



## Introduction

U-CARE is an ongoing Erasmus+ project focused on transforming urban ecosystems to enhance health across European cities with diverse climates. The project's mission is to integrate urban health research, neighbourhood-level diagnostics, as well as participatory decision-making into higher education and urban practice. This would better prepare future planners, designers, and public health professionals to address the environmental and health impacts faced because of climate change. Within this mission, four workshops were implemented in the project's case study areas in Gothenburg (Sahlgrenska Hospital), Berlin (Pankow district), Florence (Isolotto neighbourhood), and Nicosia (Makarios Hospital), connecting urban health research into decision-making processes involving a variety of stakeholders at the neighbourhood level. The workshops were structured using the UrbanCare framework and workflow, developed by Building Health Lab (BHL), and focused on four interconnected urban issues: walkability, surface runoff, urban heat, and biotope loss.

## Method

The applied UrbanCare methodology combines neighbourhood-level research, digital visualisation, and participatory methods. Its set of urban health indicators was adapted to the context of each case study. Environmental assessments of urban locations (public transport stops, crossings, respite areas, and priority entrances) using 360° photography and thermal imaging were carried out along three pedestrian loops in each case study. The assessments were integrated into its Web-based Data Viewer, providing users with an interactive system to visualise climate and health performance at each location and input data regarding perceived spatial qualities. Its analogue tools, including printed maps, persona cards, and health risk cards, were used to facilitate communication between stakeholders. The UrbanCare workflow structured the process through four stages (Research, Diagnostics, Planning, and Design), moving from analysis to the development of spatial strategies responsive to local climate and health challenges.

## Findings



The workshops demonstrated the value of combining scientific urban health data with participatory co-design processes to support more inclusive and evidence-informed discussions around climate resilience and public health. The Web-based Data Viewer was invaluable for making complex scientific data accessible to stakeholders and facilitated communication between individuals with different expertise. The combination of the Viewer with analogue materials such as maps and persona cards encouraged active participation, discussion, and negotiation leading to collaborative decision-making. The persona-cards enabled participants to connect environmental data with everyday experiences of mobility, accessibility, comfort, and safety. The four workshops implemented as part of the U-CARE project showed that structured participatory methodologies can help bridge gaps between research, policy, and design practice by generating shared understandings of feasible climate- and health-responsive spatial interventions.

**Images:** Workshop participants in Florence use both analogue materials (persona cards, environmental data, printed maps) and the data viewer via mobile device to brainstorm context specific strategies.

## Achievements

- The four workshops engaged students, researchers, planners, policymakers, citizen and stakeholders in collaborative processes.
- A shared, evidence-based understandings of urban health challenges and directions for potential future interventions to address them were produced.
- Four environmental and spatial databases of the case study areas were constructed.
- Urban health evidence was translated into accessible tools to support participatory planning processes, policy development, and design decision considering health in relation to planning and design, and climate change adaptability.

## Conclusion

The workshops demonstrate the potential of combining environmental research, digital tools, and participatory co-design to support healthier, more climate-resilient urban environments. The workshops successfully brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to produce a shared, evidence-informed understanding of urban health challenges and feasible intervention pathways. By integrating environmental data with collaborative decision-making, the workshops made complex urban health data more accessible, understandable, and actionable for diverse stakeholders. The nature of findings and outputs is exploratory at this stage, due to the limited sample size, but the methods employed can be developed and scaled up. Further analysis and piloting is necessary; however, the success of the workshops points to the fact that similar approaches would have a positive impact on policy planning for urban design that responds to issues of public health and climate resilience.

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