

XIAMEN STATEMENT ON SYSTEMS THINKING FOR URBAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The ICSU global interdisciplinary programme, *Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment: a Systems Analysis Approach*, recognizes that:

Cities and other urban settlements are expanding rapidly, and are both the predominant human habitat and the future of humanity;

Cities and the processes of urbanization offer great opportunities for health and wellbeing but also present challenges to health, including the emergence of broad social and geographic inequities;

Health and wellbeing in cities and other urban settlements are affected by an array of dynamic factors and changing relationships, which are in turn influenced by decisions at all levels, from formal policies to individual actions;

To realize the potential benefits cities have for health and wellbeing, we must understand them as interrelated systems that provide functions and generate health outcomes. Novel conceptualizations, methodologies, and ways of producing knowledge are needed that explicitly account for complexity. Systems approaches are necessary to capture the dynamic relations between policies, environments and people that change patterns of health and wellbeing in cities;

The knowledge produced using systems approaches is most often useful and effective when it is co-produced by scientists from multiple disciplines, policy makers, planners, managers, and civil society;

Given rapid urban growth, and complex health problems in cities and other urban settlements, systems approaches are vital to assure and improve human health and wellbeing and secure a sustainable future for all people and our shared planet.

Improved knowledge generated by real partnerships will allow us to act to maximize health and wellbeing in cities. We call upon the scientific community, policymakers, planners, investors, civil society groups, interested individuals and other stakeholders to work together in a spirit of partnership to adopt systems approaches and generate new knowledge that will maximize the health benefits and improve wellbeing associated with urbanization.

Adopted by the Scientific Committee for the global interdisciplinary science programme on
Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment: a Systems Analysis Approach.



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