



**SUNWAY**  
CENTRE FOR PLANETARY HEALTH

# ANNUAL REPORT

**AUGUST 2021-DECEMBER 2022**



Owned and governed by the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation   
*Nurturing the Seeds of Wisdom*

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The first of August 2021 was, for me, the culmination of a long journey of discovery. My experience as a medical practitioner, then a humanitarian aid worker, through my work on the front line of disasters and crises around the world, to the United Nations and through service with the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, led me to one rather hard-to-swallow conclusion. Despite our collective efforts to overcome the scourge of war, to improve lives, livelihoods and health outcomes, we have ignored one fundamental truth: If the planet is sick, we will also become ill.

And so, with the generous support of Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, Founder of the Sunway Group, a small team established the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health at Sunway University on that day, 1 August 2021, in Malaysia – the heart of Asia; a part of the world which suffers from the highest number of disasters, but which is also the economic powerhouse for the planet.

We have a bold ambition to introduce a relatively new approach to solving the most complex and challenging of problems in history: how best to manage the relationship between the health of humans and the health of the planet. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), strongly supported by the Sunway Group, represent collective ambition on improving sustainable human development by 2030. Our aim is to support achievement of the goals by adopting a planetary health approach, working closely with relevant partners, including the University's Centre for Sustainable Development, while also looking beyond 2030 and helping to work out "what next".

Much of the last fourteen months has been devoted to learning and planning for our small but dynamic team. We have reached several conclusions:

Firstly, collaboration is key. The need to transition away from behaviour that is deeply entrenched in how we currently manage every aspect of our relationship with the planet will require an "all of humanity" consensus. Finding the right partners so that we can play our humble part in that process will be essential. The Sunway Group's incredible work on sustainable development is a springboard for that ambition.

Secondly, without science and research, we can only guess at what needs to happen. The science is already there but its complexity leaves us numb. Our focus will be on taking what we know and what we will learn and linking it to action: changes in policy, transformation in how we use natural resources, and giving people new tools to manage their relationship with the planet, enabling us all to live within planetary boundaries.

Thirdly, our institutions must transform. Academia must recognise that research must be easily accessible for everyone, not just those who speak "academese". Governments must react not to the latest tweet or sympathetic commentator, but to "the people", to innovators and to policy makers. Corporations must move beyond the jargon of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG), of boardroom profit and loss charts, and greenwashing, towards behaviours which nurture our relationship with nature rather than destroy it.

Finally, and most crucially, we must change. Our society must truly transform. Our unsustainable consumption habits cannot continue. But without a social movement to reject the status quo and call those that profess to work in our best interests to account, nothing will change. This movement has begun; the seeds are there in ESG guidelines, in the acknowledgement by our government that "climate change" is important enough to be included in the name of a ministry here in Malaysia, in our growing rejection of fossil fuels, of single use plastics, of resource extraction that is harming the planet and ultimately regulations are required.

But this is only a small start. This is why planetary health is so critical. It focuses on the Epoch of the Anthropocene, where the Earth is now characterized by human domination of the planetary system. The planet has elemental boundaries that we need to live within to lead lives where we thrive because the planet is thriving. Exceeding these boundaries is what has landed us where we are today.

To meet this challenge, the Centre will research, pilot, learn and drive planetary health leadership development at Sunway University, which can then be replicated elsewhere. The Centre will use science and learning to push for policy change, supporting where useful, and challenging where needed. We will use the voices of our experts, and those of the wider Sunway Group, to call for change. We will help to define what that change must look like. We will harness the power of traditional and social media, communicating clear, positive, "can do" messages of change to diverse audiences across this region of the world.

We will host the 2024 Planetary Health Annual Meeting, the only global summit on planetary health, at Sunway University. This conference, open to anyone who is interested, and the year of action we will initiate in May 2023 leading up to the Summit, need to be game-changing. There is no time to lose.

I commend this report to you and hope that it, and my call to action, cause you to stop, think, reflect and consider the question "What must I do?"

Professor Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood

# CONFRONTING REALITY: THE CASE FOR PLANETARY HEALTH

## WHAT IS PLANETARY HEALTH?

Planetary health is the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health, wellbeing, and equity worldwide through judicious attention to the human systems—political, economic, and social—that shape the future of humanity and the Earth's natural systems that define the safe environmental limits within which humanity can flourish. Put simply, planetary health is the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.

A planetary health approach, adopted by the growing planetary health movement, coordinated by the Planetary Health Alliance, argues that while humankind has made significant progress in a number of areas (such as, for example reducing child mortality and increasing life expectancy, and progress made through the industrial, green and technological revolutions), these gains have been achieved through increasing disruption to the health of the planet, culminating in shifts in biodiversity and flows of natural elements, changing land use and cover, accelerating global pollution, depletion of natural resources and resulting damage to our lived environment and changes to the climate.

## HOW DO WE ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

A planetary health approach to humanity's current challenges:

- states that planetary health is a **scientific field and global movement** focused on understanding and quantifying the growing human health impacts of anthropogenic global environmental change,
- acknowledges that **humans are altering the Earth's ecosystems** and that changes in the Earth's water, land, and atmosphere adversely affect human health and the ability to achieve health and wellbeing.
- advocates for recognition of the urgency and scale of problems and required solutions. The approach is supported by a scientific evidence base and underpinned by a social movement. It is also **transdisciplinary and multi-dimensional**.
- **develops solutions** that will allow humanity and the natural systems we depend on to thrive now and in the future.
- **maintains a sharp focus on human health**, recognising that the boundaries between humans and all life we share this planet with are blurred and argues that by harming our natural systems, we harm ourselves and future generations.
- and states the belief that “achieving planetary health” (i.e., creating conditions that will allow humanity and the natural systems we depend on to thrive now and in the future) will require a **Great Transition** where we all learn to do nearly everything differently, such as:
  - producing and consuming food, manufactured products, and energy.
  - constructing and living in our cities.
  - managing our natural landscapes and resources.
  - co-existing harmoniously and responsibly with social, artificial, and digital technology.
  - recalibrating the stories, we tell ourselves about our place in the world, our relationship to Nature, and what it means to live a good life.

