

Reflecting on Conversations at the Healthy World Conference

May 14 and 15, 2024
Montréal, QC



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Overview

Between May 14-15, 2024, more than 300 people gathered in Montreal to attend the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH) Healthy World Conference: Dialogues on Health, Gender and Climate Resilience. Over these two days, Canadian and global colleagues with diverse backgrounds and experience came together to exchange ideas, challenges, and solutions at the intersections of these three themes. Using a dialogue-forward approach, with a mix of workshops, structured and unstructured conversations, and networking opportunities, these conversations both deepened our collective learning and inspired continued growth.

In designing this event, CanWaCH engaged in consultations within and beyond the health and development sector over many months. We searched for the conversations that had yet to happen, brought together voices from diverse geographic landscapes and communities, and centered hope and optimism amidst the challenging nature of the topic. We see the Healthy World Conference as one of a series of moments in our sector's growing understanding of the impacts of the climate crisis on our work, and recognize that much more is to be done if we are to continue to champion the health and rights of women, girls and their communities.

With 21 featured dialogues over these two days, there was more wisdom and resonant messaging shared than we could hope to capture. Therefore, we have attempted to distill three reflections from some of the more structured conversations in this learning document, and we hope that these highlights continue to spark conversation.

Acknowledgement of generative AI usage

To capture the full breadth of the conversations, the following session summaries were written with assistance from AI technology, including audio transcription and text summary tools, alongside traditional (manual) note-taking.



Three Reflections On:

1 | Opening keynote: Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development

SPEAKERS:

- » Kehkashan Basu M.S.M, Founder-President, Green Hope Foundation

Intergenerational perspectives on climate change: Addressing climate change requires an integrated perspective that considers the intersections of gender, health and climate. Women and girls, particularly in vulnerable communities, face unique challenges that are compounded by climate impacts. Solutions should address these interconnected issues holistically, rather than in isolation. The collaboration between different generations, particularly integrating the perspectives and solutions of youth, can drive more effective and inclusive progress. The session emphasized the importance of empowering young people to take leadership roles in climate adaptation and resilience efforts. Youth are seen as leaders who bring fresh perspectives and energy to creating sustainable solutions and advocating for a better future.

Centering joy and well-being: Envisioning and prioritizing joy and well-being are crucial for sustaining efforts in tackling climate change. By centering joy, we can create a more hopeful and positive vision for the future, which motivates continued action and supports mental and emotional resilience. Balancing the demands of impactful work with personal well-being involves finding joy in the positive outcomes and maintaining a focus on the happiness and improvement brought about by the efforts.

Data gaps and grassroots engagement: There is a critical need for age and gender-disaggregated data to better understand and respond to the specific needs of women and girls affected by climate change. Engaging with grassroots data and insights from local communities is essential for developing effective and inclusive policies and solutions.

2 | Climate Crossroads: Migration, Displacement and Opportunity

SPEAKERS:

- » **Dr. Modupe Oladunni Taiwo**, Programme Director, Save the Children International
- » **Antoine Lissorgues**, Coordinateur générale, Médecins du Monde
- » **Caroline Blais**, Travailleuse sociale, Médecins du Monde
- » **David Morley (Moderator)**, CanWaCH Board Member, Retired – Former CEO of UNICEF Canada

DESCRIPTION:

Extreme weather, changing landscapes and inaccessible food and water sources are increasingly contributing to migration and displacement, as communities leave to find safety, income and the resources to survive. Displaced populations, particularly women and youth, are also vulnerable to a myriad of physical and mental health traumas. This dialogue explored the ways in which climate, health and displacement intersect and influence each other. It also considered how policies and programs can better mitigate risks, support autonomy and offer safe and just solutions.

Disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations: The session highlighted how climate change, migration and displacement disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth, across different regions like Sierra Leone, Mexico and Canada. These challenges necessitate more compassionate, rights-based responses.

Complex drivers of migration: While climate change is a significant driver of migration, other factors like violence play a pivotal role. The panel emphasized the severe health and safety risks migrants face and the need for comprehensive health-care services, including mental health support, for displaced populations.

Need for political solutions and universal health care: The speakers called for political solutions that address the root causes of migration, advocating for a change in policies that criminalize migrants. They also stressed the importance of universal healthcare access, regardless of legal status, as a moral and economic imperative and called for ongoing dialogue and advocacy for migrant rights.

3 | Indigenous Leadership, Learning and Solidarity

SPEAKERS:

- » **Michelle Brass**, speaker, writer, and wellness coach
- » **Rosemary Cooper**, Executive Director, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- » **Elder Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer**, Elder, Mohawk of Kahnawà:ke
- » **Larissa Crawford**, Founder and Managing Director, Future Ancestors Services

DESCRIPTION:

This panel invited members of diverse Indigenous communities to share how traditional knowledge and practices have been and continue to be used to navigate and adapt to the health impacts of climate change. Special attention was given to the leadership of Indigenous women in fostering resilience and crafting relevant responses. Panelists shared how reconciliation is intertwined with climate justice. Attendees gained insights into how these learnings may be shared and integrated globally.

