

Integrating health and climate agendas

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In Rwanda, a woman collects payments for water. The money is reinvested in the community. Credit: Nicole de Paula

Climate change not only causes problems ranging from heat stress to increased transmission of infectious diseases; it also affects the social

and environmental determinants of health, such as clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. Fragmented thinking and action remains a significant barrier to integrating health considerations into climate planning and project development. Much work remains to be done to translate scientific findings for policymakers, mobilize climate financing resources in support of health co-benefits, and promote gender-just solutions within climate change projects.

The recommendations of the IASS Policy Brief "Moving as One: Integrating the Health and Climate Agendas for Planetary Health in a Post-Pandemic World" are based on in-depth qualitative interviews with experts, an updated literature review, and participant observation by the authors in the policy sphere. This policy brief is a concrete step towards bridging the gap between science and policymakers in an area where there is much room for improvement.

The recommendations:

1. Health professionals should engage strategically with [climate](#) planning processes. Although it is generally acknowledged that [climate change](#) will have wide-ranging effects on human health, health has not yet made its way to the centre of climate politics. Strengthening the health perspective at all levels of climate policy, from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to city-led climate action, has the potential to broaden support for ambitious climate action and lead to better health outcomes.
2. Use climate finance to unleash health co-benefits of [climate action](#). Countries can take the lead by including public health considerations in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement and associated plans and programmes. At the same time, funds should support this effort

by providing structural guidelines and incentives for countries to incorporate health benefits, as well as mechanisms to monitor their achievement, into project proposals.

3. Scale up gender-just solutions as a lever to implement the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. Gender and other [social inequalities](#) lower the capacity of communities to cope with climate-related health challenges and dangerous environmental degradation. We recommend scaling up gender-just policies in the NDCs and other climate strategies as a way to synergistically advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

More information: de Paula, N., Mar, K. A. (2020): Moving as One. Integrating the Health and Climate Agendas for Planetary Health in a Post-Pandemic World. - IASS Policy Brief, 2/2020.
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