Humanity is in an existential race against time. With compounding threats now clearly visible, agreeing how we transform our presence on this planet - a place that is now reliant on how we behave for its well-being - needs to be a global top priority. Continuing business-as-usual is no longer an option. We are living in the age of the Anthropocene where humanity is the driving force shaping the planet. The great transition towards a truly sustainable future requires a painful confrontation with reality, a wake-up call that transforms our social, economic and political systems and mechanisms, and a focus on equitable, ethical and responsible distribution of finite resources.

# A GLOBAL AMBITION STARTING IN ASIA PACIFIC

To support the wider planetary health movement take forward this enormous challenge, the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health (the Centre) at Sunway University is bringing the planetary health approach to Asia. The Centre is a 'think-and-do' tank committed to achieving a healthy planet for all.

The Centre aligns with Sunway University's long-standing commitment to sustainable development by working with and leveraging the University's existing faculties, networks, and diverse capacities, while simultaneously forging new connections with partners from the region and around the world to support the necessary and urgent transition that humanity must now make.

## THINKING AND DOING

As reflected in its two core workstreams, Knowledge and Learning, and Engagement and Influencing, the Centre's think-and-do ethos emphasises generating, translating, and communicating evidence-based research to promote policy and human behavioural change.



## KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

Contributing towards the global push to enhance knowledge on planetary health through the application of science and research to a broad swathe of planetary health issues.

Amplifying the voices and the work of planetary health advocates and scientists to reinforce the evidence base and application of a global planetary health transformation.



## ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCING

Persuading and engaging stakeholders to shape a planetary health approach to policy, business, social programmes and day-to-day living, requiring enhanced involvement and influence of planetary health advocates in policy making.

Engagement and influencing activities are designed to lead to behavioural change and policy reform at individual and institutional levels respectively.

The incredible biodiversity of Asia and the Pacific means that these regions are at the heart of sustainable planetary health. Here, where critical climate, ecological, biological, humanitarian, economic, and socio-political challenges are deeply intertwined, the need for a focus on planetary health is clear. The Centre has been established to help the region rise to the multi-faceted challenges it faces. To help the broader movement address our global planetary health challenges, the Centre has focused on four focus areas and three planetary health enablers during its inaugural 15 months:



**Focus Area 1:**  
Preventing Future Pandemics and Health Crises



**Focus Area 2:**  
Tackling the Climate Emergency



**Focus Area 3:**  
Creating Healthy Cities



**Focus Area 4:**  
Achieving Sustainable Food Systems



**Enabling Pillar 1:**  
Effective Communications



**Enabling Pillar 2:**  
Good Governance



**Enabling Pillar 3:**  
Education Revolution

# MOBILISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PLANETARY HEALTH LEADERS

The Centre's ethos is based on a belief that it is not too late, that there is still time and that there is energy for change. But vision and leadership are in short supply. The role of young people as agents, enablers and warriors of change needs mentoring and encouraging. The future belongs to young people; their stewardship of the planet must be informed by planetary health principles and approaches.

## AREA OF WORK

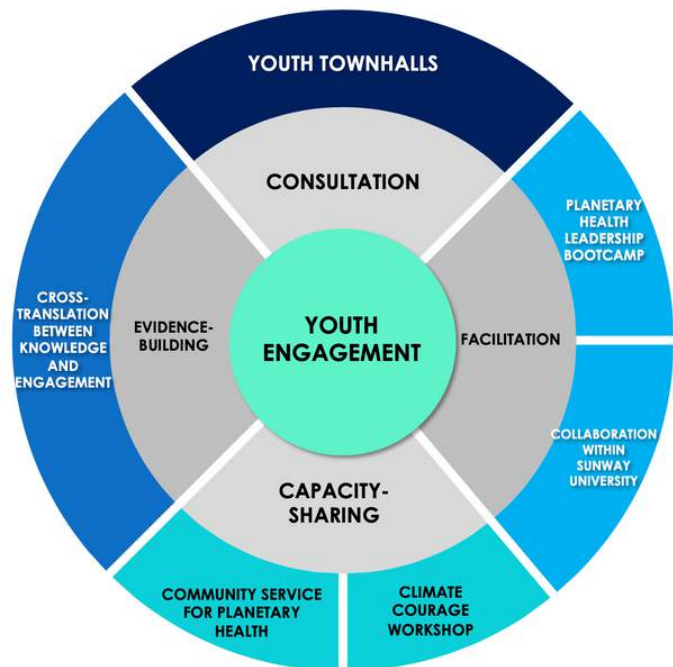
Central to the Centre's strategy is helping to foster meaningful and continuous engagement with young people. Apart from listening to their concerns, we also advocate for them to be able to express their ideas to those in power.

Youth-led solutions to tackle societal needs and challenges can be supported by including young people in high-level decision-making processes, and championing their vision for a future that they would like to live in.








The Centre has undertaken several activities in support of this most important area of work across several of its thematic priorities and enabling pillars.