Integration of Indigenous knowledge for climate justice and health: The session emphasized the critical need to incorporate Indigenous worldviews, spirituality and holistic health perspectives into climate justice and health responses in Canada. Ignoring these perspectives not only harms Indigenous communities but also undermines broader efforts to address climate change and health challenges.

Reconciliation and environmental stewardship: Reconciliation was discussed as a necessary process that extends beyond relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to include a realignment with the Earth itself. The session highlighted the importance of recognizing the Earth as a living being and stressed the principle of reciprocity in environmental stewardship, advocating for a shift away from extractive practices towards more sustainable and respectful interactions with nature.

Empowerment of Indigenous women and decolonization efforts: The speakers underscored the vital role of Indigenous women in leadership, particularly in climate adaptation, food sovereignty and maintaining traditional practices. They called for policies that support these efforts and emphasized the need to decolonize health systems and climate responses, urging non-Indigenous allies to engage with humility, support Indigenous self-determination, and create spaces that honor Indigenous knowledge and culture.

4 | Spotlight on the Global Hunger Crisis

SPEAKERS:

- » **Lilian Dodzo**, Vice President & Regional Director, World Vision International – East Africa
- » **Elly Vandenberg**, Director, Global Office Canada, World Food Programme (WFP)
- » **Jean Philippe Marcoux**, CEO, Société de coopération pour le développement international (SOCODEVI)
- » **Jacquelyn Wright**, CEO, Canadian Feed the Children
- » **Merydth Holte-McKenzie**, Senior Gender Advisor, World Vision Canada

DESCRIPTION:

This session illuminated the intersecting challenges of climate crises, health impacts and gender in the context of food insecurity. Delving into the responses of humanitarian organizations, the session examined how they approach and address climate emergencies. Panelists explored the health ramifications of the hunger crisis, considering its diverse effects on various health sectors. Central to the discussion is the integration of gender transformative frameworks, offering insights into building climate-resilient approaches. Participants engaged in dialogue on the necessity for coordinated humanitarian responses and preparedness strategies. Together, they assessed both immediate interventions and long-term strategies to mitigate the consequences of climate-related disasters on food security and health worldwide.

Intersectional challenges and holistic solutions: The global hunger crisis is deeply interconnected with climate change, economic instability and conflict. Addressing food insecurity requires a multifaceted approach that integrates various factors such as health impacts, gender equality and systemic barriers. Solutions must be holistic, considering the intersecting vulnerabilities of affected populations, particularly women and children, and must include community-based strategies and localized adaptation efforts.

Barriers to food system resilience: Key barriers to building resilient food systems include external factors like climate change, conflict and political instability, as well as internal challenges such as economic issues, food waste and inequality. Efforts must focus on breaking down silos between different sectors (e.g., health, food and climate) and enhancing coordination among stakeholders to address these complex challenges effectively.

Need for integrated and adaptive strategies: To combat the global hunger crisis, it's crucial to adopt integrated and adaptive strategies that balance immediate humanitarian needs with long-term development goals. This involves improving early warning systems, implementing climate risk insurance, leveraging innovative financing and advocating for flexible funding models. Emphasizing local partnerships and community-centered solutions can enhance the effectiveness of these strategies and foster resilience in vulnerable populations.

5 | Global Partnership and Multilateral Collaboration on Climate and Health

SPEAKERS:

- » **Jean-Bernard Parenteau (Moderator)**, Director General, Health and Nutrition Bureau, Global Affairs Canada
- » **Lasha Gogvadze**, Health Department Lead, Health Climate, Migration and Risk Communication, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- » **Chloë Cooney**, Director, U.S. Strategy, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance
- » **Dianne Stewart**, Deputy Director for External Relations, The Global Fund
- » **Cicely Thomas**, Health Financing Lead, Global Financing Facility

DESCRIPTION:

In this session, speakers reflected on the role of multilateral agencies and global partnerships in fostering collaboration among governments, civil society, international organizations and local communities. Highlighting both successes and areas where further work is needed, panelists discussed the potential of these partnerships to enhance resilience, facilitate cross-sectoral efforts and strengthen preparedness in the face of global climate and health challenges. The conversation examined the unique contributions of these partnerships in supporting and investing in anticipatory action to mitigate the effects of climate change and health crises.

Essential role of multilateral organizations: Multilateral organizations are crucial in addressing global challenges like climate change and health crises. Their ability to provide financing, such as concessional loans and grants, is vital for countries grappling with economic downturns, weakened health systems, and climate impacts. Models like the Global Financing Facility illustrate how combining World Bank loans with grants can effectively support vulnerable populations and ensure sustainability.

Strength of multilateral collaboration: Multilateralism is emphasized as a key strength in tackling complex global issues. Effective solutions require collaboration among various global entities, including the Global Fund and Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance). These partnerships enhance agility and resilience, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where multilateral organizations quickly adapted and responded to crises, demonstrating the importance of collective action.

