Climate Information for Public Health Action (CIPHA)

Summer Institute

News from the Ground

November 2008



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Now that the world's attention is focused on climate variability and climate change adaptation, it is essential not only for public health communities, but also, for government central planners, to understand the role climate plays in driving disease burden and affecting economic growth. Public health emerges as the final common pathway for all impacts of climate variability and climate change on individuals as well as societies. Thus, climate information needs to be coupled with health information to develop and to improve the public health decision making process. However, we have to work carefully to improve our understanding of climate and non-climate issues associated with public health events in order to better identify information needs, as well as enable careful use of processing and tailoring tools to improve our understanding and operational use of the relationship between climate and health outcomes.

As part of this process, The International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), initiated, a two-week Summer Institute, entitled *Climate Information for Public Health*, in partnership with the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) and the Mailman School of Public Health. This course was held at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Campus in Palisades, New York from June 2-13, 2008.

In attendance at the Summer Institute were thirteen participants from ten different countries: Botswana (1), Ethiopia (1), Zimbabwe (1) Kenya (1), Nigeria (1), Niger (1) United Kingdom (2), Switzerland (1), Colombia (1) and the United States (3). Five of the course participants worked in the climate or meteorological sector, and the remaining eight in the health sector or health related research fields. After the course ended, we felt the need to start a newsletter to strengthen the network created by the alumni and to share **knowledge** alumni, partners, researchers and a wide body of stakeholders about the use of climate information to improve decision making process in the public health sector at the global, regional and local levels, The CIPHA Newsletter is an instrument to **inform** and to **share**.

The CIPHA newsletter will be published once every three months to help keep its readers informed of the latest developments within the CIPHA network including alumni activities, brief meeting reports, news from the 'health-climate' world as well as opportunities

for collaboration and funding. From time to time there may be a survey being conducted in a region that you may be interested in participating in. By signing up for the newsletter, we will ensure that you stay informed about what is going on in the area of climate information for public health action. The next CIPHA newsletter will be emailed out at the end of February 2009.

Below we provide selected updates on alumni activities – please send in your own ready for the next issue!

Alumni Updates



SI 08 alumni Adugna Woyessa , who works at the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute (EHNRI), in Addis Ababa is now a member of the Climate and Health Working Group of Ethiopia (CHWG) established as a result of an IRI supported workshop entitled 'Climate matters in health', held on 28 February 2008 in Addis Ababa. The working group aims to foster stronger collaborations between the climate and health communities so that information on climate sensitive diseases is used effectively. In September the CHWG, a grouping of the Anti-Malaria Association and other Ethiopian professionals, in collaboration with the IRI convened its first workshop. The theme of the workshop was 'Scientific and Technical Meeting on Climate and Health'. The three day meeting focused on ongoing research and research results, and applications related to climate sensitive diseases, with a view of assessing available resources, identifying gaps and defining requirements, including training, for future research.

SI 08 Alumni Tinni Halidou Sardou (Sponsored by the Health and Climate Foundation) - African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), meteorologist is now back in Niger producing a regular bulletin on Climate and Health using IRI's Data Library as a resource.

SI 08 alumni Louise Kelly-Hope – Researcher at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Vector Group had helped to start new possible collaborating research studies on climate and diarrheal diseases and dengue fever between researchers from Universidad del Bosque , Universidad de Antioquia in Colombia and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. She is sharing what she learnt at the CIPH, especially features of the IRI Data Library with students visiting Liverpool students and also referred one of the students as a potential candidate for the Summer Institute course '09.

SI 08 alumni Viviana Ceron –a National Institute of Health bacteriologist is working as a malaria consultant in the National Integrated Dengue and Malaria Surveillance and Control System in Colombia. [To learn more about this initiative, refer to the project profile of National Integrated Dengue and Malaria Surveillance and Control System for Colombia].

Viviana Ceron and Gilma Mantilla were co-organizers of a two-week Basic and Advance Course in Epidemiological and Public Health Surveillance with Emphasis on the links between climate and health, conducted in Bogota last September. They report attendance of over 70 participants from the public health sectors of 10 Latin American countries. The course was the result of a collaboration between

Colombia's National Institute of Health and Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies; the Pan-American Health Organization, Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network, and the IRI exhibited the usefulness of various internet resources which can be used for training programs such as the one developed by Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) in CDC - Atlanta called **Horizonlive**. This technology allowed participants from 9 countries from Latin and Central America to attend the climate and health module. Such new tools need to be a regular feature in our attempts to spread climate information towards improvement in public health. The other lesson we learnt was the need to provide training material through the web or off the web so that trainees could to go back to review the concepts and tools they learnt. Towards this, the Colombian team which was behind the organization of this course will develop a module of climate and health in partnership with TEPHINET (http://tephinet.org/).

SI 08 alumni Laurence Cibrelus, a master student at Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, is doing her internship in the health research centre CERMES in Niger working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Meningitis Environmental Risk Information Technologies (**MERIT**).