Our approach to youth engagement includes:

- consultations with youth leaders and youth-led groups.
- facilitation and investment in youth initiatives.
- education and sharing of capacities and resources.
- integration of youth voices in planetary health matters.
- storytelling.
- building an evidence-based mandate towards mobilising the next generation of planetary health leaders.



## HOW OUR YOUTH ACTIVITIES LINK TO THE CENTRE'S FOCUS AREAS AND ENABLING PILLARS:

Focus Area/ Enabling Pillar	Planetary Future Fridays	i-Speak	Planetary Health Leadership Bootcamp	Youth Townhall	Climate Courage Workshop
 Preventing Future Pandemics and Health Crises		✓	✓		
 Tackling the Climate Emergency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Creating Healthy Cities			✓		
 Achieving Sustainable Food Systems		✓	✓		
 Effective Communications	✓	✓			✓
 Good Governance			✓	✓	
 Education Revolution			✓	✓	✓

# MOBILISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PLANETARY HEALTH LEADERS



## PLANETARY FUTURE FRIDAYS

This monthly initiative focuses on raising three simple yet important questions on planetary health to young people: 'What does Planetary Health mean to you?', 'How does Planetary Health relate to you/your organization?', and 'What does your ideal, healthy future look like?' The participant's answers are shared via the Centre's social media platforms.



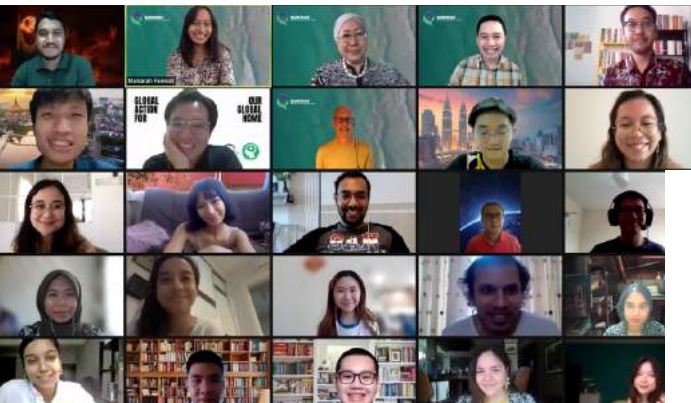
## I-SPEAK

This university-wide public speaking competition, held in collaboration with the University's Department of Communication (DoC) aimed to enhance planetary and global health awareness among youth and provided them with a platform for discussion and advocacy.

## PLANETARY HEALTH LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMP

Together with Youth Care Malaysia, we organised the myIMPACT 'Planetary Health Leadership Bootcamp' in July, with a focus on:

- Introducing the concept of planetary health, its core principles and key issues in the region especially in relation to local communities.
- Enabling the participants to relate, articulate, and apply planetary health perspectives in their policy briefs and pitches.
- Helping participants to explore and work on solutions covering different areas of interest among the broad planetary health challenges.
- Mobilising the next generation of planetary health leaders.



## YOUTH TOWNHALL

The Centre launched its first Youth Townhall in 2021, to harness youth participation on climate action and decision-making processes.

With three Youth Townhalls and more than one hundred participants, we focused on flood management and recovery programmes, the role of indigenous people in protecting biodiversity, and empowering and activating youth on climate action.

# FOCUS AREA 1: PREVENTING FUTURE PANDEMICS AND HEALTH CRISES

# FA1

## WE ARE NOT READY FOR THE NEXT HEALTH CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic was a reminder that the emergence of new infectious diseases is sudden and unpredictable, and that humanity is usually prepared for the last crisis event rather than the next. A narrow view of human health that only recognises the biomedical aspect of "health" narrows our chances of adequately addressing future health threats.

Helping people to recognise that a classical notion of "health" – doctors, hospitals, ambulances and health care - is only a small part of the overall equation of how to lead a healthy life, and is a major policy and communications challenge.

**5** JOURNAL ARTICLES  
**3** POLICY BRIEFS  
**1** CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The Centre is generating evidence-based research on identifying and reducing the local environment drivers of diseases. This research and other emerging evidence will support policy dialogue that lays out why behaviour change is important. A critical part of this process is enhancing collaboration across social sectors, including contributing to international and regional discourse around pandemic prevention.

The Centre published five articles on prevention of future health crises, developed three briefs for the World Health Organization (WHO) and organized a capacity-building workshop on non-communicable diseases and systems thinking in collaboration with the Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore. The Centre is a member of the Global Panel for a Public Health Convention, supporting publications on the importance of a pandemic treaty and recommendations on the forward financing of WHO.

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) BRIEFS

### PLANETARY HEALTH: A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE FUTURE

**Headline:** To advance the health of people in the Western Pacific Region in the coming decades, the health of the planet can no longer be ignored.

### TOWARDS A HOLISTIC VIEW OF HEALTH

**Headline:** To improve health and wellbeing in the Western Pacific Region on a grand scale, there is a need to shift away from a purely biomedical view of health and move towards a holistic view that captures all determinants of health.

