

According to available estimates, already in 2016 one in eight people in the world lived in a slum. By 2030, this number will be one in four. At the same time, in the countries of the Global South, where the number of slums is the highest, we are now facing an unprecedented aging process. By 2050, more than two-thirds of the world's elderly will live in these regions of the world. The project answers to the urgent need for research on the urbanizing Global South in the context of both environmental and demographic changes. Its main goal is to recognise and understand how older inhabitants of so-called slums, commonly referred to as areas of poverty, cope with the conditions they live in and adapt to them.

Poorest countries are most affected by environmental changes, including the climate crisis, despite having least contributed to them. Regions most at risk when it comes to the effects of these negative changes are Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. It is there that floods or long-lasting drought force local populations to search for new, safe places to live, which often leads them to slums in nearby or more distantly located cities. These areas, however, are no less affected by environmental problems – indeed, they are often additionally polluted with various kinds of toxic waste. This makes them one of the most extreme human habitats.

The project was developed in response to the above data because, although many scientific studies deal with the elderly in slums, they lack analyses which consider the diversity of this group and of the activities undertaken by its members when it comes to everyday problems related to living in slums. When someone arrived in the slum, how long they have been living there and what they think of it – all this translates into their everyday practices. Research carried out as part of the project will make it possible to determine how elderly inhabitants' strategies of coping with and adapting to slum conditions are affected by their perception of their surrounding environment and attachment to their place of origin (and vice versa).

The planned research will be carried out in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dhaka (Bangladesh) with the use of traditional anthropological methods. The researcher will spend a total of over 5 months in each slum doing field research, i.e. collecting data using qualitative methods such as interviews and various observation techniques. Also, visual tools will be given to slum inhabitants, enabling them to become active research participants, which will result in a better understanding of local problems, particularly as they will be depicted from the inhabitants' own perspective.

The project will contribute with various results. The research will make it possible to discover and explain elderly slum inhabitants' practices relating to difficult environmental conditions, taking into account their different types. Results of the analyses will show whether their actions affect slum liveability, which of their strategies are effective and which are not, and how all this is influenced by their perception of the environment and a sense of attachment to the slum as a permanent or temporary place of residence. Additionally, an important aspect of the project will be the creation of a knowledge-exchange network between the researcher and members of the studied community, where the latter are often overlooked in the information chain. This time they will be part of the discussion regarding their lives, i.e. the research results and their potential for the future.