

Call for Papers

Special Issue: Informality and Climate Change in Global South Cities

Edited by: Debra Roberts, Andrew Okem, Maria Fernanda and Chandni Singh

This special edition in *Urbanisation* seeks to explore the multifaceted relationship between informality and climate change in cities in the Global South. We welcome submissions focusing on the Global South and the following themes, including case studies and evidence synthesis.

- **Climate impacts and resilience in informal settlements:** Submissions under this theme will target climate change impacts and resilience in informal settlements in the Global South.
- **Informal economies, vulnerability and resilience:** We welcome submissions that synthesise evidence on climate change impacts on the informal economy, including adaptation strategies and resilience building. This includes actions and solutions to reduce urban risks in informal settlements and informal economies.
- **Informal governance and climate change adaptation:** This theme will examine the role of informal governance in responding to climate-related challenges (including losses and damages) and new ways of planning under and for uncertainty. We also welcome submissions that unpack the interactions between formal and informal governance structures with a focus on innovation in governance, urban planning and urban service provision in informal settlements across Global South cities.
- **Informal governance and climate change mitigation:** This theme will examine the opportunity offered by informality to leapfrog to a low-carbon urban development path and expedite a just transition. We also welcome submissions that unpack the interactions between formal and informal governance structures with a focus on innovation in governance, urban planning and urban service provision in informal settlements across Global South cities.

Extended Abstract Submissions

30 November 2024

Submission deadline for extended abstracts

31 January 2025

Intimation to shortlisted abstracts

Abstract submissions should be sent to submission@urbanisationjournal.com with the subject line 'Abstract Submission for 11(1) Special Issue'.

Extended abstracts can be up to **700 words** and include introduction/ context, methodology, key findings, and theoretical or empirical contribution.

The abstract should be accompanied by the title, author names and affiliations, and 4–6 keywords.

Full Paper Submissions

30 June 2025

Submission deadline for full paper

Word limit for all sections: **4,000–6,000 words**

Submissions should be sent via
<https://peerreview.sagepub.com/urb>

Submission guidelines:
<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/URB/>

This issue will be published in May 2026, but papers will be published in the OnlineFirst section as soon as they are ready. We welcome submissions for the following article sections of the journal: General Articles, Writing from Practice, Learning and Pedagogy, On Method, and Evaluations and Assessments.



With its commitment to publish diverse research from the Global South, *Urbanisation* provides language support to accepted papers at the copy-editing stage.

Urbanisation is indexed in: DeepDyve | Dutch-KB | EBSCO Discovery Service | EBSCO: Urban Studies Abstracts | J-Gate | Portico | UGC-CARE (GROUP I)

For more details, visit www.urbanisationjournal.com

Call for Papers

Special Issue: Informality and Climate Change in Global South Cities

Edited by: Debra Roberts, Andrew Okem, Maria Fernanda and Chandni Singh

This special edition in *Urbanisation* seeks to explore the multifaceted relationship between informality and climate change in cities in the Global South.

Concept Note

Informality in cities of the global South is a social construct borne out of poverty and socio-economic inequality, underdevelopment, and a lack of institutional and infrastructural capacity. The result is a process of urbanisation characterised by informal settlements, informal economies and informal governance. These cities face the dual challenge of rapid growth—it is projected they will be the centres of global urbanisation by the middle of the century (UN-Habitat, 2018)—and escalating climate change (Revi et al., 2022). These transitions have led to sanitation and housing deficits, pushing the poorest populations into isolated, high-risk areas and precarious urban living (Du et al., 2022, Castellanos et al., 2022). Informal systems are vulnerable to climate change: development and well-being in urban areas of the global South are being undermined by observed climate impacts and will continue to be challenged under projected climate risks. This poses significant challenges for achieving sustainable development as urban areas concentrate a significant proportion of the global South's population and are often characterised by high population density, inadequate infrastructure, and poor living and health conditions (Oteng-Ababio et al., 2019; Weimann & Oni, 2019; UNESCAP, 2022).

