What are our aims?

The ZMG contributes to global efforts to improve the health of urban populations by:

- Analyzing health risks in urban settings
- Assessing the availability, accessibility and acceptability of health and social services in urban areas
- Offering interdisciplinary training and research activities on global urban health issues
- Establishing international collaborative links in the form of research and training networking alliances with relevant stakeholders and comparing their respective situations
- Providing recommendations to improve the health of vulnerable populations

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Welcome to the Centre for Medicine and Society

The Centre for Medicine and Society (ZMG) committed to the field of Global Health with a special focus on urban health and wellbeing.

The departments of Biological Anthropology, Environmental Medicine, Psychosomatic Medicine, Palliative Care, Medical Sociology and Psychology and others are embarking on an interdisciplinary collaboration to explore the determinants and disparities of health and disease. In cooperation with CETRAS (Center for Transcultural Asian Studies, University of Freiburg) and with global organizations (e.g. the WHO and UNEP) the focus is on health and the health conditions such as ecological, biological, social and psychological risk factors in urban settings and on options for improving the living conditions particularly of the urban poor.

Our mission is to contribute to improving the health situation of urban populations in resource-poor countries and industrial countries through research and training.

Research:

In cooperation with the University of Cape Town (South Africa), Penn State University (USA) and other partners, the ZMG is currently working on the project "URBAN HEALTH - URBAN LIVING" an interdisciplinary research project. It focuses on determinants and disparities of health and disease as well as on accessibility to medical care.

Because of existing partnerships within the Pan University Network of Global Health (PUNGH), Cape Town has been selected as the first city for implementation of an interdisciplinary research project. The aim is to develop recommendations for improving the health of disadvantaged population groups and reduce disparities and health risks.

Within the PUNGH network, the ZMG seeks to strengthen the network which is currently running a joint research project entitled "Identifying Urban Transition Priority Areas for Mother and Child Interventions in Cape Town and Pune".

Together with international partners, the ZMG identifies risk factors and proposes measures to control major urban diseases in several cities of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Training:

The ZMG builds on four years experience gained in the elective course on "Global Health" for students from all faculties at Freiburg University, in which health and health service problems, as well as social, psychological and environmental determinants of health are explored.

This course provides an overview of a number of key issues on Global Health. It is designed to help students to understand biological, social and ecological risk factors for health and health systems in a comprehensive way. This interdisciplinary course (4 ECTS) is offered twice a year in five teaching blocks including a visit to the WHO in Geneva and a workshop on needs assessment and planning tools in order to improve the health of vulnerable populations.

The ZMG is now embarking on a postgraduate Master program (MSc) “Global Urban Health” (GUH) which is expected to start in 2016. This Modular course will be taught in English and will be offered for postgraduate students worldwide covering one academic year. The MSc GUH course, which is hosted by the philosophical faculty and organized by the ZMG, will be taken as a full time course with subsequent field study (for the MSc thesis) to be completed abroad or as desk study in Freiburg.

The master course includes interdisciplinary approaches with input from several faculties of Freiburg University and external lecturers. It will offer excursions to WHO-Geneva, relevant institutions in Basel and Strasbourg and will show the efforts of the city of Freiburg to create healthy living conditions.