### CLOSING THE HEALTH GAP IN THE FUTURE

**Headline:** Closing the longstanding gaps in health equity in the Western Pacific region must remain a key policy objective for the long-term future.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

**JUN 2021**

The Contribution of Islam to Planetary Health

**FEB 2022**

Safeguarding Youth Health in Climate-vulnerable Countries

**JUN 2022**

Protecting Environmental Defenders to Prevent Pandemics

**FEB 2022**

Beyond the Hippocratic Oath: A Planetary Health Pledge for the Malaysian medical community

**JUN 2022**

Barriers to Statin Use in the Philippines



# FOCUS AREA 2: TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

# FA2

## HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS DRIVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate crisis is now the most significant threat to humanity's sustainable existence on the planet. Science shows that it is driven entirely by human behaviour, enabled largely by greed and a naïve belief on the part of those individuals, governments and companies who have held the global balance of power since the industrial revolution that it is possible to magically sustain endless economic growth without there being any kick back by nature.

This combination of factors is what has led to the rash of floods, droughts, heat waves, bush fires, and related trillions of dollars' worth of disaster-related losses that we see; and is the cause of our destabilised and increasingly erratic weather patterns.

In 2020 human activity on the planet accounted for 35.2 billion tonnes of CO2 emissions; of which 20.7 billion tonnes (58 percent) was emitted by Asia. The amount of CO2 we are emitting is rising year on year while other regions' numbers are, by and large, falling. The questions must be why, what can we do about it, and how do we help communities adapt?

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

**9** ARTICLES

**2** WEBINARS

**6** COLLABORATIONS

The Centre is generating and supporting research on the health consequences of the climate crisis in the region and using this evidence to advocate and provide technical support for policy change, climate crisis mitigation innovations, and strengthened commitments at regional and international levels. The Centre has published nine articles, hosted two webinars on this topic, and engaged, collaborated, and partnered with other stakeholders including government agencies, international organisations, civil society organisations, academia, and youth groups.

## WEBINARS

### SERIES 1

Planetary Prevention: Safeguarding Health from Pandemics and Climate Emergency in Asia and the Pacific

In partnership with Kementerian Alam Sekitar dan Air (KASA)

