

9th Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar Session

Date: October 12, 2025 (Sunday)

Time: 3.00 PM - 4.30 PM BST(GMT+6)

Topic: Environment and Climate Change in Urban Health

Seminar Minutes

On Sunday, October 12, 2025, the Bangladesh Urban Health Network (BUHN) organized its 9th Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar, focusing on the critical theme of "Environment and Climate Change in Urban Health." Speakers from UNICEF, Bangladesh University of Health Sciences (BUHS), Partners in Health and Development (PHD), Jahangirnagar University (JU), icddr,b, North South University (NSU), Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP), Eminence Associates for Social Development and other partner organizations presented evidence on the health impacts of air pollution, innovative climate adaptation initiatives, and the importance of integrating environmental indicators into urban health planning, addressing the agenda of the session. The seminar concluded in a vital discussion emphasizing the absolute necessity for collaborative, intersectoral efforts to address environmental pollution and ensure equitable healthcare access for the urban poor.

Seminar Objectives

Obj 01: Map and quantify the specific health burdens (e.g., heat-related illness, vector-borne diseases like dengue, respiratory ailments) driven by environmental degradation (air/water pollution) and climate change impacts (flooding, heatwaves) in urban settlements of Bangladesh.

Obj 02: Evaluate the vulnerability and adaptive capacity of existing urban health infrastructure, service delivery, and supply chains to current and projected climate shocks and environmental stressors.

Obj 03: Pinpoint the siloed governance and accountability gaps across the health, environment, and urban planning sectors that impede integrated and effective responses to environmental and climate-related health risks.

Obj 04: Identify, share, and discuss innovative, inter-sectoral models and technologies such as climate-informed early warning systems, green infrastructure, and digital surveillance for building climate-resilient and environmentally sound urban health systems.

Obj 05: Generate a set of actionable policy and financing recommendations for policymakers and development partners to prioritize and operationalize climate-health integration within the national urban health strategy.

Key Resource Persons

Contribution	Resource Personnel
Esteemed Chief Guest	Dr. Md. Khairul Islam Regional Director - WaterAid, South Asia Region
Welcome speech	Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - Eminence Associates for Social Development
Esteemed Panelists	Dr Priscilla Wobil Health Specialist - UNICEF
	Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy Senior Deputy Director - Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
	Dr. Sohana Shafique Project Coordinator (Urban Health and UHC) - icddr'b
	Dr. Md. Shakhaoat Hossain Associate Professor & Chairman (Department of Public Health and Informatics) - Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka
	Professor Dr. M. H. Faruquee Professor and Head (Dept. of Occupational and Environmental Health) - Bangladesh University of Health Sciences (BUHS)
	Dr. Mohammad Zahirul Islam Assistant Professor (Department of Public Health) - North South University
	Dr. Evana Akhtar Assistant Scientist - icddr'b
	Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat Executive Director -Coalition for the Urban Poor-CUP
Session Moderator	Ummay Farihin Sultana Project Manager - Bangladesh Urban Health Network (BUHN)