Informal settlements, in particular, often lack adequate infrastructure and services, making them particularly vulnerable to climate impacts such as flooding and heatwaves (UN-Habitat, 2020; UNESCAP, 2022) and are often overlooked or underrepresented in climate adaptation planning (Brown et al., 2014; Taylor & Peter, 2014). Additionally, communities in informal settlements frequently have to negotiate agency in local decision-making. Informal employment, often in sectors that are highly exposed to climate change impacts (OECD, 2023), remains a critical livelihood option for millions (Kathage, 2018; Chen, 2012).

While discourses on informal settlements and the informal sectors are often centred around their deficiencies, they are also sites of innovation and adaptation, with experiences and lessons for experiential risk management that are flexible and, sometimes, transformational (Sharma et al., 2022; Collado & Wang, 2020). In the context of cities in the global South, informal governance systems are crucial in decision-making, resource management and meeting local needs. They often emerge to address the weaknesses of formal governance structures, which are inadequate or unsuitable in addressing contextual urban realities of the global South. Informal governance, which includes traditional leaders, community-based organisations and informal networks, plays a critical role in resource management and service provisioning in many global South cities (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). In the context of climate change, informal governance systems facilitate adaptive responses and enhance community resilience (Parvin et al., 2023). However, they lack formal recognition and integration into official policies, which limits the scalability of informal solutions (Satterthwaite et al., 2020). Furthermore, they often operate in parallel to formal systems and are, therefore, viewed as a threat to the formal governance architecture. These territories often face different forms of violence and stigmatisation, which places communities and settlements in deeper vulnerability. Strengthening the links between informal and formal governance systems is essential for creating resilient urban environments capable of withstanding and adapting to climate impacts.

The global South's informal economy, informal settlements and informal governance present significant opportunities for building resilience against climate change impacts in its rapidly urbanising cities. However, there remain gaps in our understanding of the dynamism of informality in these cities (Dodman et al., 2022; Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy & UN-Habitat, 2022; Prieur-Richard et al., 2018).

Call for Papers

Special Issue: Informality and Climate Change in Global South Cities

Edited by: Debra Roberts, Andrew Okem, Maria Fernanda and Chandni Singh

This special edition in *Urbanisation* seeks to explore the multifaceted relationship between informality and climate change in cities in the Global South.