2021

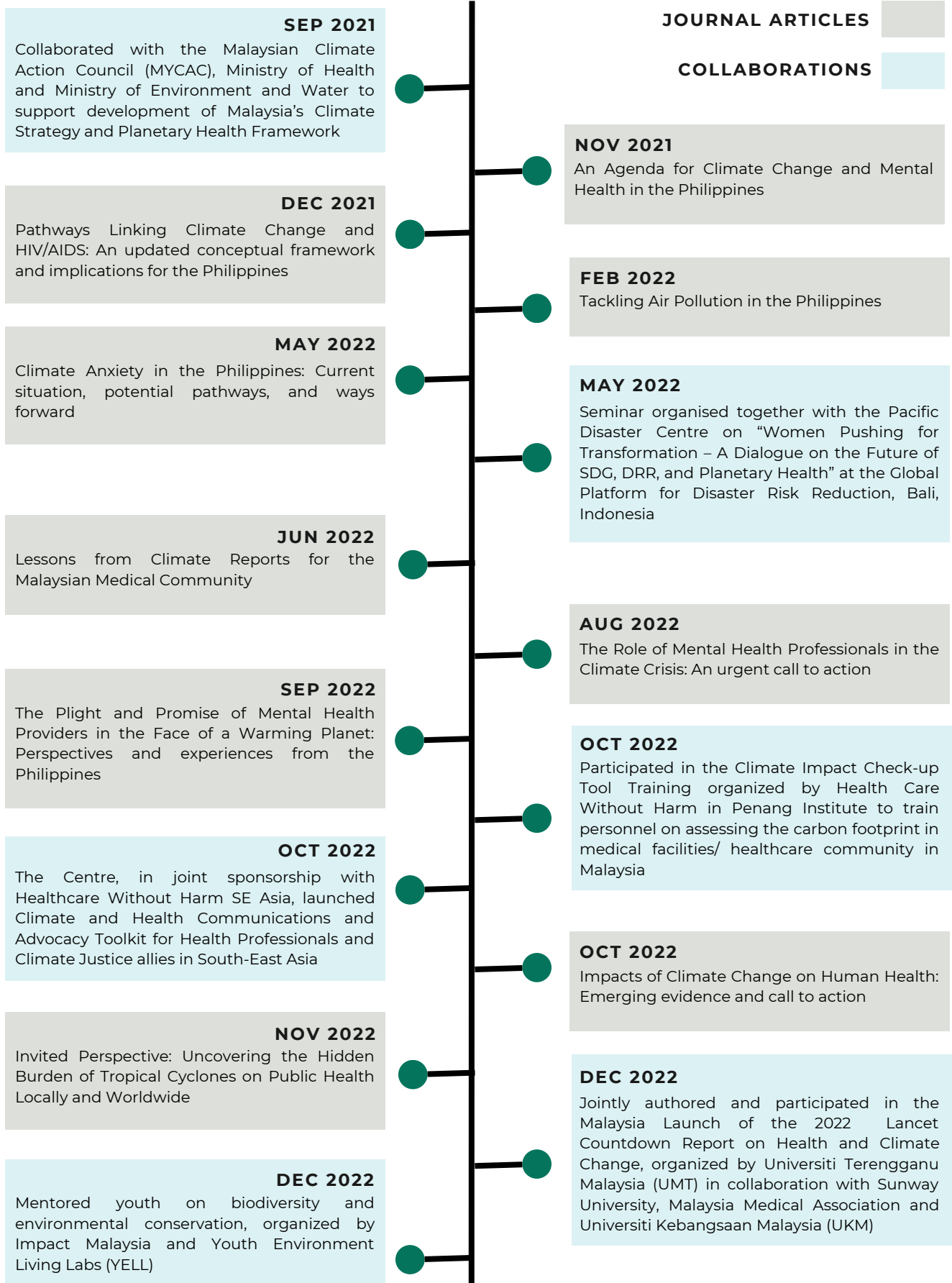
### SERIES 2

Planetary Health Issues in Asia-Pacific on Climate and Mental Health

In partnership with Department of Psychology, Sunway University

2022

## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND COLLABORATIONS



# FOCUS AREA 3: CREATING HEALTHY CITIES

# FA3

## CITIES ARE FACING MULTIPLE HEALTH RISKS

Seventy percent of us will be living in towns and cities by 2050, often in haphazard and unplanned locations. Cities face specific challenges: air pollution, access to clean water and other forms of environmental pollution, specific health risks, and waste and energy management. They also present humanity with massive logistical challenges when it comes to servicing food, sanitation, protection and other daily needs. These challenges are exacerbated by a stark rise in inequity. Addressing them through the lens of transformation shows us that there is a need to plan and manage cities differently.

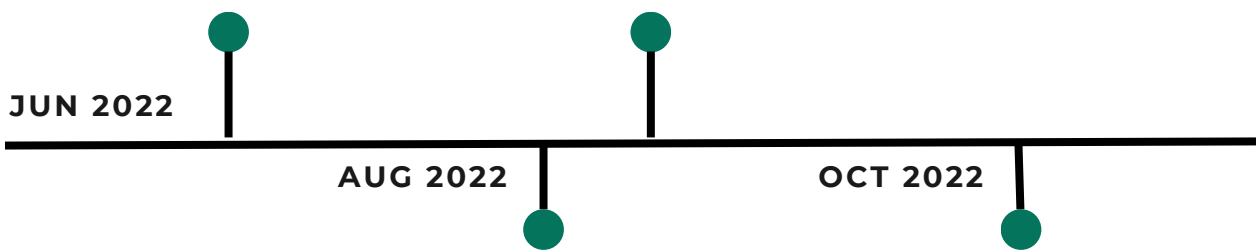
## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The Centre is working closely with the Doughnut Economics Action Lab in Oxford, UK, whose ethos flags the central importance of regenerative economics. Together with the city of Ipoh, the Institut Darul Ridzuan and Sunway University, the Centre is supporting the transformation of Ipoh's economy so that it is aligned with the principles of Doughnut Economics and Ipoh becomes "A City Living within the Doughnut".

**4** CAPACITY-BUILDING EVENTS  
**1** GRANT SECURED

Led a workshop on "Unrolling the Doughnut" and "Ipoh Doughnut Governance" at Institute Darul Ridzuan.

Participated and facilitated group discussions on mapping Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh's projects using the Doughnut Economics model's four lenses.



**JUN 2022**

**AUG 2022**

**OCT 2022**

Hosted the pre-workshop at Sunway University in preparation for the Doughnut Economics Strategic Retreat.

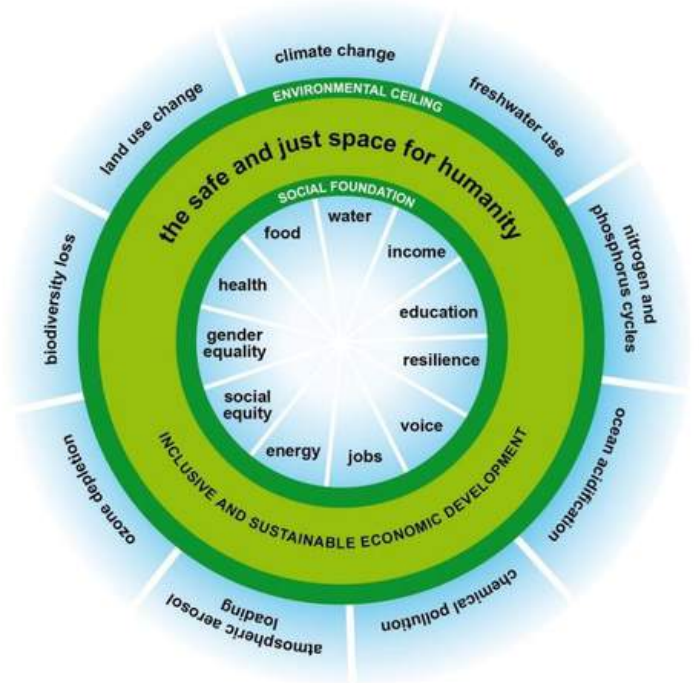
Delivered a keynote speech at the Ipoh Doughnut Symposium.

## WHAT IS DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS?

Kate Raworth, an Oxford University Economist, developed a regenerative economics model with a vision where humanity will not only survive, but thrive socially, economically, and politically – by living within planetary boundaries and maintaining a basic social foundation, based on the SDGs, for all.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "LIVE WITHIN THE DOUGHNUT"?

It's conceptually simple. Humanity should not overshoot the ecological ceiling whilst, at the same time, be able to satisfy social needs - residing in the ring of the doughnut, the "safe and just space for humanity".



(Raworth, 2012)

## THE CENTRE'S ENGAGEMENT

The Centre is working with a team of subject matter experts including some from Sunway University, to facilitate discussions and knowledge exchange between the Doughnut Economics Action Lab, Institute Darul Ridzuan (IDR), Majlis Perbandaran Ipoh (MBI) and the Perak state government. The Centre will capture learning and knowledge from this project as it is implemented over the next two years – so that this can be shared with other cities in Malaysia and beyond through our association with countries in the region and the UN's regional development coordination office.

The Centre is helping to build capacities of the Perak state government officials, private sector, and civil society organizations on areas including planetary health, sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and regenerative economics, with a focus on replicability elsewhere in Asia and across the broader region.



