



PHEN

Pacific-northwest
Health Equity Network

Strategic Plan
2024-2026 updated version

About this Plan

In 2017, the British Columbia Coalition Institute (BCCI) came into being as an informal network. In the following years, there were many successful events through the BCCI. However, by 2022, it became apparent that a strategic plan was needed. In July 2022, a workshop in Vancouver, facilitated by Verena Rossa-Roccor, formed the basis of a strategic plan that was shared with our hubs and the Community of Practice network. This was a 3-year plan that guided the goals and actions for the year 2023.

However, given the recognition that the world is uncertain and complex, and that the realities within which we live in our various communities are constantly changing, we also recognize the 2023 document as a planning framework for annual renewed versions of a strategic plan. Toward the end of 2023, it became apparent that the BCCI community of practice needed a new name due to several reasons: 1) the “Coalition” as such no longer existed, having been amalgamated into the new Canadian Association for Global Health (CAGH); 2) Our activities included more than a single event (such as an “institute”), having evolved to a “Community of Practice” with a range of activities; 3) Collaborators outside of BC joined us, notably the Center for One Health Research in the University of Fairbanks, Alaska. As a result, through a dialogue process, we became the **Pacific-northwest Health Equity Network (PHEN)**. In the process, we also amended our Organization Model, with several changes including a new Leadership Team (see: Appendix A, at the end of the document)

WHO WE ARE
OUR DISTINCTIVE ROLE
OUR VALUES
OUR CONTEXT

Who we Are

The **PACIFIC-NORTHWEST HEALTH EQUITY NETWORK (PHEN)** is an evolution of THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COALITION INSTITUTE (BCCI) which began in 2017 with an inaugural provincial gathering of individuals involved in global health research through the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR). The gathering was held in Kelowna, BC, sparking a long-standing partnership between members working in universities, health authorities, community organizations, and research networks across the province who shared an interest in equity.

Since the end of 2023, we have continued our community of practice under our new name, PHEN, along with an evolved organizational structure.



On the photo (from left to right): Jerry Spiegel, Leah Shipton, Katrina Plamondon, Vic Neufeld in UBC Vancouver (May 2024).

The networks and relationships struck at the BCCI 2017 event led to remarkable provincial collaborations, including the establishment of a cross-institution graduate level global health practice course that continues to welcome students from across the province in trans-disciplinary and applied, equity-centred collaborative learning. In 2019, with support from a small grant from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), BCCI held a second event in Victoria, BC, focused on Planetary Health: Local and Global. Collaboration continued after that event, leading organically to a Community of Practice (CoP).

Over the course of the pandemic, this dynamic and broadly representative community of practice focused on the climate crisis as an inherently global health and equity issue, continued to evolve. The pandemic prompted us to shift to an online collaborative learning community, with the convergence of two crises giving rise to the theme for the 2021 virtual workshop: Climate Justice: Learning from the Pandemic. Over the last three years, our efforts continue to evolve and respond to emerging evidence and initiatives; however, as we have grown, so has the need for greater structure and direction for our efforts.

The need for a strategic plan was identified in two virtual synergy mapping workshops with over 30 participants in February and March 2022. Efforts to identify synergies repeatedly endorsed the need for collaborations across institutions. Members' reflections focused on the far-reaching, broad, and universally critical importance of harnessing collective capacity, ingenuity, and energy for evidence-informed and equity-responsive solutions.

In the strategic planning event of July 2022, we were able to host our first in person event since 2020. This event harnessed pandemic-time efforts to build and maintain momentum within the community of practice. Guided by a professional facilitator, we are now refining our three-year strategic plan, with annual work plans.

We recognize the interconnectedness of people and multi-species around the world, and to the Earth. We also see ourselves as a nimble, adaptive, and creative community that can respond to some of the problems we create.

Our Distinctive Role

OUR VISION

Based in the Pacific Northwest, we are a courageous Community of Practice that boldly advances health equity through local action on global issues.

OUR MISSION

We aim to cultivate a strong network and support system, grounded in learning together and embracing our collective agency to act locally while thinking globally, toward more equitable and sustainable futures.

Four Pillars



CONNECTING

Regular and effective communication

Build local networks through strategic partnerships and collaborations

Host events



KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Mobilize around emerging issues

Promote equity-centred research to action

Maintain a resource library



LEARNING

Support each other in teaching & learning (i.e., courses, curriculum, and resources)

Deliver training on equity & climate

Sharing resources

Adapting, learning from doing, and responding with nimbleness



ADVOCATING & ACTING

Integrated scholar activism on annual challenges

Support hubs working on local challenges

Connecting

OUR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IS DEDICATED TO FOSTERING CONNECTIONS AS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN.

Our goal is to facilitate meaningful relationships and partnerships among and outside of our membership including those engaged in global health, planetary health, one health, and others, harnessing a range of diverse perspectives (i.e., practice, research, training, etc.). Current examples of our community connections include those with the [Rural Health Services Research Network of BC](#) as well as the [Shawnigan Basin Society](#). Our goal is to enhance communication and collaboration, and promote the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experiences. By leveraging the power of connections, we strive to create a dynamic and inclusive environment.



