

Research Insecurity, Health and Well-being

The overarching aim of this project is to examine the syndemic relationships in resource insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa and assess its sequelae among vulnerable populations in multiple informal settlements.

1. Hosting Institution- York University, Canada

2. Faculty Supervisor

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Position/ Title:	Assistant Professor, Canada Research Chair in Global Health and Humanitarianism
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3. Time Frames for Hosting Scholar

January 2026- March 2026

May 2026- August 2026

September 2026- December 2026

January 2028- March 2028

4. Research Project

Project Title: Research Insecurity, Health and Well-being

Project Description: Globally, nearly 1 billion people live in slums, and this number is expected to rise rapidly as population growth, ruralurban migration, and other social, economic, and environmental factors push people into cities. In many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), rapid population growth and intense urbanization have resulted in the creation and expansion of slum areas. By 2030, it is estimated that nearly 2 billion people will be living in slums, primarily in lowand middle-income countries, where economic opportunities for urban residents have not kept pace with rapid urbanization. Urban slums face complex physical and social challenges that combine to threaten health: poor access to or lack of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services; infectious disease outbreaks from widespread disease vectors; environmental hazards from extreme weather and exposure to pollution; food and energy insecurities; marginalization; and poor housing. These vulnerabilities have undoubtedly been amplified by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 60 percent of the current urban population lives in slums and urban informal settlements where precarious living conditions from overcrowded spaces, lack of safe water, poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, multiple environmental hazards, and lack of healthcare facilities threaten health and general wellbeing. After decades of national and global attempts to improve the health and livelihood of slum residents, poverty and poor health remain persistent in the urban slums of the region, and many of the residents are without access to good healthcare. Despite an extensive literature demonstrating that residents in urban slums tend to experience multiple insecurities and vulnerabilities, such literature has largely addressed individual vulnerabilities and insecurities as separate threats to the health and well-being of slum residents, often overlooking how insecurities co-exist, codetermine each other, and the resulting syndemic effects of their interactions. The overarching aim of this project is to examine the syndemic relationships in resource insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa and assess its sequelae among vulnerable populations in multiple informal settlements.

This aim would be accomplished through four objectives:

1. To examine the dimensions of resource insecurity: food, water, energy, and housing insecurity in two urban slums in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Develop a scale for measuring housing insecurity.
3. Identify pathways through which different resource insecurities—food, water, energy, and housing— co-occur and co-determine each other
4. Establish the syndemic effects of resource insecurity on the health and well-being of slum residents The central hypothesis of this study is that resource insecurity is detrimental to the holistic well-being (encompassing physical, emotional, social, economic, spiritual, occupational, environmental, and educational aspects) of households in informal settlements, particularly among women, infants, and children.

**Preferred Academic
Background and
Research Skills:**

Population Health, Sociology, Geography, Epidemiology, Statistics, or Psychology. The student should have experiences writing literature reviews and manuscripts. They should have some experience in the application quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

5. Leadership, Community Engagement and Cultural Activities (recommended)

Participate in the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research weekly seminars for professional development and networking activities.