# FOCUS AREA 4: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

# FA4

## EXISTING FOOD SYSTEMS ARE WASTEFUL, EXTRACTIVE, AND PROMOTE A SYNDOMIC OF ILLNESSES

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how fragile our “just in time” food supply chains are. It also exposed the extractive, wasteful aspects of humanity’s management of global food systems.

Multinational corporations, weak regulation and an inability for states to address legal liability beyond borders are generating a ‘syndemic’ of undernutrition and obesity, and accelerating climate change, and biodiversity loss.

Our current highly extractive approach to food must change – so that it considers human needs and the protection of the planet’s boundaries. Producing adequate and healthy food to meet the world’s nutritional needs within these boundaries is possible. It requires healing soils and producing food in harmony with local ecology while supporting socio-economic well-being. To this end, priorities should urgently focus on ending food-driven deforestation; transitioning away from industrial animal agriculture; and redirecting subsidies to help farmers who are on the front lines of climate change.

On the consumption side, diets must quickly shift from animal-based, convenient highly processed packaged foods to largely plant-based, whole grain “Real Food”: food that nourishes communities and the earth; respects human health, animals, social justice and the environment; and is as close as possible to its natural state without alteration. Large scale change can start with consumers.

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

3

JOURNAL  
ARTICLES

1

TALK SHOW

1

COLLABORATION

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

SEP 2022

Global Environmental Climate Change, COVID-19, and Conflict Threaten Food Security and Nutrition

DEC 2022

Addressing Food Insecurity and Climate Change in Malaysia: Current evidence and way forward

SEP 2022

Health Sector Solutions for Promoting Sustainable and Nutritious Diets

## WHAT IS A PLANETARY HEALTH DIET?

A "Planetary Health Diet" is a plant-based diet consisting of half a plate of fruits and vegetables, and half a plate of primarily whole grains, plant proteins (beans, lentils, pulses, nuts), unsaturated plant oils, modest amounts of meat and dairy, and some added sugars and starchy vegetables.

It is a flexible diet that allows for adaptation to dietary needs, personal preferences, and cultural traditions, with the ultimate goal of promoting healthier diets and sustainable food production that depends less on carbon-intensive food resources.



Planetary Health Diet, first introduced in the EAT-Lancet Summary Report.

## PLANET SAVING MEALS

Inspired by the Planetary Health Diet, a new series, Planet Saving Meals, was launched in collaboration with the Sunway School of Hospitality and Service, Tourism and Management, to explore plant-based and less carbon-intensive food alternatives.

The first episode "Jackfruit of All Trades" was released on 1 May 2022, on the Centre's YouTube channel, in preparation for Muslims' celebration of Eid. It explored jackfruit as a plant-based alternative to beef and chicken for the "must-have" rendang.

Jackfruit is a truly sustainable crop, easy-to-grow in Malaysia's tropical climate and even proposed as an ideal replacement for wheat, corn and other staple crops under threat from climate change.





# ENABLING PILLAR 2: GOOD GOVERNANCE

# EP2

## CORRUPTION, POLITICAL POLARISATION, AND LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY ENABLE THE PLANETARY HEALTH CRISIS

Corrupt practices and rent-seeking behaviours by elites that ignore the perils humanity faces are leading ever larger numbers of people into relative poverty. These same elites work to divert attention and focus from planetary health challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine by a Security Council permanent member, fractured politics across the permanent members of the same Council, whose mandate is “to maintain international peace and security”, the rise of nationalism in the so-called great powers; and here in Malaysia the 1MDB scandal, the corrupt behaviour and lack of accountability of elements of our political class are all events that divert humanity’s collective focus from the realities of the planetary health challenge we face.

A renewed focus on good governance, which means governance that is participatory; consistent with the rule of law; transparent; responsive; consensus-oriented; equitable and inclusive; effective and efficient; and accountable is needed to help steer humanity in the right direction.

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

**3** JOURNAL ARTICLES    **12** COLLABORATIONS    **5** PARTNERSHIPS

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

**JAN 2022**

Tackling the Politics of Intersectoral Action for the Health of People and Planet

**APR 2022**

Safeguarding Planetary Health for Southeast Asia's Future Children

**APR 2022**

**MAR 2022**

Financing the Future of WHO



## ADVISORY GROUP

To support its evolving work, and particularly with a focus on how to address the parlous state of governance, the Centre established an Advisory Group of distinguished experts to provide strategic and technical guidance.

The Advisory Group includes five members who provide high-level input on potential focus areas or key issues and strategic direction. In the last 15 months, five Advisory Group meetings have been convened and have provided support to the Centre in the areas of:

- Influencing national policy change in Malaysia through the incorporation of planetary health language in the 12th Malaysia Plan and Malaysia's national budget 2023.

- Engaging Malaysia's Ministry of Environment in developing a national Planetary Health Roadmap.

- Engaging with the United Nations Development Programme to support its work on transformation as articulated in the 2021 and 2022 Human Development Reports.

- Developing and shaping of the 2024 global Planetary Health Summit, which will be hosted by the Centre and University in April next year.

## INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

The Centre also focused on the international humanitarian system, which is facing increasing challenges in addressing the fallout from and consequences of the planetary health crisis. The Centre hosted a session to discuss these issues at the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week in Geneva in May and is working with the humanitarian system's governance structures to identify where and how the adoption of a planetary health approach can inform the system's effectiveness.