Seminar Highlights

Welcome Remarks	<i>Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder:</i> Thanking the participants for joining, he emphasized the critical and immediate need to overhaul primary healthcare (PHC) services in urban areas, citing the severe effects of climate change and internal migration. He noted that the national health system is currently failing migrants, as urban PHC coverage is severely limited, reaching only nine percent, and is critically threatened by a funding crisis. He concluded on a hopeful note that the new interim government is planning to develop a sustainable model for urban PHC delivery by leveraging existing infrastructure and mobilizing resources.
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Seminar Discussions	Seminar Decisions/Recommendations
Objective 01	
<i>Dr. Priscilla Wobil:</i> Emphasized children's exposure to lead (35 million affected) and air pollution (19,000+ child deaths under five), compounded by heatwaves and flooding. Advocated for pollution mitigation, climate adaptation, and resilient health facilities with improved WASH and solarization. <i>Dr. Md. Shakhaoat Hossain:</i> Shared research on PM2.5 exposure, noting increased ARI and pneumonia among children, higher pollutants near schools, and daily transport-related exposure variations. <i>Dr. Sohana Shafique:</i> Reported climate-driven health crises including vector-borne, diarrheal, respiratory, and mental health issues, disproportionately affecting poor women and children. <i>Professor Dr. M. H. Faruquee:</i> Presented extreme heat impacts on occupational health, especially in RMG workers, and highlighted systemic consequences on labor productivity. <i>Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy:</i> Addressed urban heat stress, waterlogging, and vector-borne diseases, proposing the Green Health Care Initiative (GHI) linking local innovation with national climate-health strategies. <i>Dr. Mohammad Zahirul Islam:</i> Focused on increased prevalence of climate-sensitive diseases and emphasized strengthening infrastructure, PHC, and insurance systems. <i>Dr. Evana Akhtar:</i> Documented household air pollution and heavy metal impacts on children, pregnant women, and elderly, advocating clean fuel trials, nutritional interventions, and targeted intersectoral solutions. <i>Ms. Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat:</i> Highlighted inequities in exposure and service access among urban poor, urging justice-based policies. <i>Dr. Md. Khairul Islam:</i> Highlighted lead exposure from rickshaws and the need to mitigate migration-driven health vulnerabilities.	1. Strengthen systemic capacity to protect children from toxic pollution and develop climate-resilient health facilities with solar energy and improved WASH infrastructure. 2. Replace biomass fuels with cleaner alternatives and enforce stricter air quality standards near schools and urban transport zones. 3. Scale up evidence-based pollution reduction interventions such as clean fuel trials and nutritional supplementation.
Objective 02	
<i>Dr. Sohana Shafique:</i> Noted infrastructure strain due to urban heat islands, floods, and drainage congestion; stressed early warning systems and multi-actor coordination for resilience. <i>Dr. Priscilla Wobil:</i> Advocated climate-resilient health facilities with solar power, WASH improvements, and systemic capacity building. <i>Dr. Mohammad Zahirul Islam:</i> Emphasized strengthening core infrastructure, PHC service delivery, and reliable insurance mechanisms. <i>Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy:</i> Promoted GHI as a systemic model linking community-level innovation to national health policy for climate adaptation. <i>Professor Dr. Faruquee:</i> Highlighted occupational infrastructure vulnerability and recommended factory and urban adaptations.	4. Urgently expand and sustainably fund urban PHC beyond its current 9% coverage to meet the needs of climate migrants and the urban poor. 5. Strengthen urban infrastructure and introduce health insurance systems to mitigate financial burdens of climate-driven diseases.

Seminar Discussions	Seminar Decisions/Recommendations
Objective 03	
<i>Ms. Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat:</i> Criticized fragmented urban governance, lack of political commitment, and non-recognition of the urban poor in planning, leading to inequitable service access. <i>Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy:</i> Addressed weak climate-health integration and data fragmentation; proposed systematic cross-sectoral coordination. <i>Dr. Sohana Shafique:</i> Emphasized multi-actor governance for adaptive urban health systems. <i>Dr. Md. Khairul Islam:</i> Called for intersectoral collaboration to manage urban migration, lead exposure, and health system challenges.	6. Prioritize new research on lead exposure, especially from rickshaw batteries, and address urban migration drivers through intersectoral policies. 7. Adopt justice-based urban policies ensuring recognition, service equity, and job security for the urban poor and climate migrants.
Objective 04	
<i>Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy:</i> Introduced GHI with pillars: decarbonization, WASH enhancement, workforce climate-health training, and Green Intervention Packages. <i>Dr. Priscilla Wobil:</i> Highlighted Children's Environmental Health Collaborative for intersectoral collaboration. <i>Dr. Md. Shakhaoat Hossain:</i> Provided evidence on PM2.5 exposure monitoring and transport-based exposure patterns, informing targeted interventions. <i>Dr. Evana Akhtar:</i> Showcased field interventions like clean fuel RCTs, mobile behavior change, and nutritional supplementation as evidence-based solutions. <i>Professor Dr. Faruquee:</i> Recommended urban greening, factory redesign, solarization, and heat-adapted occupational measures.	8. Implement occupational safety adaptations in the RMG sector to safeguard workers from heat stress. 9. Institutionalize the Green Health Care Initiative (GHI) within national policy frameworks.
Objective 05	
<i>Dr. Md. Khairul Islam:</i> Recommended research and policy action on lead exposure and migration-related health drivers. <i>Dr. Priscilla Wobil:</i> Advocated investment in climate-resilient facilities and national capacity to protect children. <i>Ms. Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat:</i> Called for justice-based urban policies ensuring service equity, recognition, and job security for the urban poor. <i>Dr. Mohammad Zahirul Islam:</i> Recommended systemic strengthening of urban infrastructure, PHC, and insurance mechanisms. <i>Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy:</i> Suggested formal institutionalization of GHI in national policies. <i>Dr. Evana Akhtar:</i> Urged scaling up evidence-based interventions for pollution and heavy metal reduction targeting vulnerable populations.	10. Prioritize research on lead exposure and urban migration drivers. 11. Enhance health system preparedness via early warning systems and coordination.

