

Regional network for Equity in health in east and southern Africa (EQUINET)

Strategies for tackling commercial determinants of health and for urban wellbeing in east and southern Africa

REGIONAL MEETING May 23-24 2024 Nairobi Kenya

**Convened by Training and Research Support
Centre (TARSC) for EQUINET**

1. Background

Urbanisation and economic / commercial activities in east and southern African (ESA) countries are associated with rising opportunities and wealth for some groups, but also many dimensions of stress, often in close proximity to wealth. Urban areas often concentrate new commercial processes and products, such as ultraprocessed foods, harmful substances and tobacco, traffic related injury, industrial processes and digital systems, many developments raising both opportunity and harms. This makes it important to ensure equitable benefit and provide viable alternatives to risk environments, processes and products that are harmful to health in a range of areas, including on production and food systems, waste and pollution, biodiversity and green spaces, and predictable access to clean energy, safe water and sanitation, economic resources and social services. These goals are stated in the Sustainable Development Goals, and are important in ESA countries, where economic inequality is high, and where commercial determinants of health (CDoH) and climate change pose significant burdens.

This regional in-person meeting seeks to review the evidence, and share experiences and analysis to date. It aims to identify scaleable policies, practices and strategies to tackle these challenges, particularly those that make cross-sectoral links between inclusive economic and social benefit, that provide embedded responses to climate change, that are participatory, and that proactively generate evidence and prevent challenges, such as through health impact assessment (HIA). The meeting draws on and will deepen analysis and develop proposals from case study work carried out in the ESA region, as well as learning from work on health impact assessment. For both, the meeting will discuss how to scale-up positive experience, practices and lever support and policy change from higher levels.

Aims: This EQUINET regional meeting, convened by TARSC, is thus inviting and gathering people from institutions involved in work in ESA on urban health and HIA related to the areas noted above. It is being held on May 23rd and 24th 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. It will use a mix of presentation, discussion and participatory processes to:

1. Share and review experience and evidence from both urban health work and HIA in ESA on the laws, policies, systems, features, measures and tools that positively impact on health and that make linkages across economic, social, health and ecosystem wellbeing, including to respond to climate change.
2. Identify the implications for policy and practice at national, regional and global level.
3. Identify a theory of change and strategies to advance, support and scale-up in ESA the promising policies, practices and tools identified in the meeting.
4. Identify issues from the meeting to communicate to policy, technical and wider audiences in and beyond the region on improving health (equity) and climate adaptation in urbanisation and in economic/ commercial activity in ESA.

To enable effective and active participation the numbers in the meeting will be limited. EQUINET will support the daily meeting costs for all delegates and sponsor a limited number of delegates for travel and accommodation, and welcomes other self-sponsored delegates. Delegates are asked to email interest to admin@equinetafrica.org before 5pm Southern Africa time April 11th 2024 with REGIONAL MEETING in the subject line indicating in the email: their name, country, institution, outlining in a few sentences only work implemented relevant to the meeting aims; indicating prior involvement in EQUINET work and whether self-sponsored or seeking sponsorship for travel and accommodation for the meeting. Please attach a CV. Feedback will be provided by April 15th, with further details for accepted delegates.