



## Sustainable Places Projects: Systems thinking and place-based methods for Healthier Malaysian cities (SCHEMA)

Cities are now the dominant human habitat, with more influence than ever on economies, environments and health. Despite progress, intractable urban health problems persist, often the unintended consequences of decisions in other sectors. These problems carry substantial costs and are unevenly distributed.

Unravelling urban complexity requires systems approaches grounded in a social-ecological understanding of health. In illuminating the linkages between human health and physical and social environments, such work can lead to healthier, greener, more equitable cities.

The SCHEMA project will inform urban decision-making, helping to improve local health and meet environment goals, while at the same time developing local research capacity. In particular, the project will explore how health links with green infrastructure and urban food in the Malaysian context. It will create new knowledge, facilitate the implementation of place-based systems approaches, and so lead to better planning decisions and health outcomes in future.

Funded by the Newton-Ungku Omar Fund, the SCHEMA project is led by the Sustainable Places Research Institute and the International Institute for Global Health at United Nations University. Joining partners with expertise in systems and place-based methods, urban planning and public health, to examine urban health in Malaysia.

## The Newton-Ungku Omar Fund

On 5 December 2013 the UK Chancellor announced the creation of an Emerging Powers Research and Innovation Fund of £375 million over 5 years to support science and innovation partnerships with emerging powers. The Fund forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment and its primary focus is to develop partner countries research.

Under the Newton-Ungku Omar Fund in Malaysia, the British Council, as one of several UK delivery partners working with the Higher Education International Unit, is aiming to run programmes in the 'People' strand of Newton, in partnership with the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) as part of the Science to Action (S2A) initiative undertaken by the Government of Malaysia.

Institutional Links is a global initiative with initial focus on establishing collaborations on specific areas that are linked to Malaysian priorities and development needs, and to bring in relevant private and third sector partners, including small- and medium enterprises (SMEs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), technology transfer offices and other not-for-profit organisations.

## United Nations University - International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH)

The United Nations University (UNU) is an international community of scholars, engaged in research, postgraduate teaching and capacity development and dissemination of knowledge in furthering the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The mission of UNU is to contribute, through research and capacity building, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems that are the concern of the United Nations and its Member States.

The UNU-IIGH undertakes research, teaching and capacity development and dissemination of knowledge related to key issues of human health. The aim is to contribute to the development and strengthening of health services policy frameworks and management actions, particularly for people in developing countries, and to support implementation of promotive and preventive approaches to human health. For more information please visit <http://iigh.unu.edu>.

## Research team



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