SI 08 alumni Peter Omeny, a climatologist from the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) in Kenya, helped to create a Kenyan Climate and Health Working Group with James Sang from the Ministry of Health. Their first scientific meeting is planned for the 8-9th December in collaboration with the International Livestock Research Institute and the IRI. Peter has applied for a PhD in Malaria Modeling in Wales, UK. Hopefully for the next newsletter we will have a PhD candidate in our alumni group.



Peter Omeney and SI 08 alumni Joaquim Da Silva (WHO-AFRO) the ICPAC Malaria meeting associated with the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Fora (GHARCOF) in Nairobi , in August.

SI 08 alumni Joy Guillimot moved to Madagascar shortly after the Summer Institute to work with the Ministry of Health on climate change issues. IRIs Pietro Ceccato met her there at a Workshop on Climate and Health organized by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) with World Health Organisation (WHO). No doubt there will be lots to report in the next news letter.

Lessons from the Training Course

The Climate Information for Public Health Summer Institute was a starting point for the public health community to better understand the role that climate plays in driving disease burdens. The course also provided an excellent opportunity to address the need for a more coordinated interaction between climate experts and health workers to improve decision-making processes in the public health sector. It brought participants together from ten countries, aiming to educate them on the value that climate information plays in decision-making processes. It also sought to enable health experts understand the complexity of integrating climate information to decision-making processes, such as use of downscaled climate models for regional and local health risk management decisions. The success of the institute can be seen in the activities of the alumni.



Upcoming courses

Niamey – Niger on March 2009 – hosted by Centre de Recherche Médicale et Sanitaire/ Ministry of Health and Réseau International des Institute Pasteur. Laurence Cibrelus would be the co-organizer for this course.

Ethiopia on May 2009

Summer Institute 2009 Registrations to begin at the end of November 2008. More info at http://iri.columbia.edu/education/summerinstitute09

Upcoming Events

Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health in Bamako, Mali, from 17 - 19 November 2008

The Global Forum for Health Research, Bamako 17-19th November. This meeting is being co-organised by WHO, the World Bank, UNESCO, and the Global Forum for Health Research, COHRED and the Government of Mali. All Ministers of Health have been invited, as well as several dozen other Ministers covering science and technology, research, higher education, social science and development cooperation. Madeleine Thomson, scientist at the IRI will be giving a presentation on climate change and health.

Climate and Health Working Group in Ethiopia

The next CHWG meeting is scheduled for December in Addis and will focus on the Meningitis Environmental Risk Information Technologies (or MERIT) Project.

3rd East African Health and Scientific Conference, Theme: "Climate Change, Environment and Health" Nairobi, Kenya, March 25-27, 2009, hosted by Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI).

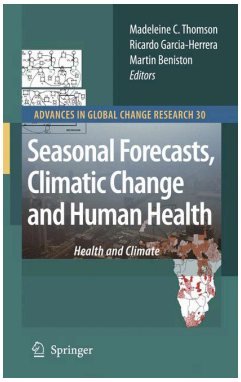
Opportunities of Funding

The Health and Climate Foundation

The Foundation has donated 100 copies of the book, Seasonal Forecasts, Climatic Change and Human Health to African institutions. Send your institutions request to Gilma Mantilla

(mantilla@iri.columbia.edu)

Thank you HCF!!



The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) was approved by the Board of Directors of the World Bank on July 1, 2008. On September 26, donors gathered to pledge over US$6.1 billion.

The CIF are an important new source of interim funding through which Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) will provide additional grants and concessional financing to developing countries to address urgent climate change challenges. The CIF will enable a dynamic partnership between MDBs and developing countries to undertake investments that aim to pursue development goals through transition to a climate-resilient economy and a low carbon development path.

Recent Publications

Malaria Journal recently published a paper on the association between malaria epidemics and El Niño in Sri Lanka, authored by Lareef Zubair (Associate Research Scientist), Neil Ward (Decisions Systems Director) and Stephen Connor (Research Scientist), Columbia University senior, Hyemin Yang; and IRI partners from the: Anti-Malaria Campaign (Sri Lanka), Foundation for Environment, Climate and Technology (Sri Lanka), and International Water Management Institute (India). Go to IRI Publications for more on this work.

Human Health in a Changing Climate - A Canadian Assessment of Vulnerabilities and Adaptive Capacity-represents the first comprehensive assessment of health vulnerabilities to climate change in Canada. It provides an up-to-date synthesis of knowledge on how the health of Canadians is affected by our climate today, and what may lie ahead under future climate change. For more info, please contact Health Canada's Publications

Related Links

http://iri.columbia.edu/education/summerinstitute08

http://www.tephinet.org/

http://www.acmad.ne/en/homepage.htm

http://www.globalforumhealth.org

http://www.hc-foundation.org

Please contact cipha@iri.columbia.edu to send your comments or materials to be included in our next CIPHA.