Attendance Sheet of the Seminar:

Following attendees from Government of Bangladesh, BUHN, UNICEF, Academicians, NGOs professionals and other partner organizations' joined the virtual seminar-

SN	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Dr. Md. Khairul Islam	Regional Director	WaterAid, South Asia Region
2.	Mr. Md. Mamunur Rashid	Joint Secretary (World Health Wing)	HSD, MoHFW
3.	Mr. Sohel Mahmud	Deputy Secretary AEPD (Program Management)	SICIP, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
4.	Dr Priscilla Wobil	Health Specialist	UNICEF
5.	Ms. Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy	Senior Deputy Director	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
6.	Dr. Kazi Saifuddin Bennoor	Senior Consultant	United Hospital, Dhaka
7.	Dr. Sohana Shafique	Project Coordinator, Urban Health and UHC	icddr'b
8.	Dr. Margub Aref Jahangir	Health Specialist (Urban)	UNICEF Bangladesh
9.	Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder	Chief Executive Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
10.	Dr. Md. Shakhaoat Hossain	Associate Professor & Chairman	Department of Public Health and Informatics, Jahangirnagar University
11.	Professor Dr. M. H. Faruquee	Professor and Head	Dept. of Occupational and Environmental Health, BUHS
12.	Dr. Mohammad Zahirul Islam	Assistant Professor	Department of Public Health, North South University
13.	Dr. Zahidul Quayyum, PhD.	Professor and Director	BRAC JPGSPH, BRAC University
14.	Dr. Evana Akhtar	Assistant Scientist	icddr'b
15.	Ms. Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat	Executive Director	Coalition for the Urban Poor- CUP
16.	Md. Mukhlesur Rahman	Deputy Director, Health Sector	Dhaka Ahsani Mission
17.	Ms. Masuda Begum	Director (Health and Nutrition)	Nari Maitri
18.	Md. Azmal Hossain	Programme Analyst--Urban Health	UNFPA Bangladesh
19.	Mr. Mohammad Amirul Islam	Deputy Manager	Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB)
20.	Dr Md Saidur Rahman	Team Leader (Aalo Clinics)	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
21.	Mr. Mohammad Sohel Shomik	Deputy Project Coordinator	icddr'b
22.	Dr. Nazia Rahman	Project Coordinator	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
23.	Mr. H. M Nazrul Islam	Executive Director (Program)	Dhaka Ahsani Mission
24.	Dr Hasnain Ahmed	Health Officer	Unicef Bangladesh

25.	Md. Shamsudduha Sarkar	Program Coordinator (ICT)	CMED Health
26.	Mr. Anisur Rahman Bayazid	Senior Research Associate	BRAC JPGSPH, BRAC University
27.	Mr. Shourov Jamil Biswas	ICT Officer	Aalo Clinic
28.	Dr. Koushik Majumder	Individual	Chittagong Medical College & Hospital
29.	Ms. Syeda Umaiya Wali	MEAL Officer	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
30.	Mr. Md. Sadik Al Ashik	Executive Officer- Environmental Monitoring	Technotex Testing & Quality Assurance Ltd.
31.	Mr. Rakib Hossain	Research Assistant	Air Quality, Climate Change & Health (ACH) Lab, JU
32.	Ms. Sanjida Ahmed	Research Associate	Air Quality, Climate Change & Health (ACH) Lab, JU
33.	Ms. Afsana Yasmin	Research Assistant	ACH Lab, JU
34.	Mr. Md. Riaz Uddin Reza	Individual	Independent University
35.	Mr. Sayed Mohammad Rasel	Research Associate	ACH Lab, JU
36.	Mr. Md. Maksedul Alam		Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
37.	Mr. Rafid Islam	Individual	Jahangirnagar University
38.	Dr. Shahin Akter	Technical Operation Director	Eminence Associates for Social Development
39.	Ms. Tanjina Farhana Upoma	UNV Health Officer	UNICEF Bangladesh
40.	Ms. Ummay Farihin Sultana	Senior Research and Knowledge Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
41.	Dr. Maliha Khan Majlish	Senior Technical & Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
42.	Mr. Md. Wahiduzzaman	Urban Health Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
43.	Mr. Md. Saddam Hossain	Senior Data Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
44.	Mr. Md. Neamul Islam	Business Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
45.	Mr. Abhijeet Kumar Singh	Research & Communication Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
46.	Mr. Abir Chowdhury	IT Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
47.	Mr. Md. Shoriful Islam	Graphic Designer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
48.	Mr. Minhajul Islam	Health and Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
49.	Ms. Sanjana	Unknown	
50.	Ms. Shabegum	Unknown	
51.	Mr. Salek	Unknown	

Snapshot of the Seminar:

