

Welcome to the 5th Urban Health Cluster Newsletter!

Urban health refers to the wellbeing and health of people living in cities. It focuses on the link between the common chronic health conditions and the environment. The six projects forming the Health Cluster (ENLIGHTENme, eMOTIONAL HEART, RECETAS, URBANOME, WELLBASED) aim to enhance collaboration and promote the importance of including health and well-being in urban related strategies and policies.

In this edition you will read about the significant outcomes from two of our Cluster Projects that have completed their 4-year efforts! What is more, we are excited to communicate the early announcement of

the Cluster's Final Meeting that is going to take place at the heart of EU's policy making, in Brussels! The urban event is set for May 2025! Details regarding the agenda and key topics will be shared in the upcoming newsletter issue in April!

You may follow UHC online:

Website: <https://www.urban-health.eu/>

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Kind regards,
The editorial team

We say goodbye to the UHC Projects that complete their cycle! Part I



The first European Cluster to improve and safeguard health and well-being of citizens, leaving none behind.



The projects of the Urban Health Cluster have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, under grant agreement, No. 945307 (eMOTIONAL cities), No. 945238 (ENLIGHTENme), No. 945105 (HEART), No. 945095 (RECETAS), No. 945391 (URBANOME), No. 945097 (WELLBASED)

Congratulations to the ENLIGHTENme and WELLBASED Partners!

After 4 years (2021-2025) of intensive efforts, two of our Cluster Projects have reach their final destination! ENLIGHTENme and WELLBASED have sought to carry our impactful interventions in 9 cities across Europe and beyond! Their efforts brought together experts from different scientific fields and sectors, such as urban development and health research for four years to collect evidence about indoor and outdoor urban lighting (ENLIGHTENme) and energy poverty (WELLBASED). Let's have closer look at their prominent results and outcomes!

ENLIGHTENme Project Highlights!

Lighting the Way to Better Health and Wellbeing | Key Insights for Cities

Over the last 4 years, experts have studied new ways to improve lighting, especially for older adults. The results offer important guidance on making cities healthier and more welcoming for everyone. The project's final event titled "[The effects of light on health and wellbeing: results from ENLIGHTENme project](#)", held on February 13, 2025, brought together 53 participants, including municipalities, lighting designers, industry leaders, and researchers, to discuss the results and chart the way forward. ENLIGHTENme findings have also been showcased at key events, including the Breakfast@Sustainability Forum in Brussels, ensuring that insights reach EU policymakers and urban health networks.

To further ensure lasting impact, **Urban Lighting for health and wellbeing: new guidelines** have been developed, inspiring municipalities to incorporate health and wellbeing considerations into their urban lighting plans. It provides research-based recommendations and policies to help cities make better lighting choices. With the help of a special **Open Atlas**, both citizens and city leaders can use these insights to create healthier and more livable urban spaces.

A **Set of Policy Briefs**, designed to help policymakers, urban planners, and industry leaders, expands on the main ideas from the guidelines, offering more detailed insights into key topics such as **the role of lighting in social life, the integration of health and wellbeing in lighting policies, the economic benefits of well-designed lighting policies, smart outdoor lighting systems for boosting social life, co-creation methods for innovative urban lighting solutions, the health and wellbeing impact of indoor lighting, and ethical considerations in lighting.**

ENLIGHTENme has set the stage for a future where urban lighting is not just about illumination but also about enhancing public wellbeing. As cities take the next steps, these insights will serve as a beacon for creating brighter, healthier urban spaces for all.

For more details and to watch the ENLIGHTENme video, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63WZ0hLEz8>

Discover more about the ENLIGHTENme guidelines and recommendations:

- ✓ **Urban Lighting for health and wellbeing: new guidelines:** <https://zenodo.org/records/14930692>
- ✓ **Set of policy briefs:**
- ✓ Ethics in lighting: <https://zenodo.org/records/14931102>
- ✓ Health and wellbeing impact of indoor lighting interventions: <https://zenodo.org/records/14931068>
- ✓ Community engagement for designing innovative urban lighting solutions: <https://zenodo.org/records/14931025>
- ✓ Social lighting for quality of life in public space: <https://zenodo.org/records/14930991>
- ✓ Making an economic case for investing in outdoor and indoor lighting interventions: <https://zenodo.org/records/14930980>
- ✓ Integrating health- and wellbeing-conscious lighting in urban policy: <https://zenodo.org/records/14930948>
- ✓ Social lighting for ageing cities: <https://zenodo.org/records/14930918>
- ✓ **Open Atlas:** <https://appweenlightenmep01.azurewebsites.net/>

Lighting the Way to Better Health and Wellbeing | Key Insights for Cities

Have you ever considered how the lighting in your home influences your mood and daily activities? After four years of intensive research and collaboration, the ENLIGHTENme project has officially concluded, providing valuable insights into how lighting - both indoors and outdoors—affects our health and wellbeing.

To help people **better understand the impact of lighting**, ENLIGHTENme conducted community engagement activities, workshops, and awareness campaigns. The project worked closely with communities in **Amsterdam, Tartu, and Bologna**, establishing **Urban Lighting Labs** to explore how lighting can improve daily life.

The ENLIGHTENme project engaged with citizens to explore outdoor lighting solutions, organizing workshops where residents shared their experiences and discussed how lighting impacts safety, social life, and wellbeing in public spaces. This work was captured in **a short documentary**, highlighting how well-designed public lighting can make streets, parks, and neighborhoods safer, healthier, and more inclusive - especially for older adults.

