

Imperial College London and African Partners Launch £6 Million Project to Build Climate-Resilient Cities

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Imperial College London, in collaboration with key African partners, has announced a major £6 million research initiative, CLARITY-Africa (Climate Change Resilient Equitable Healthy Cities in Africa), to bolster the climate change resilience of urban centers across the continent. Funded by Wellcome, the project aims to mitigate the health impacts of increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events in African cities.

The research will focus on four strategically selected cities: Accra and Tamale in Ghana, and Kigali and Musanze in Rwanda, representing diverse urban characteristics. Researchers will gather comprehensive data on temperature, water quality, sanitation, and other critical metrics through sensors, surveys, imaging, and satellite data. This information will be analyzed to understand the effects of climate change on population health, infrastructure, and socio-economic activities.

“Climate change will affect society in all kinds of ways – from people’s physical and mental health, to infrastructure, and the future of learning and work,” stated Professor Majid Ezzati, Academic Director of Imperial Global Ghana and lead researcher from Imperial’s School of Public Health. “Cities in Africa will be among some of those most impacted by the challenges and consequences of climate change. This project will help create a blueprint of action to create more resilient cities and society.”

CLARITY-Africa will prioritize engaging with local stakeholders to ensure that research findings are translated into actionable strategies and commitments. The project will also focus on identifying and assessing technologies and strategies that can be adapted to mitigate climate change effects, such as

informing the design of climate-resilient school buildings.

“Climate change is endangering people’s health around the world, but those in already-hot regions are facing some of the biggest threats,” said Madeleine Thomson, Head of Climate Impacts and Adaptation, Wellcome. “To protect lives we need to find ways to adapt and respond to increasingly frequent heatwaves, floods, and droughts. This research will help us find ways to do that throughout Africa with the potential for lessons that could be rolled out around the world.”

The project builds upon Imperial’s existing partnerships in Africa, including its newly established Imperial Global Ghana hub, which aims to strengthen collaboration in research, technology, education, and entrepreneurship. Collaborative partners include the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), University of Ghana, University Cape Town, the African Mayoral Leadership Initiative (AMALI), and African Urban Research Initiative (AURI) hubs. This initiative underscores Imperial’s commitment to addressing global challenges through scientific collaboration and innovation.