Integration of local knowledge with global efforts: Multilateral organizations are encouraged to integrate local knowledge and community involvement into their strategies. Effective climate and health interventions depend on local engagement and culturally sensitive approaches. Ensuring that local voices, especially from civil society and grassroots communities, are included in decision-making processes is critical for crafting sustainable and effective solutions.

6 | Advancing Dialogue on Climate, Health and Gender in Increasingly Volatile times

SPEAKERS:

- » **Julia Anderson (Moderator)**, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health
- » **Prof. K. Srinath Reddy**, Founder (Past) President and Honorary Distinguished Professor of Public Health, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)
- » **Caroline Brouillette**, Executive Director of Climate Action Network Canada
- » **Apolline Traore**, Burkinabé Director

DESCRIPTION:

The climate crisis. Health security. Gender rights and bodily autonomy. These complex topics can be challenging to address on their own. At their intersections, we can easily find polarizing politics, cultural clashes and misinformation. This panel explored challenges and pathways for fostering productive dialogue and clear, impactful engagement. Examples were drawn from diverse media channels such as film, scientific literature and journalism. This unique discussion offered an opportunity to learn from global voices and perspectives on what truly moves people to action and what lessons our sector can learn as we seek to share our own stories.

Diverse communication approaches: The session highlighted the need for varied communication strategies tailored to different audiences and contexts. Traditional methods, like top-down dissemination of scientific information, have not been effective in generating action on climate change. Instead, panelists advocated for context-appropriate communication that begins with shared values and engages people where they are. This approach is crucial in overcoming the influence of powerful forces working against progress on issues like climate change and gender equality.

Building collective movements: A key strategy discussed was the importance of moving beyond simply providing information to actually empowering people to join forces in collective action. Effective communication should help build political power capable of counteracting the vested interests that hinder progress, such as those from the fossil fuel industry. Panelists emphasized the necessity of inclusivity in building these coalitions but also the importance of maintaining integrity by carefully choosing allies and avoiding partnerships with entities that have conflicting interests.

The role of storytelling in engaging and inspiring action: Storytelling, particularly through film and literature, was underscored as a powerful tool for engaging audiences on complex and contentious issues. The session explored the challenges and opportunities in using art to subtly educate and inspire action without alienating audiences. The importance of balancing entertainment with education, especially across different cultural contexts, was highlighted as essential for conveying critical messages about climate change, gender equality and other global issues.

7 | The Business of Partnerships

SPEAKERS:

- » **Lori Kerr**, Chief Executive Officer, FinDev Canada
- » **Patricia Peña**, Assistant Deputy Minister – International Development Partnerships and Operations, Global Affairs Canada
- » **Tamer Samah Rabie**, Global Program Lead for Climate and Health, World Bank
- » **Jocelyn Mackie** (Moderator), Gilberts LLP

DESCRIPTION:

In this session, speakers offered insights into the shared (and distinct) objectives of civil society, government and private sector. Together, they examined the many nuances of private partnerships: from local to international; corporations to social enterprises. The panel explored successful collaborations and discussed the key ingredients for impactful partnerships. By candidly unpacking the challenges and opportunities, this dialogue touched on the tradeoffs, discomforts and priorities of sector partners working at the climate, gender and health nexus, and how to be candid about the realities while exploring the possibilities.

Need for innovative financing and partnerships: The session emphasized the importance of developing new financing tools and partnerships to address climate and global health challenges. Initiatives like Grand Challenges Canada and the International Assistance Innovation Program were highlighted as examples of how innovative financing can support sustainable development. There is often a disconnect between the private sector's focus on profitability and the need for environmental sustainability. The discussion touches on strategies to bridge this gap, such as using de-risking language and phasing approaches to integrate environmental considerations gradually.

Understanding the private sector ecosystem: The discussion highlighted that the private sector is diverse, with varying risk appetites, motivations and return requirements. Engaging effectively with the private sector involves understanding these differences and leveraging the strengths of different segments to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth. It's crucial to understand and engage with partners at their current level of capability and willingness. This includes addressing challenges like the disconnect between profitability and environmental sustainability.

Importance of sustainable infrastructure and environmental, social and governance considerations: Investing in sustainable infrastructure is essential for improving outcomes in health, gender equality and climate change. The session emphasized the need to go beyond mere compliance with environmental and social standards to create genuine value. This includes adopting gradual approaches to implementing these practices and incorporating sustainability criteria into procurement processes. Success stories from Peru and Indonesia illustrated how integrating these considerations can enhance operational efficiency and promote environmentally friendly practices. Ensuring that solutions are bankable, cost-effective and scalable is essential for sustainability.

8 | Resilience: An Intersectional Lens

SPEAKERS:

- » **Bella Lam**, Chief Executive Officer, Jane Goodall Institute of Canada
- » **Marie Meloche**, Director of Programs, Jane Goodall Institute of Canada
- » **Emmanuel Mtiti**, Senior Program and Policy Director, JGI Tanzania, Jane Goodall Institute of Canada
- » **Gabrielle Fayant**, Co-founder, Assembly of Seven Generation (A7G)

DESCRIPTION:

Drawing on lived experiences across diverse geographies, this interactive discussion examined how the notions of reliance in people and resilience in nature are interconnected. Discussants reflected on how a holistic, intersectional approach to the concept of resilience highlights how identity, experience and environment influence each other. The profoundly contextual nature of resilience was explored through specific examples of programs and holistic approaches designed to support the health and well-being of people and place.