Besides, the project has also produced a [set of brochures](#) to raise awareness about the importance of designing good indoor lighting and provide **practical recommendations** to families in their homes, with a special focus on older people. Whether it's adjusting brightness, choosing the right color temperature, or changing the direction of light, small changes can have a big impact on how we experience our homes.

Learn more :

- ✓ Brochures: <https://enlightenme-project.eu/user/pages/06.resources/05.awareness/ENLIGHTENme-AwarenessCampaign-Leaflet-final.pdf>
- ✓ Documentary: <https://enlightenme-project.eu/resources/clips>

WELLBASED Project Highlights!

Public health and energy policies | Learnings for the local just transition

"When it comes to health in cities, many factors come from outside the health sector." said Carolyn Daher from the Barcelona Institute for Global Health during the WELLBASED final conference on 20 February. Indeed, quantitative and qualitative data from the WELLBASED project echoes the complexity of the problem: to design effective and combined solutions for complex problems such as energy poverty we need to bring energy, health, housing and social experts together.

To anchor the health aspect in the broader energy poverty debate (and vice-versa), this data has lately been shared in-person with decision-makers from EU and international institutions such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Public Health Alliance, Barcelona Institute for Global Health or the EU Energy Poverty Advisory Hub.

WELLBASED has identified important policy gaps both for local and EU policy-makers. Based on these, the team produced a wide set of recommendations broken down into [5 thematic policy briefs](#). **The health perspective, for example, is still extremely limited in official EU texts. Beyond mention as a consideration, health and health equity do not play any role of significance within the recent energy directives.**

Local action in that field matters more than ever. WELLBASED pilots and follower cities having signed the [Healthy Homes Manifesto](#) recognise the need for efficient interventions whereby invested money is improving health and energy conditions at once.

As discussions around a Clean Industrial Deal and decarbonisation are at full speed, we must make sure this involves everyone, with equity in access to energy and health. Energy poverty and the related serious health risks are most tangible at the regional and local level, but EU and national guidelines and supportive frameworks are urgently needed. To bring residents back to comfort and wellbeing at home, it requires efficient governance mechanisms, capacity and long-term perspectives.

Access more on the WELLBASED Resources:

- ✓ Policy Briefs: [Policy recommendations – WELLBASED](#)
- ✓ All WELLBASED publications around how pilots designed their urban programs, outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, financing options, etc. [Publications – WELLBASED](#)

Data telling the truth about energy and health of people

The results of the WELLBASED 18-months study are not a big bang, but they tell us a lot about the health and wellbeing impacts of home energy interventions. The international WELLBASED team found people across all six cities whose physical and mental health was affected by the lack of access to energy. This included health conditions being exacerbated by energy poverty, often associated with poor living environments, poor air quality, unbearable summer or winter temperatures and exposure to damp, cold or overheating.

The findings indicate that a significant portion of households – 60-70% – are living in conditions that negatively impact their health, such as dampness and energy bill arrears. Quantitative data revealed that, compared to someone without energy problems, being in high energy poverty means you have:

- 5x higher chances of experiencing anxiety or depression
- 3x higher chances of struggling significantly with doing your usual activities
- 3x higher chances of experiencing significant pain or discomfort

And if you are already in a somewhat fragile medical state, you are more likely to experience worse health as a result of poor energy conditions. A few interviewees who had to rely on energy-dependent life-saving technology were even having to make trade-offs between using that electricity to operate a machine to help them breathe or watch television.

During the qualitative interviews that captured people's lived experience ([listen to our podcast on that topic](#)), the team found widespread evidence of people cutting back on energy to reduce their costs, and coping with excessive heat and cold, as well as with damp and mould. **Some of the interviewed people are among the most efficient energy consumers in Europe, but efficiency comes at a cost on their wellbeing and quality of life.**

Learn more:

- ✓ All WELLBASED publications around how pilots designed their urban programs, outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, financing options, etc. [Publications - WELLBASED](#)
- ✓ The short summary of the final impact conference in Valencia in February and its youtube replay: [Events - WELLBASED](#).
- ✓ 2 podcast interviews (one on ["lived experience"](#) and [one on city interventions with Budapest and Valencia in the focus](#))



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Final Cluster Meeting is coming to the heart of EU's policymaking!

Cities are focal points of human civilisation, often lauded as hubs of prosperity, creativity and development. However, cities are also magnets for a complex array of challenges, recently aggravated by global urban expansion and climate change, which negatively impacts environmental conditions and therefore people's health and well-being. Research on urban health is increasingly vital as cities, despite their potential for growth and innovation, also act as breeding grounds for various urban stressors and health issues, which contribute significantly to the prevalence of epidemics, non-communicable diseases, and an increased risk of premature deaths. Moreover, the dense and fast-paced urban environment can exacerbate mental health issues with city dwellers often facing higher rates of stress, anxiety, depression and other psychological disorders. Addressing these challenges requires a multidisciplinary approach that blends urban planning, public health, and environmental science, aiming to create healthier, more sustainable urban spaces that promote their inhabitants' well-being.

The Urban Health Cluster organises its final annual cluster meeting to elaborate on the above matters and present new evidence for **effective urban health policies** derived from collaborative work done over the last four years of research by the six Horizon2020 projects that formed the Cluster. Stay tuned for more announcements and the official invitations in next months newsletter issue!

THE CLUSTER PARTNERS



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