The key activities that guide this pillar are:

- **COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND EFFECTIVELY** through a variety of channels, including our website and newsletters. The communication channels will serve as platforms for sharing updates, promoting events, and disseminating resources to members, enabling us to maintain a strong, connected, and informed group.
- **BUILD COMMUNITY NETWORK** through strategic partnerships and collaborations. The core team will seek out and establish relationships with organizations, institutions, and individuals who share our values and mission and who can contribute and benefit from our work. These partnerships and collaborations will provide us with access to new resources, expertise, and networks, enabling us to expand our reach and impact and promote equity-centered approaches.
- **HOST EVENTS.** We will prioritize regular events and meetings that facilitate knowledge sharing among our community. These may include meetings centered around Indigenous perspectives on forestry and webinars with our local learning hubs. Additionally, we will continue to host our bi-annual workshop to reconnect in-person, discuss and reflect on our strategy and progress, and also introduce new members who support our overall vision.

Learning

WE VIEW LEARNING AS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN, AND OUR GOAL IS TO CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR MEMBERS TO GROW, REFLECT, AND ADAPT.

By supporting each other in teaching and learning, sharing resources, and continuously adapting through our shared experiences, we aim to foster a culture of continuous and reflective learning.

The key activities that guide this pillar are:

- **TEACHING AND LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER** is essential to creating a culture of continuous supportive learning. To facilitate this, we will provide opportunities for members to share their knowledge and expertise through courses, curriculum development, and resource sharing.
- **DELIVER TRAINING ACROSS BC RELATED TO EQUITY AND CLIMATE.** To achieve climate justice, we must prioritize equity and inclusivity in our work. To this end, we will deliver training across the province on climate topics with an equity-centered approach. This training will be designed to help our members understand the intersections of climate change, social justice, and the importance of building inclusive and equitable communities.



Knowledge Sharing

OUR GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE THE SHARING OF IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG MEMBERS AND ENSURING RESOURCES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, we aim to bridge the gap between research and action, advance equitable solutions, and contribute to a more just and sustainable future.



The key activities that guide this pillar are:

- **MOBILIZE AROUND EMERGING ISSUES.** Our CoP will focus on identifying and responding to the emerging trends and challenges. This involves staying up-to-date on the latest research and identifying the relevant issues that require attention. We aim to engage members, partners, and stakeholders in discussions that address these issues (i.e., forestry, equity, youth, and climate change) and actions that address them.
- **PROMOTE EQUITY-CENTERED RESEARCH TO ACTION.** Promoting equity-centered research to action implies that our actions are guided by principles of equity and inclusion. This means prioritizing the perspectives and experiences of marginalized communities and ensuring that research and work is conducted in a culturally responsive way. It also means focusing on equitable outcomes and ensuring that promotes social justice and reduces disparities.

Advocating & Acting

OUR COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES THAT ADVOCATING & ACTING IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF WHAT OUR MEMBERSHIP WAS SEEKING.

We aim to break out of the traditional academic confines and support membership advocacy and action. This is not simply another community of practice where members learn and share among themselves, but one that mobilizes for meaningful change as all other pillars of our strategic plan lead to this one. Our community is committed to engaging in scholar activism by selecting and focusing on relevant topics each year, working on community issues, and taking action in response to emerging issues. By leveraging our collective knowledge, expertise, and networks, we strive to create a more just and equitable world through meaningful advocacy and action.



The key activities that guide this pillar are:

- **SCHOLAR ACTIVISM ON SELECTED TOPIC EACH YEAR.** To achieve our goal of driving local impact, we focus on a different topic each year and engage in scholar activism to advance meaningful change in that area. For example, in 2023, our community focused on forestry-related issues, while in 2024, we are focusing on youth engagement. By selecting and focusing on a specific topic each year, we can better leverage our collective knowledge, expertise, and networks to drive meaningful action and advocacy in that area.
- **LEARNING HUBS ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES.** These hubs are made up of members who are passionate about a particular issue in their community and want to take action to address it. We provide support and resources to these hubs, helping them to develop effective strategies and initiatives to address the issue they are working on. By supporting local hubs, we can help to drive impact at the grassroots level, while also creating opportunities for members to engage in meaningful advocacy and action on issues that matter to them.

Our Values

Our efforts purposefully include building a diverse, future ready community, committed to the stated values.

KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

Our commitment to this involves the co-production and translation of knowledge. We believe collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and community members is essential for meaningful change. This ensures our work is grounded in the needs and experiences of those most affected by the issues we address. We value respectful and equitable collaboration and aim to make the knowledge we produce accessible and relevant to those who need it most.

LEARNING WITH HOST NATIONS

Our community members are guests and settlers who live and work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of several Nations. As we strive for climate justice, we recognize that protecting human and non-human rights is an integral aspect of environmental protection and sustainability. We recognize our responsibility to learn from and build relationships with our host Nations. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with these Nations through mutual respect and reciprocity.