Holistic and intersectional approach to resilience: The session underscored the importance of viewing resilience through an integrated lens that considers the interconnectedness of climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental inequity and the impacts of colonization. This approach emphasized that resilience is not just about survival but involves understanding the complexities of identity, history and systemic challenges that different communities face. By considering these intersectional factors, the session highlighted the necessity of solutions that are sustainable, equitable and culturally informed. Resilience was characterized as the ability to innovate and adapt to new challenges, particularly in the context of climate adaptation.

Indigenous perspectives on resilience: Indigenous perspectives on resilience were central to the discussion, particularly the idea that Indigenous communities should not have to be perpetually resilient. Resilience often implies ongoing struggles due to systemic injustices like colonization, loss of land and cultural erosion. The discussion on the burdens of resilience, particularly for Indigenous youth, raised important questions about justice, equity and the role of institutions in either perpetuating or alleviating these burdens. The session called for systemic change to address the root causes of these challenges and emphasizes the importance of cultural resurgence, land stewardship and supporting Indigenous youth in reclaiming their heritage and identity as essential components of true resilience.

Community-led solutions and ethical partnerships: The emphasis on community-led approaches and the ethical alignment of partnerships and funding was a critical takeaway. The session highlighted the value of local knowledge and the need for communities to lead in developing solutions to the challenges they face. This approach not only empowers communities but also ensures that interventions are relevant and sustainable. Ethical considerations in partnerships and funding are essential to maintaining the integrity and long-term vision of resilience-building efforts, ensuring that they are aligned with the values and needs of the communities involved.

9 | Climate and Reproductive Rights

SPEAKERS:

- » **Samukeliso Dube**, Executive Director, FP2023
- » **Carina Hirsch**, Head of Advocacy & Policy, Margaret Pyke Trust
- » **Abebe Shibru**, Country Director, MSI Ethiopia Reproductive Choices
- » **Erica Belanger**, Associate Director - Government Partnerships, MSI Reproductive Choices

DESCRIPTION:

This dialogue delved into the complex and crucial connection points between the climate crisis and reproductive rights, focusing on the shared challenges of resources, urgency and inclusion. Attendees had the opportunity to hear examples of these intersecting impacts at both the practice and policy levels. Panelists reflected on cases where funders have been engaged in investments at these intersections and what lessons this offers for future engagement with stakeholders in both the climate and SRHR landscapes.

Integration of reproductive health and climate resilience: The discussion emphasized the need to integrate reproductive health services, including family planning, into climate resilience strategies. Climate change disproportionately affects women, particularly in low-income regions, and the disruption of reproductive health services due to climate-related disasters highlights the importance of including these services in climate adaptation efforts. The lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services exacerbates their vulnerability to climate impacts.

Advocacy for rights-based approaches: There's a clear distinction made between rights-based family planning, which empowers women to make informed choices, and coercive population control. This session advocated for reproductive health services as a fundamental right, essential for both individual empowerment and community resilience in the face of climate change. To improve access to family planning services in areas where stigma exists, program managers and health care workers need to balance raising awareness and overcoming societal barriers without falling into population control rhetoric.

Policy integration is needed: The session called for urgent action to better integrate reproductive health into climate policies and funding mechanisms. It highlighted the need for effective advocacy to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are included in climate action frameworks and that funding and policy support reflect this integration. The panel encouraged using forums like the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and COP meetings to advocate for the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights with climate change agendas, and for making a strong case for funding that supports both areas.

10 | One Health Today

SPEAKERS:

- » **Brian Bedard**, Director, Food Safety and Animal Health, Alinea International
- » **Deborah Ola**, Youth Working Group Member, CanWaCH
- » **Abdikadir Dakane**, National Director, SOS Children's Villages Somalia
- » **Kristen Rodrigues**, Director, International Programs, Veterinarians Without Borders
- » **Mark Brender**, National Director, Partners in Health Canada

DESCRIPTION:

While the One Health approach is not new, there remains an appetite for clear and practical strategies for its implementation at the policy and practice level. The panel delved into contemporary understandings of One Health, exploring its principles and how they have evolved. Speakers reflected on how gender equality and human rights have increasingly become central in One Health and drew on specific examples of successful integration and implementation of One Health principles at the local, national, and global levels.

Integration of climate change and health: The session highlighted how climate change exacerbates health challenges, with specific examples including neglected tropical diseases and the displacement of populations. Climate-induced changes can increase the risk of disease outbreaks and affect health outcomes. This underscores the need to integrate climate considerations into health strategies to address these interconnected issues effectively. Securing long-term, sustainable funding for One Health programs is a significant challenge. The session highlighted the importance of moving beyond traditional donor funding to explore innovative models such as local revenue generation, community-based insurance schemes and private sector partnerships.

Community-centered involvement with a gender equity lens: There was a strong emphasis on the importance of training at the community level and involving local stakeholders. Effective One Health initiatives require engaging with communities, including training grassroots workers like community health promoters and extension workers. This approach helps in better implementation and sustainability of health programs. The session stressed that effective One Health initiatives often rely more on social and behavioral changes than on technical solutions alone. The session addressed gender disparities in health, particularly how women and girls are disproportionately affected by diseases due to their roles in activities that increase their exposure to infections, such as fetching water. Ensuring gender equity and involving women in decision-making processes are critical for creating effective health interventions.

Challenges and innovations in data management: The session addressed significant challenges in data collection and management for One Health. Issues include data centralization, accuracy and privacy. Innovations like AI tools and centralized databases are being explored to improve data quality and accessibility. However, ensuring data privacy and integrating diverse data sources remain ongoing challenges.

11 | Innovation and Technology: Implications for People and Planet

SPEAKERS:

- » **Dr. Jeanette Vega**, Senior Adviser, Minister of Health, Chile
- » **Jennifer Garard**, Deputy Director, Future Earth Canada and Sustainability in the Digital Age
- » **Karlee Silver (Moderator)**, Chief Executive Officer, Grand Challenges Canada

DESCRIPTION:

This session explored the practical and ethical dimensions of technology, AI and innovation within the context of global health and the climate crisis. The panel examined how technologies serve and impact vulnerable populations impacted by the climate crisis, emphasizing the importance of a gender equity perspective in crafting solutions. Attendees explored how AI can enhance access to crucial information and empower communities facing global health challenges and environmental crises. It was a thought-provoking discussion on the responsibilities of ethical decision-making, as well as insights into improving access to information in light of the digital divide and reflections on measuring the impact of technological interventions.

Environmental impact of AI: The session highlighted concerns about the environmental costs associated with AI, particularly its carbon footprint and water usage. There is a growing recognition of the need for standards to quantify and manage these impacts. This includes addressing the energy demands of training large AI models and exploring best practices for cooling server farms to reduce their environmental impact. AI has the potential to help lower-income countries bypass intermediate stages of development by directly adopting advanced technologies that meet their specific needs. This can be a significant opportunity for these countries to make rapid progress without needing to go through traditional development stages. However, AI solutions should be developed based on local demands and capacity to ensure they are relevant and effective in the specific context of each country.

Ethical and inclusive AI development: Ensuring that AI contributes positively to equity involves addressing several challenges. This includes ensuring that AI tools are developed with local contexts in mind rather than imposing solutions from outside. For example, there are ongoing efforts to ensure that Indigenous populations are fairly compensated for their data and involved in decision-making processes related to its use. Additionally, there is a need for capacity building to help local communities effectively implement and benefit from AI technologies. Ethical AI development also requires transparency, community engagement and a focus on preventing biases in data and algorithms. As technologies evolve rapidly, existing regulations often lag behind. The conversation touched on the need for dynamic and adaptive regulatory frameworks to address new challenges as they arise.

Shifting social norms and default options: The discussion emphasized the potential impact of shifting social norms on the ethical use of technology. For example, in Chile, legislation regarding the preservation of the human brain involves protecting the data and intelligence contained within it. This foresight addresses future scenarios where brain data might be extracted and stored digitally. Changing default options on digital platforms to promote more responsible choices can drive significant behavioral change. Educating people about responsible technology use from a young age is also crucial in shaping attitudes towards technology and ensuring its ethical application.

12 | Building Resilience in a Changing Climate: Youth Perspectives on Health, Gender and Climate Action

SPEAKERS:

- » **Ineza Umuhoza Grace**, Global Coordinator, Loss and Damage Youth Coalition
- » **Stu Solomon**, Senior Advisor, Economic Empowerment & Resilience, Plan International Canada
- » **Theo Gibbs**, Senior Climate Strategy Advisor, Y-labs

DESCRIPTION:

This session featured discussions on addressing climate challenges within health systems while promoting equity and actionable solutions grounded in youth perspectives of equity and justice. The session amplified the voices and rights-based considerations of young people amidst the climate crisis. It also emphasized the significant health risks posed by climate change, from direct effects like heat-related illnesses to indirect impacts such as disrupted access to health care. Speakers reflected on solutions to address the impacts of the climate crisis in a youth-centered way, which includes locally-led adaptation, bolstering resilient health systems and funding mechanisms.

Youth anxiety and hope: The session highlighted the interconnectedness of climate justice, health and gender justice, emphasizing that young people, particularly women and girls in the global south, are disproportionately affected by climate change. These impacts include challenges in accessing health care, education and economic opportunities. Youth face significant anxiety about the future due to the ongoing climate crisis. They often feel overwhelmed by the destruction they witness and the lack of effective action from leaders. Despite this, there's a call to address this anxiety by fostering hope and ensuring that youth have meaningful roles in driving change.

Youth-led advocacy and systemic change: There was a strong focus on the role of youth in leading climate action. The discussion emphasized that youth are not just victims but also active solution-makers. The session called for systemic changes that involve young people and women in decision-making processes to ensure gender-responsive and community-driven solutions. This involvement helps ensure that their perspectives are reflected in policies and actions, potentially reducing feelings of helplessness.

Holistic and inclusive approaches: The session underscored the need for a holistic approach to addressing climate-related health challenges, involving collaboration across sectors and levels. This includes integrating digital tools, mobile clinics, and combining climate and sexuality education, while also addressing cultural barriers and empowering grassroots initiatives. The discussion highlighted how climate change results in economic losses, such as infrastructure destruction, which leads to increased debt for developing countries. This highlights the need to rethink how climate-related losses are addressed, suggesting that the current approach may need to be reevaluated to better support affected regions.

13 | Riding the Wave: A Workshop on Integrating Climate Action into your Organizational Strategy

SPEAKERS:

- » **Lauren Alcorn (Moderator)**, Senior Director of Strategic Partnership and Government Relations, One Drop Foundation
- » **Daria Hobeika**, Chief Legal Officer - Transition Risk, Climate Law, and Governance, Clearsum
- » **Tania Vachon**, Senior Director of Programs, Social Art for Behaviour Change, One Drop Foundation

DESCRIPTION:

Mitigating risks posed by climate change is our collective responsibility and is vital to the future of our organizations and the communities with whom we partner. Creating a climate strategy and adopting climate stewardship within your organization should not be an overwhelming task! Through this practical workshop, participants deepened their understanding of the key elements of a climate strategy, including definitions, foundational concepts and tips to guide them. This was reinforced through specific examples of One Drop's own organizational journey, supported by Clearsum. This was also a good opportunity to break down silos and develop strategies collectively to maximize impact. includes locally-led adaptation, bolstering resilient health systems and funding mechanisms.

Integration of climate strategies: The session emphasized the importance of integrating climate strategies into the core operations of organizations. Assessing and enhancing strategies requires an understanding of:

- **Impact:** Understanding climate change impacts on the organization and the populations they serve;
- **Risk:** Assessing physical and transitional risks associated with climate change;
- **Opportunities:** Identifying new needs and adapting services to changing conditions;
- **Data management, communication and finance:** Ensuring data-driven decisions, effective communication, and alignment with funding requirements.

Collaboration and continuous learning: It is essential to build a community of practice for sharing strategies, tips and experiences. The session encouraged ongoing education and collaboration among participants, emphasizing that climate strategy is an evolving field that requires constant learning and adaptation. The conversation highlighted the importance of organizations making statements about their progress in climate resilience, even if they are just starting: being transparent about where they are in their journey can be more valuable than silence.

Emotional and psychological considerations: The session acknowledged the emotional and psychological challenges associated with climate work, such as anxiety and fear. It stressed the importance of creating safe spaces for these emotions to be expressed, which can foster creativity and drive positive action. When identifying challenges, consider framing it positively using a "How might we?" approach. Successful climate strategies involve changing behaviors within the organization. This requires more than just knowledge; it involves motivating staff and partners, often by evoking emotions and engaging people creatively.

14 | Gender Responsive Climate Financing: Implications for Global Health

SPEAKERS:

- » **David Schwartz**, Senior Advisor to CEO and Strategic Partnerships, Convergence Blended Finance
- » **Brian Tomlinson**, Executive Director, AidWatch Canada
- » **Elena Bagnera**, Senior Climate Finance Analyst, Climate Policy Initiative
- » **Mukesh Chawla**, Former Adviser, Health, Nutrition and Population, World Bank
- » **Lindsay Glassco (Moderator)**, President & CEO of Plan International Canada

DESCRIPTION:

In this dialogue, speakers explored the current landscape of climate financing and investments, and the opportunities for addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls in the context of climate change. Panelists described how spending silos make it difficult to measure what has been invested, and to respond to increasingly complex health and climate crises. They also discussed the availability and nature of existing funding mechanisms, as well as the opportunities for innovative approaches to investment that keep inclusion and equity at the forefront.

Urgent need for climate finance reform: There's a critical need to increase climate financing, particularly in areas like health and gender equality, which are currently underfunded. Few climate finance targets health impacts, despite the growing health crises that are exacerbated by climate change. The lack of focus on these areas underscores the need for more nuanced data and better-defined metrics to ensure funds effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations, especially women and children.

Challenges in climate finance allocation: The current landscape of climate finance heavily prioritizes mitigation efforts (such as renewable energy projects) over adaptation and loss and damage, including health impacts. While both public and private investments are significant, debt remains a primary tool for raising finance, which can limit effectiveness. Gender-responsive investments are particularly lacking due to inconsistent definitions and difficulties in tracking outcomes. More nuanced data and better-defined gender metrics are needed to ensure climate finance effectively supports women and girls who are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Integration and innovation in climate finance: Effective climate finance requires better integration of health and gender considerations into all financial and development strategies. The session highlights the importance of breaking down silos between climate, health and humanitarian financing, advocating for mainstreaming these considerations throughout the design, implementation and evaluation of projects. Innovation in funding mechanisms, such as blended finance and catalytic funds, is also crucial to mobilize resources and support early-stage solutions effectively.

