

Side Event Report:

Barcelona Global Health Summer School 2015

“Climate Change and Health: Addressing the Challenge, Exploring Solutions”

“Climate change is the biggest global-health of the XXIst century.” – *The Lancet*. This was one of the statements that led the start of the summer school the first day of the course. Students from across the globe were brought to share cultural differences among them, to learn united and to create networks for their future endeavours. Participants from Asia, America, Europe and Africa were present and involved in the course. The idea of the course, sprung from Paula Peremiquel, from AECS-Catalonia and with collaboration of IFMSA and ISGlobal, this year’s edition was successfully conceived.

Monday the 13th, the summer school starts. The sessions served as an introduction to climate change and its relationship to health through environmental and non-environmental determinants of health. Joan Tallada, Rachel Lowe, Payam Dadvand and Oleksandr Yashchenko were the guest speakers of the first day. After the theoretical sessions, discussion followed on ways to build adaptative measures in rural communities, some of which may be severely affected by climate change impacts. One of the conclusions was the necessity of building resilient adaptations and the need to empower and educate locals to act on their own to adapt.

The following day, the debate focused on how climate change directly affects health. Some of the topics discussed were vector ecology and reduced air quality, facilitated by Payam Dadvand and Krijn Paaijmans. The day ended with a visit to the facilities of “*Cosmocaixa*” a science museum in Barcelona.

Wednesday the 15th, the morning consisted of letting the participants know the scientific environment of Barcelona regarding climate projects. Guided visits to the *Center for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL)* and the *Catalan Institute of Climate Sciences (IC3)* were conducted. The afternoon sessions were facilitated by Kira Vinke and Simon Gosling, on topics such as population displacements and water scarcity, respectively. These were ones of the more engaging sessions among participants and which has received more positive acclaim.

The last day of teaching was the most politically charged of all of them. Students went from global to local, learning advocacy skills and opportunities on how to push for your ideas and defend responsible action on climate change. Nick Watts, Joanna Depledge and Claudel Desroisiers facilitated this day’s sessions. The students found out how important are effective communication skills in climate discussion, where one person can make an incredible difference if he or she is persuasive enough.

Unofficial consensus was reached: action and more people involved in climate change advocacy are needed. Later on the final day of the summer school, the side event of the course started: the Conference of Parties Simulation. Since Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon participants who stayed were engaged in political negotiations to adapt Lima's COP document to each one's countries needs and capabilities. The simulation provided ways of implementing that which was learned over the past few days.

The key messages the students took with them would be:

- Action for Climate Change is needed now.
- We can yet subvert the threat of climate change.