EQUITY

Our community of practice embraces a set of six equity-centred principles for practice, engagement and research in global health: partner authenticity, practice inclusion, shared benefits, commitment to the present and next generations, act on causes of inequities, and practice humility (Plamondon & Bisung, 2019)¹.

¹ Plamondon KM, Bisung E. The CCGHR Principles for Global Health Research: Centering equity in research, knowledge translation, and practice. *Soc Sci Med.* 2019;239:5 pages. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277953619305246>

ACCOUNTABILITY

As we do our work to fulfill our mission, we are accountable to ourselves, to assess all aspects of our achievements—as individuals, hubs and as an organization. We will do this informally as an integral aspect of our activities. As an organization we will conduct a systematic annual review of our goal achievements and resources, identifying lessons learned to guide our future work.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Recognizing the climate crisis as the most pressing global health issue facing our planet today, our community of practice brings a diversity of health-focused disciplines from across the entire spectrum of career trajectory, from youth to senior advisors—together in a creative learning response to this existential crisis. We also see the potential in strengthening relationships between universities and the communities in which they are situated.

Our Context

As our strategic plan has evolved, we are aware of, and informed by a range of contextual issues, some of which are summarized here:

- **CANADA AND CLIMATE CHANGE.** Canada is one of the greatest contributors to climate change, and therefore carrying great responsibility to mitigate the harms our country poses to humanity, multi-species, and the Earth.
- **THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (CAGH).** When the BCCI began in 2017, it was a product of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR). In 2022, the CCGHR amalgamated with the Canadian Society for Global Health, to become the CAGH. As contributions from the earlier CCGHR, there is now a Working Group on Climate Change. Members of the former BCCI, now PHEN, are also CAGH members, and active in these two groups.
- **TRANSITIONING INTO A PACIFIC NORTHWEST EXPLORATION.** In 2023, the BCCI began building connections with colleagues across the Pacific Northwest, including the Center for One Health Research (COHR) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. These collaborations helped shape the transition of the BCCI into the Pacific-Northwest Health Equity Network (PHEN), with the aim of building a regional community of practice focused on health, equity, and planetary health. While the broader political context in the United States, including the effects of the Trump era, has created challenges, PHEN continues to maintain relationships with key colleagues in the region, and these connections continue to evolve. We recognize that this has been a challenging period for many of our U.S. colleagues.
- **GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND CANADA.** This is a particularly challenging time for global health research in Canada. Shifts in global relationships (particularly related to political changes in the United States) are affecting the broader research environment. Canada is also navigating a changing national context, sometimes described as the “Carney effect,” which may influence research priorities and funding landscapes. The PHEN team is well aware of these challenges but also recognizes the opportunity for strong and distinctive leadership. These considerations will help inform updates to the 2026 Strategic Plan, building on the foundations established in the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

As a community of practice committed to climate justice, we recognize that power dynamics play a critical role in shaping the way we work and the impact we have. We acknowledge that the work we do requires a deep understanding of power and privilege, and a willingness to challenge and dismantle systems of oppression.

We understand that we cannot achieve our goals alone, and that the work we do requires collaboration, learning, and collective action. By coming together as a community of practice, we have the power to effect real change and advance climate justice. We believe that by working together, we can leverage our collective power to create lasting change in our communities and beyond.

We recognize that the work ahead will not be easy, and that setbacks and challenges are inevitable. However, we are committed to staying the course, learning from our experiences, and adapting as needed to ensure that we make progress towards our goals.

We are grateful to our members, partners, and allies for their support and commitment to our mission. Together, we will continue to work towards a more just and sustainable future for all, where power is distributed equitably, and all voices are heard.

Thank you for being part of our community of practice and for your commitment to climate justice.

Stay connected with the community and email us
phen.admin@ubc.ca and visit our [website](https://www.equityscience.ca/communities-of-practice/phen):
<https://www.equityscience.ca/communities-of-practice/phen>

Organizational Model

ROLE	WHAT	WHO (AS OF MARCH 2026)
LEADERSHIP TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides strategic leadership and direction• Represents the PHEN to external partners• Provides fiduciary and financial oversight• Builds strategic capacity• Coordinates initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barb Astle• Kate Tairyan• Matthew Little• Veena Sriram• Michelle Amri• Sarah Kelly• Federico Andrade-Rivas (PHEN Associate)• Mira Ziolo (PHEN Associate)
SUPPORT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides administrative support• Coordinates and plans events• Seeks funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator: Vic Neufeld• Advisors: Katrina Plamondon, Jerry Spiegel• Coordinator: Fernanda Novoa
HUBS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core units through which the CoP takes action• Organize around specific initiatives, particularly within the activism lens, both within the hub and engaging the CoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universities: UBC-Vancouver, UBC Okanagan, UVIC, SFU, TWU, UNBC.• Community partners: RHSRNbc, Shawnigan Basin Society, Institute for Global Solutions at Claremont Secondary School (Victoria, BC).