15 | Measuring Impact & (Re)Designing research

SPEAKERS:

- » **Danielle Alakija**, Founder & CEO, The SOLI Group
- » **Kohima Daring**, Senior Country Director, World Renew Bangladesh
- » **Natacha Lecours**, Senior Program Specialist, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- » **Yaovi Mahuton Gildas Hounmanou**, Researcher
- » **Bart Dickinson (Moderator)**, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator, The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

DESCRIPTION:

How can we foster more inclusive, community-led and nuanced research and evaluation at the nexus of climate, health and rights? Panelists critically examined how traditional research and evaluation approaches fall short in capturing the intricate and context-specific connections between global health, gender equality and the climate crisis. Together, speakers reflected on how monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning mechanisms must be relevant for and crafted by those living on the frontlines of climate change. They also discussed the current data landscape, identifying gaps in available data and exploring opportunities to invest in better data collection.

Evolving M&E practices: The session highlighted significant advancements in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), including the integration of AI and machine learning for data synthesis and prediction. These technologies are improving data collection and analysis, especially in contexts with incomplete historical data. The emphasis on community-level data collection methods, such as crowdsourcing through text message, demonstrates a shift towards more real-time and localized insights.

Community engagement and inclusivity: A major theme was the critical role of community involvement in M&E and research. Engaging communities throughout the research process ensures that interventions are relevant and effective. The session stressed the need for participatory methods, flexibility in research design, and respect for local knowledge and narratives to address real-world issues. Effective M&E should be an integral part of the project from the start, not a separate process. It should be woven into the project's design and implementation to ensure that impact and effectiveness are continuously assessed.

Ethical considerations and storytelling: Ethical issues related to data protection and storytelling were discussed, emphasizing the need for anonymizing data and ensuring participants' privacy. Storytelling was recognized as a powerful tool for conveying impact and engaging audiences. However, effective storytelling requires a deep understanding of cultural contexts. Stories need to resonate with the audience and drive action. It's not just about reporting data but about ensuring that the information leads to practical measures and community action. There was a focus on bridging the gap between abstract climate change discussions and the real, immediate impacts experienced by vulnerable populations. The need for data and narratives that reflect these immediate effects, rather than just abstract projections, was emphasized.

16 | Becoming a Planetary Health Leader: Co-designing Opportunities for Action & Impact Through your Organization

SPEAKERS:

- » **Tina Lines**, Advocacy and Policy Officer at the Canadian Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases.
- » **Maëlle Marchand**, Founder and Social Impact Strategist at Symbiocene Collective
- » **Adetola Oladimeji**, Manager of Impact and Learning & Co-Coordinator, WGCCH, Stephen Lewis Foundation Climate Change and Health Working Group
- » **Sara Marshall**, Business Development Manager, WaterAid Canada

DESCRIPTION:

Participants had the opportunity to explore how they and their organizations could become leaders in planetary health — a transdisciplinary, solution-oriented field and social movement to safeguard human health and natural systems in the Anthropocene era. Attendees participated in a series of collaborative design activities where they could explore the foundational principles and goals of planetary health and assess its alignment with their organization. The session allowed participants to tap into the diverse knowledge of one another to explore and create opportunities for their organization to transform ideas into concrete actions that can equitably promote healthier communities and ecosystems.

Systems thinking: Solutions to planetary health challenges require a systems-based approach, which considers the interconnections between human health, ecosystems and climate. The session emphasized the emerging field of planetary health, which connects human well-being with the health of the planet's ecosystems. It highlighted the need for transdisciplinary collaboration and systems thinking to address the interconnected challenges of environmental degradation and human health, especially in the context of the Anthropocene era. Planetary health issues are complex and require input from local communities, policymakers, researchers and practitioners. This collaborative approach ensures that strategies are holistic, addressing both human and environmental health in an integrated manner.

Actionable strategies and challenges: Participants engaged in activities to explore how their organizations could adopt planetary health principles. They identified both hopes and challenges in implementing these concepts, such as reducing environmental impacts, improving human health and promoting equity. The session encouraged creative, non-traditional approaches and cross-sectoral partnerships to achieve meaningful outcomes. The discussion highlighted the importance of primary prevention, particularly in the context of neglected tropical diseases, as preventive measures help mitigate environmental impacts and reduce health inequalities.

Focus on vulnerable populations and sustainable practices: The discussion also addressed the impact of climate change on neglected tropical diseases and the importance of climate-resilient water and sanitation systems. Examples like Montreal's urban agriculture initiatives were used to illustrate how local actions can contribute to planetary health. The session underscored the need for innovative solutions that prioritize both environmental stewardship and social equity, particularly for vulnerable communities.

17 | Closing panel: Inter-generational action on climate, health and rights

SPEAKERS:

- » Sheila Watt-Cloutier
- » Dr. Chúk Odenigbo

Interconnection of human and environmental trauma: The session highlighted the profound link between human trauma and environmental issues. Historical injustices, such as colonialism, have led to enduring challenges like high suicide rates and food insecurity in Arctic communities. This has contributed to creating “landscapes of despair” — environments associated with negative physical, mental, spiritual and social health outcomes. These landscapes have been particularly detrimental to marginalized communities, including Indigenous and Black communities. This trauma parallels the environmental crisis, where climate change disrupts traditional lifestyles and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities.