References

- Brown, D., McGranahan, G., & Dodman, D. (2014). Urban informality and building a more inclusive, resilient, and green economy. *IIED Working Paper*. International Institute for Environment and Development. Retrieved from <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10722IIED.pdf>
- Castellanos, E., Lemos, M. F., Astigarraga, L., Chacón, N., Cuvi, N., Huggel, C., Miranda, L., Moncassim Vale, M., Ometto, J. P., Peri, P. L., Postigo, J. C., Ramajo, L., Roco, L., & Rusticucci, M. (2022). Central and South America. In H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E. S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösckhe, V. Möller, A. Okem, & B. Rama (eds.). *Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (pp. 1689–1816). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009325844.014>
- Chen, M. A. (2012). The Informal Economy: Definitions, theories and policies. *WIEGO Working Paper*. Retrieved from https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Chen_WIEGO_WP1.pdf
- Collado, J. R. N., & Wang, H. H. (2020). Slum upgrading and climate change adaptation and mitigation: Lessons from Latin America. *Cities*, 104, 102791.
- Dodman, D., Hayward, B., Pelling, M., Castan Broto, V., Chow, W., Chu, E., Dawson, R., Khirfan, L., McPhearson, T., Prakash, A., Zheng, Y., & Ziervogel, G. (2022). Cities, settlements and key infrastructure. In H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E. S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösckhe, V. Möller, A. Okem, & B. Rama (eds.). *Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (pp. 907–1040). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009325844.008>
- Du, J., Greiving, S., & Yap, D. L. T. (2022). Informal settlement resilience upgrading: Approaches and applications from a cross-country perspective in three selected metropolitan regions of Southeast Asia. *Sustainability*, 14(15), 8985. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.3390/su14158985>
- Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy & UN-Habitat. (2022). Discussions and findings from the 2021 Innovate4Cities conference: New insights for the 2018 global research and action agenda on cities and climate change science. B. Walsh (Ed.), J. Greenwalt (Ed.), C. Oke, P. Hadfield, A. Dickey, M. Craig, M. North, N. Hunter, A. Okem, S. Bland, J. Verbeeck, B. Barth, A. Deacon, H. Roberts, J. Randhawa, S. Joshi, D. Carrillo Silva, M. Lootens, M. Adler, . . . S. Zhu. Retrieved from <https://unhabitat.org/findings-from-innovate4cities-2021-and-update-to-the-global-research-and-action-agenda>
- Kathage, A. M. (2018). Understanding the informal economy in African cities: Recent evidence from Greater Kampala. *World Bank Blog*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/african/understanding-the-informal-economy-in-african-cities-recent-evidence-from-greater-kampala>
- Obeng-Odoom, F. (2016). *Reconstructing urban economics: Towards a political economy of the built environment*. Zed Books.
- OECD (2023). Informality and globalisation: In search of a new social contract., Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c945c24f-en>
- Oteng-Ababio, M., Owusu, G., & Asafo, D. M. (2019). Following the footsteps: Urbanisation of Wa Municipality and its synergism in risk accumulation, uncertainties and complexities in urban Ghana. *Jamba*, 11(1), 479. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jamba.v11i1.479>
- Parvin, A., Mostafa, A., & Syangadan, R. (2023). Disaster adaptive housing upgrading: Insights from informal settlements in Bangladesh and Nepal. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 38, 2129–2149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-023-10031-3>
- Prieur-Richard, A. -H., Walsh, B., Craig, M., Melamed, M. L., Colbert, M., Pathak, M., Connors, S., Bai, X., Barau, A., Bulkeley, H., Cleugh, H., Cohen, M., Colenbrander, S., Dodman, D., Dhakal, S., Dawson, R., Espey, J., Greenwalt, J., Kurian, P., . . . Ürge-Vorsatz, D. (2018). Global research and action agenda on cities and climate change science. Retrieved from https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/07/Research-Agenda-Aug-10_Final_Long-version.pdf
- Revi, A., Roberts, D., Klaus, I., Bazaz, A., Krishnaswamy, J., Singh, C., Eichel, A., Kodira, P. P., Seth, S., Adelekan, I., Babiker, M., Bertoldi, P., Cartwright, A., Chow, W., Colenbrander, S., Creutzig, F., Dawson, R., De Coninck, H., De Kleijne, K., . . . Ürge-Vorsatz, D. (2022). The Summary for Urban Policymakers of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report. Indian Institute for Human Settlements. <https://doi.org/10.24943/SUPSV511.2022>
- Satterthwaite, D., Archer, D., Colenbrander, S., Dodman, D., Hardoy, J., Mitlin, D., & Patel, S. (2020). Building resilience to climate change in informal settlements. *One Earth Review*, 2(2), 143–156. Retrieved from <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/publications/research-and-publications/building-resilience-informal-settlements>
- Sharma, U., Brahmabhatt, B., & Panchal, H. N. (2022). Do Community-Based Institutions Spur Climate Adaptation in Urban Informal Settlements in India? *Climate change and community resilience: Insights from South Asia*, 339–356.
- Taylor, A., & Peter, C. (2014). Strengthening climate resilience in African cities: A framework for working with informality. Retrieved from https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/files/CDKN_ACC_WP_final_web-res.pdf
- UNESCAP (2022). Trends in and impacts of urbanization in Asia and the Pacific. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/CED7_INF3.pdf
- UN-Habitat. (2018). Addressing the most vulnerable first: Pro-poor climate action in informal settlements. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2019/05/pro-poor_climate_action_in_informal_settlements-.pdf
- UN-Habitat. (2020). World cities report 2020: The value of sustainable urbanization. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Retrieved from <https://unhabitat.org/world-cities-report-2020-the-value-of-sustainable-urbanization>
- Weimann, A., & Oni, T. (2019). A systematised review of the health impact of urban informal settlements and implications for upgrading interventions in South Africa, a rapidly urbanising middle-income country. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(19), 3608. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16193608>