**The Centre is also a signatory to the Humanitarian Climate Change Charter.**

**Politically**, because humanity's leadership is overwhelmed by the increasing intensity and breadth of crises and the constant and near-global distractions of our now digitised world, governments are finding it easier to retreat from multilateral humanitarian obligations under law. This has negative consequences on health – especially the health of the most vulnerable people.

**Economically**, humanitarian needs are outstripping the capacity of governments and global humanitarian actors to respond. Unless bold action is taken, needs are set to multiply in ever increasingly complex emergencies that our systems are not adequately prepared as has been amply demonstrated over the last decade and more, and more acutely in the last 24 months.

**Socially**, humanitarian action is used as a band aid in protracted crises, leaving increasing numbers of people in highly vulnerable situations for years on end, usually living in unsustainable conditions, outside formal social protection systems, and in conditions which are reliant on ineffective, environmentally unfriendly and unsustainable forms of service provision.

## PLANETARY HEALTH ANNUAL MEETING 2022 (PHAM2022)

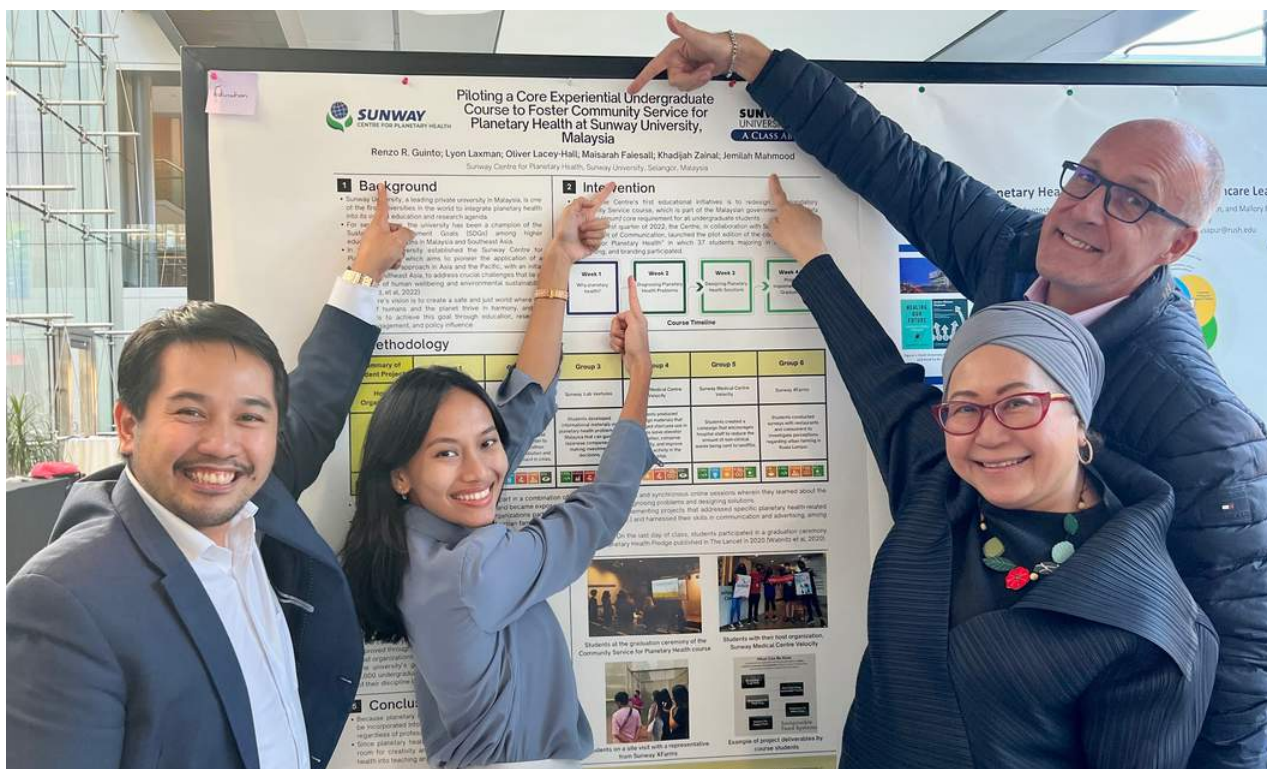
The Sunway Centre for Planetary Health participated in the 5th Planetary Health Annual Meeting held in a hybrid format in Boston, USA from 31 October to 2 November. Sunway University and the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health will host the 6th Planetary Health Annual Meeting (PHAM) in April 2024.

PHAM is a global gathering of scientists, policymakers, educators, young leaders, the private sector, and concerned planetary citizens. Held every 18 months, it aims to connect the global planetary health community, seek solutions for the grand challenges facing humanity, and provide tools and drivers to support systemic change. Its past five events have brought together thousands of leaders from over 130 countries in gatherings held in the United States, Scotland, and Brazil.

Recognising the key role that Asia plays in planetary health challenges and solutions, PHAM2024 will be the first of its kind to be held in Southeast Asia. Malaysia is proud to be the host of PHAM2024 with the theme of “From Evidence to Action: Confronting Reality”, led by the Centre and Sunway University.

