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Cli-CC.HE Project- Climate change, cities, communities, and equity in health

Rosalba D'Onofrio*, Roberta Cocci Grifoni*, Elio Trusiani*, Timothy D. Brownlee*, Chiara Camaioni*

Abstract

The concept of "urban health" and the role of urban design in the quality promotion of the cities' living spaces are highly debated on a scientific level, but have not yet been effectively introduced into university education. A gap between education, scientific research and professional practice hinders the achievement of a seamless collaboration among the different stakeholders involved in the urban regeneration of our cities. CliCCHE, an Erasmus+ Project aims at developing and testing newer non-formal learning/teaching experiences to stimulate students' motivation, enhance their engagement and amplify their contribution to generating a participative environment.

The CliCCHE educational methodology and tools will be developed seamlessly with the contribution and involvement of students, representative groups of citizens, professionals and public administrations.

The adoption of nonformal learning tools will help to identify and define climate change adaptation strategies at the urban scale. Since the educational methodology and tools will be finalized by a European consortium (University of Camerino; The Cyprus Institute; University Institute of Lisbon ISCTE; CNR IRIB and University of Belgrade) and integrated into the educational offer of each partner, it will be possible to transfer it in other EU countries.

Introduction

The concept of "urban health" and the role of urban design in promoting the quality of cities' living spaces has been present in the international debate for some decades, but only since the publication of the "New Urban Agenda" (WHO, 2016), health has been defined as "one of the most effective indicators of sustainable development in any city".

It is therefore clear that the objective of identifying conditions suitable for improving the health of citizens, promoting psycho-physical well-being, and supporting health equity is also the responsibility of those who deal with the analysis and design of the city's spaces (Un-habitat and WHO, 2020). More and more at the center of scientific investigations concerning urban spaces, the concept of urban health is evolving from a biomedical to a socio-anthropological approach, and architects, planners, and designers are called upon to perform fundamental tasks that were not contemplated until a few years ago, on which they risk not having consolidated qualifications. For example, in the design of curricula aimed at training health professionals, the need to encourage sensitivity and

training that are able to provide a strong response to public health issues related to climate change is emerging (Maxwell et. Al, 2016). Consequently, there is a need to initiate a rapid redesign of medical school curricula to teach how to recognize, diagnose and treat the many health conditions exacerbated by climate change, as well as to understand their public health implications (Goshua et. Al, 2021).

However, few States have launched specific courses to train professionals on targeted issues concerning the impacts of climate change on health (Who, 2018). In fact, there is a gap between education, scientific research, and professional practice (Azzopardi-Muscat et. Al, 2020), which hinders the achievement of a perfect collaboration between the different actors involved in urban regeneration. The lack of effective sharing of information between different sectors, the widespread inability to recognize that climate change affects health, and poor training on combined climate and health issues (WHO, 2018; UNESCO 2020) are only some of the reasons that determine this gap.

Urban inequalities and the rapid pace of ongoing changes require consideration: we cannot continue to train students in the same way and expect different outcomes from them (Corburn, 2019). While efforts can be found to at least incorporate climate change issues into educational policies and curricular frameworks, there is still little evidence that such efforts are actually contributing to a turnaround (Reimers et. Al, 2020). There is, therefore, the need to move from simple pedagogical processes based on a *silo approach* to others that are more systemic and "deeper", capable of transversally combining biophysical, socio-economic and socio-psychological understandings (Luetz, et. Al, 2019). To make urban health education operational, medical, public health, nursing, and other higher-education institutes will need to collaborate with social sciences, law, education, planning, and architecture (Corburn, 2019) and vice versa, identifying a shared vocabulary capable of tuning different skills into dialogue.

CCli-CC.HE project

In this reference framework, the Erasmus + CliCCHE project, an acronym for Climate change, cities, communities and Equity in health, arises from the will of the partners operating in different thematic areas to build a network capable of capitalizing on the work carried out independently by each one and work together with a shared educational toolkit for health-oriented and climate-proof urban planning. The project, launched in January 2022 and destined to end in December 2023, sees the participation of 5 European partners: the University of Camerino as lead partner, the Cyprus Institute, the CNR IRIB, the Iscte - Instituto Universitario de Lisboa and the University of Belgrade.