Intersectionality and comprehensive approaches: Gender, health and climate resilience are deeply intertwined. Women and children in Indigenous communities are particularly affected by climate change due to systemic inequalities. The discussion stressed the importance of addressing these interconnected issues comprehensively, rather than tackling them in isolation. Colonization has imposed a singular view of health and medicine, often disregarding holistic and traditional practices. Historical instances include the use of disease as a weapon and the imposition of Western medical practices on Indigenous communities, undermining traditional healing methods. Leadership should come from a place of heart, integrating emotional intelligence and empathy rather than force. Outrage, as opposed to rage, should be used to drive change — it acknowledges pain without dehumanizing others.

Empathy and inclusion of diverse knowledge: A call was made for empathetic and culturally informed solutions, moving away from bureaucratic responses. Recognizing and integrating Indigenous and Black knowledge, as well as embracing diverse perspectives, is crucial for effective and sustainable solutions. This approach involves understanding and incorporating holistic and traditional practices into both environmental and health-care strategies. Nature, when treated solely as a resource for exploitation, becomes a tool of harm rather than a partner in sustainable living. Addressing these issues involves respecting and integrating diverse perspectives on environmental stewardship. The session emphasized the importance of learning from elders and previous generations. Elders offer valuable wisdom and traditional knowledge that can guide current and future efforts in addressing issues related to health, environment and social justice.

Final Thoughts: CanWaCH's Reflections On Future Directions

1 | Continuous learning: Building competence through collaboration, technology and innovation:

At the core of meaningful skill-building lies an ongoing commitment to continuous learning and better data. The sessions underscored the sector's need for sustained capacity-building efforts to equip professionals with the technical skills, tools and information necessary to address the complex intersections of climate, health and gender. Fostering a culture where attendees can share information and refine their skills is essential for building confidence, maintaining progress, and achieving long term impact. We must explore new models of learning for increased sector knowledge and expertise in these areas. Moving forward, reinforcing these skills through follow-up workshops, technical guidance and additional resources will help ensure that newly acquired competencies are applied effectively, ultimately benefiting both our organizations and the communities they serve.

Gathering accurate, demographic-specific data is essential for addressing the needs of vulnerable communities. Ethical storytelling, rights-based advocacy and culturally sensitive communication foster engagement and collective action. While technology, especially AI, offers potential in data management and health access, it requires ethical development, community involvement and responsible use to avoid perpetuating biases and ensure equitable impact.

2 | Curious conversations: Dialogue-forward approaches are best suited to complex issues

The conference highlighted a strong desire among participants for more opportunities to connect, share ideas and build meaningful relationships with each other. Additionally, there is an appetite to hear from new voices, different sectors and non-traditional actors. A dialogue-based approach that prioritizes two-way conversation and debate, along with workshops, roundtables and structured networking opportunities allows participants to explore topics in-depth, and can create a collaborative environment where they exchange insights, learn from each other's experiences, and engage in richer, more impactful conversations. These formats foster active participation, enabling attendees to explore topics from multiple perspectives.

Technology can be a powerful medium for engaging attendees, both in-person and virtually, and there is room for improvement when it comes to meaningful hybrid participation in future events. Using online platforms to facilitate introductions, schedule meetups or create thematic discussion groups could enhance our ability to connect.

Facilitation matters. Moderators play a key role in shaping the flow and interaction of the conversation, and speakers should be supported to design their presentations with questions and

participant curiosity in mind. That means focusing less on traditional lectures and more on fostering audience interaction. This approach works best when speakers have a chance to connect before the session and build their own relationships and connections in advance.

3 | Unified efforts: Integrated, intersectional approaches for inclusive climate-health solutions

Breaking down barriers between global and domestic efforts and contexts emerged as a priority. Many participants stressed the need to move beyond silos, emphasizing that effective solutions require multifaceted, cross sectoral conversations. Bringing together diverse perspectives from the global North and South, from humanitarian and development contexts, and from environmental and health sectors enriches the dialogue and helps better align strategies to address interconnected impacts of the climate crisis.

Effective climate action requires addressing the complex intersections of climate impacts with health, gender and displacement. Vulnerable groups, especially women, youth and marginalized communities, experience climate effects disproportionately. Solutions must be holistic: Indigenous knowledge and youth perspectives to create resilient and equitable policies. Indigenous knowledge and youth-led innovations are central to sustainable and culturally relevant responses, emphasizing ethical, community-centered partnerships that respect and leverage local contexts and expertise.

To drive meaningful change, there is also a pressing need for coordinated inter-coalition advocacy. By uniting voices from different sectors and networks, we can amplify shared goals, foster solidarity and accelerate action. Prioritizing interdisciplinary collaboration, cross-sector partnerships and inclusive conversations will strengthen efforts to create innovative and impactful solutions to the wide ranging impacts of the climate crisis.

