?

Format



Keynote Address



Panel Discussion

Donor perspective
Research/policy/capacity/community perspective





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