The project aims to overcome the highlighted gap between education, scientific research, and professional practice by promoting a new integrated transdisciplinary educational methodology based on the adoption of unconventional tools to address the effects of climate change on urban health for the urban regeneration of European cities. The project aims to concretely contribute to training future experts able to operate within the logic of the *innovative quintuple helix framework* in a system of multilateral relations between several dimensions or sectors that collaborate and which see the participation of educational institutions, research centers, public administrations, civil society, and citizens. CliCCHE aims to develop and

test new non-formal learning/teaching experiences aimed at stimulating students' motivation, improving their commitment, and amplifying their contribution to the generation of a healthier and climate-proof environment. More specifically, the project intends to achieve the following objectives:

- enable students to assess the effects of climate change on urban health and equity and, consequently, identify and design appropriate adaptation strategies;
- increase students' interest in urban regeneration through an innovative participatory process (urban simulation game);
- innovate training activities both by applying a transdisciplinary approach and by involving citizens through immersive virtual environments, simulation games, and public art;
- promote changes within the public administration and provide knowledge and tools that could develop climate-proof health-oriented urban plans and projects;
- raise public awareness regarding the effects of climate change on health in the urban context.

Methodology

The activities and the results of the project are based on the development of prerequisites and foresee application and verification

phases through specific workshops. CliCCHE is structured as follows (fig. 1):

R1- Research on mitigation and adaptation strategies of climate change effects on human health in urban areas (R1): this is the preliminary document aimed at identifying case studies, examples, research and projects on the relationship between climate change and urban health;

R2- Health urban planning Teaching Methodological Guidelines: this is a methodological framework for the design of the training curriculum with objectives, skills, and competencies of the students, pedagogical approaches and identification of suitable technologies, and planning of educational activities.

The pedagogical approach is aimed at making people understand the importance of planning, urban design, and technologies that can mitigate the effects of climate change on health (thermal stress, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, food insecurity, mortality increase due to the spread of viruses, effects of natural catastrophic events, etc.).

R3- Educational toolkit on healthy urban planning: a tool aimed at transferring and applying the methodology developed in R1 and R2;

R2 and R3 will be applied and tested through a series of local workshops at the partner

level, with students, and with direct inputs from stakeholders and citizens.

The methodology (R2) and the Toolkit (R3) will serve to innovate educational programs on urban regeneration in European higher education institutions by integrating different disciplines. The methodology is periodically analyzed and discussed by the partners, in particular through meetings for professors and researchers involved in teaching activities (C1 and C2), aimed at refining the scientific knowledge and skills of the participants. This experience will form the basis for exchanges and mutual learning in order to identify the peculiarities of the partners' cases and develop a generalization path in order to address the needs of a wider sample of universities and public administrations.

R4- Urban planning guidelines oriented to health and climate change mitigation practices: this result involves the development of a document with instructions and checklists that will help universities and public administrations to better define and evaluate urban policies.

The methodological framework and the tools used will be disseminated through mainstreaming activities as different channels and communication tools and through specific events called Multiplier events. During these events and in the final conference, the

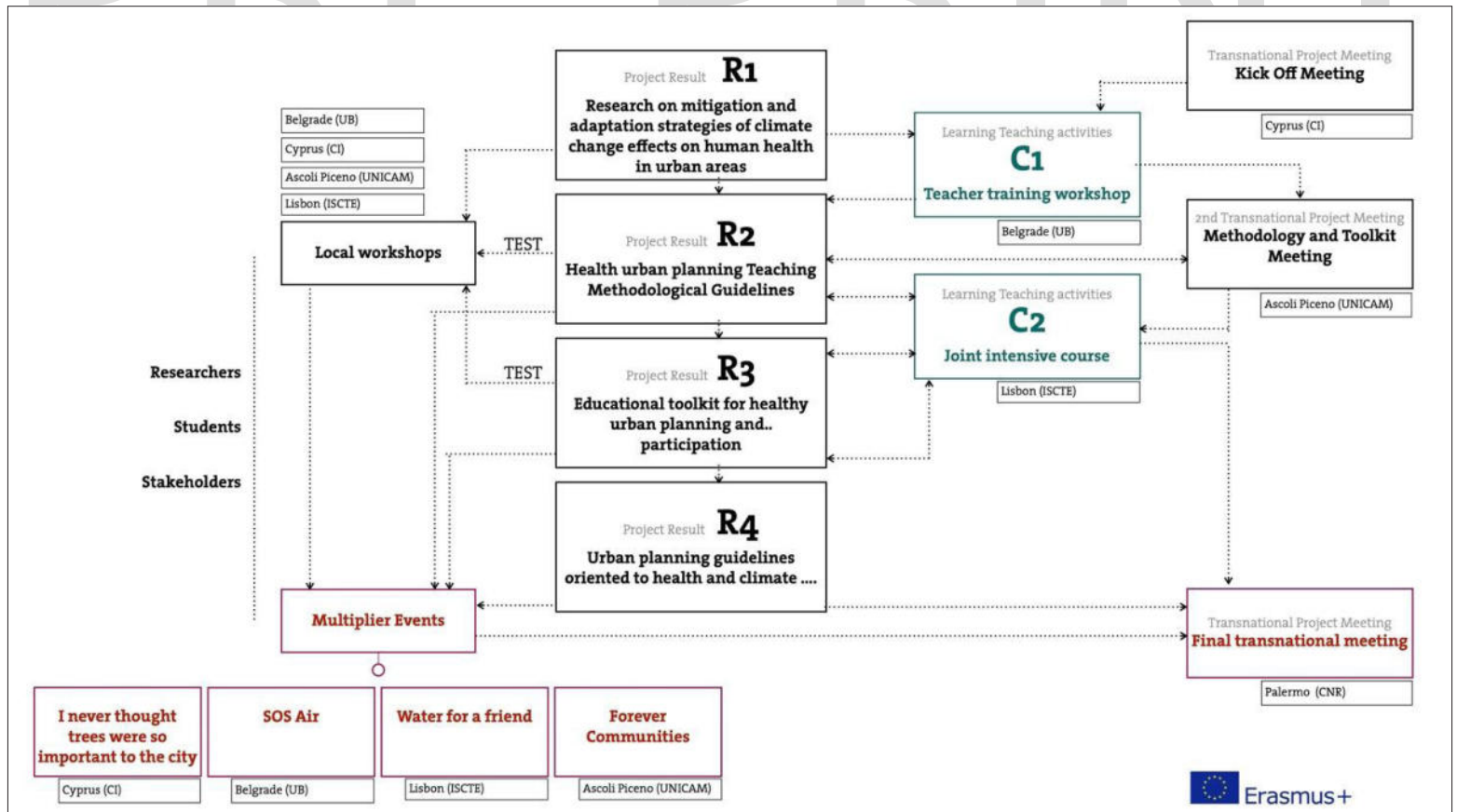


Fig. 1. Diagram of CliCCHE's workflow.

students themselves will involve citizens and stakeholders in activities aimed at disseminating the results of the project, under the scientific supervision of researchers and reference teachers.

Expected results

Among the various expected results, the students should acquire new skills useful for their future professional practice, through a transdisciplinary methodology based on the link between urban planning, human health, environmental protection, and the impact of climate change. Furthermore, the project expects their possible experimentation and their contribution to a participatory process that will enable them to acquire useful skills to interact with society.

Public administrations could increase their knowledge and awareness regarding the threats posed by climate change on urban health, and acquire methodologies and assessment tools to incorporate these issues into their practice. In this way, they will be able to develop a conscious sense of responsibility for healthy and climate-proof urban regeneration and will be able to promote health and climate-oriented urban space design. This approach supports the possibility for other local stakeholders to contribute and integrate into a health-oriented and climate-proof urban regeneration process and also develop new services and solutions to contribute to a healthier urban environment. More specifically, the project includes the following innovative teaching aspects:

1-An integrated and transdisciplinary approach on climate-proof and health-based urban regeneration will be transferred to the university education curricula.

2-The involvement of students in complex issues such as urban regeneration will take place through a training path that should be closer to the interests of the younger generations, different from the exclusive teacher-student approach. This means: a) testing new methodologies to represent urban scenarios in a more engaging way, enriching our sensory perception of the urban environment; b) experimenting with the “urban-simulation” game approach as a participatory device, through which students will be able to understand the needs and expectations of citizens and communities.

3- Students will play an awareness-raising role that will be conducted with the support of public art through the direct involvement of citizens and local administrations. This activity will take place in urban spaces, which

students will transform into action places and involve citizens to illustrate the results of their projects, with the public art language.

4- The living laboratory approach will allow public administrations to dialogue with universities and citizens about how cities are used and how to deal with urban health and climate change issues. It is an iterative method that represents a useful innovation in the field of applied urban regeneration (Binder et. Al, 2008; Celi et. Al, 2018).

Conclusion

Although scientific knowledge, such as that which refers to urban health and climate change, has a universal value, it is necessary to be able to translate this knowledge into a process capable of developing skills that are capable of being effective. The impacts of climate change on people's health can differ profoundly according to geographical basis, or on the readiness of urban structures and citizens to adapt. Educating effectively on health and climate change-related topics is an ambitious task that cannot be delegated to the virtuosity of individual institutions which, moreover, might not have resources linked to transversality, and the skills to develop high-quality curricula (Reimers et. Al, 2021). CLICCHE attempts to work on a large and international scale by bringing together knowledge that stems from European institutions that work on different issues but jointly identify highly site-specific methodologies (Filho, 2018; Filho, 2021).

All the results of the project will be created in order to allow direct and wide free access to possible users even after the life of the project, also through the Erasmus + platform, the project website, and from the institutional sites of the partners. ■

Note

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