PHAM2024 will acknowledge and internalise that despite its roots being in academia, in order to be transformative, planetary health must become transdisciplinary and grounded on partnerships and collaboration with other health-based solutions movements, such as One Health and Environmental Health, and fully joined up with and engaged in global processes, especially those being managed by the United Nations such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**In this 6th installation of the Planetary Health Annual Meeting, the message is clear: For science to be transformational, it needs to be translatable – communicated in ways that the public can understand and for decision-makers to act on.**



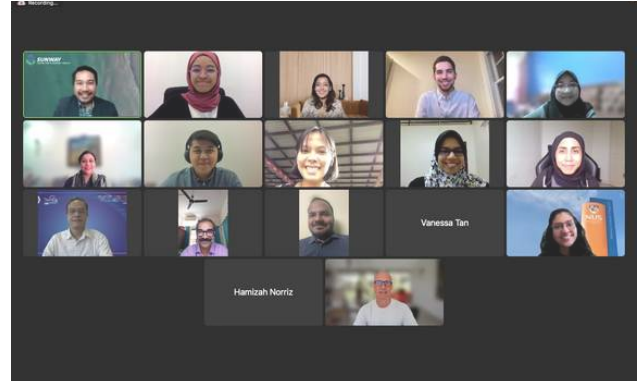
# ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PLANETARY HEALTH ALLIANCE (PHA)



## SOUTH & SOUTHEAST ASIA CONVENING

The South and Southeast Asia Hub of the Planetary Health Alliance was established in 2020. Following discussions with members, the Centre agreed to assume the convening role for the Hub, with 23 member organisations participating and a strategy for growth.

The Centre organised the first convening of Southeast and South Asian Planetary Health Alliance Hub members in 2022. Agreements were reached on:



- A primary focus on building resilient communities.
- Developing and maintaining a regional platform for knowledge/expertise sharing.
- Conducting research studies in parts of the Indo-Pacific region.
- Finding ways to hear and amplify the voices of vulnerable and indigenous communities.
- Common advocacy messaging, particularly to governments in the region on tackling climate change.
- Bridging the planetary health knowledge between the government, the private sector, and civil society.
- Administering a regional-level landscape analysis to better understand who is doing what, where, on the promotion of planetary health.

## OTHER GOVERNANCE-RELATED ENGAGEMENTS

<p><b>ADAPT Initiative</b> Engagement on the Centre's planetary health and humanitarian action work.</p>	<p><b>United Nations Development Programme, Malaysia and Human Development Report Office New York</b> Planetary health and sustainable approaches to human development.</p>	<p><b>United Nations Development Cooperation Office</b> Access to and engagement with the UN's Mission Chiefs in the Asia Pacific region.</p>	<p><b>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</b> Dialogue on planetary health and humanitarian action.</p>
<p><b>Connecting Business Initiative</b> Development of a position paper on humanitarian action, planetary health and engagement with the private sector.</p>	<p><b>UNICEF Malaysia</b> Initial discussion on collaborating on youth and planetary health as well as potential research on children's environmental health.</p>	<p><b>United Nations Economic Commission for Asia Pacific</b> Engagement with the Commission on matters of mutual interest and concern.</p>	<p><b>Universitas Indonesia</b> Engagement on planetary health and disaster risk reduction.</p>
<p><b>Interagency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs</b> Preparation of recommendations on planetary health and humanitarian action.</p>	<p><b>World Health Organization</b> Discussions initiated with the Climate and Health Section on partnership activities in the future.</p>	<p><b>Palladium Group</b> Engagement on planetary health and disaster risk management in Indonesia through the SIAP SIAGA Program.</p>	<p><b>Worldwide Fund for Nature, Malaysia</b> Partnership under development focused on environment and health and climate change.</p>

# ENABLING PILLAR 3: EDUCATION REVOLUTION

# EP3

## AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION IS URGENTLY NEEDED

Efforts to change mindsets need to be rooted in altering the way that information is delivered to people, including through education systems. While some progress is being made at mainstreaming environmental issues into our education systems, a comprehensive and joined up approach linking research, policy and practice is needed.

Planetary health education programmes need to be established at different levels, starting with tertiary education institutes.

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

**1** JOURNAL ARTICLE    **36** STUDENT PLEDGES    **1** UNDERGRADUATE COURSE

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

APR 2022



Global health educational trips: ethical, equitable, environmental?

## UNDERGRADUATE COURSE - MPU 3412

Through the MPU 3412 course, the Centre is introducing planetary health to undergraduate students at Sunway University. On the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- understand the concept of planetary health, its core principles and key issues especially in relation to local communities.
- learn how to diagnose a planetary health problem and design a solution for it.
- appreciate their civic responsibility and potential contribution in advancing planetary health at the community level in collaboration with others.

As part of the 2022 pilot cohort's graduation from the course, all 36 students participated in the first ever recital of the Planetary Health Pledge at Sunway University. The Planetary Health Pledge, which originated from the medical fraternity, signifies the commitment for the planetary health community to incorporate planetary health principles on the individual life.

# THE PLANETARY HEALTH PLEDGE

I **pledge** to dedicate my life to the service of humanity, and to the protection of natural systems on which human health depends.

The health of people, their communities, and the planet will be my first consideration and I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, as well as reverence for the diversity of life on Earth.

I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity and in accordance with good practice, taking into account planetary health values and principles.

To do no harm, I will respect the autonomy and dignity of all persons in adopting an approach to maintaining and creating health which focuses on prevention of harm to people and planet.

I will respect and honour the trust that is placed in me and leverage this trust to promote knowledge, values, and behaviours that support the health of humans and the planet.

I will actively strive to understand the impact that direct, unconscious, and structural bias may have on my patients, communities, and the planet, and for cultural self-awareness in my duty to serve.

I will advocate for equity and justice by actively addressing environmental, social, and structural determinants of health while protecting the natural systems that underpin a viable planet for future generations.

I will acknowledge and respect diverse sources of knowledge and knowing regarding individual, community, and planetary health such as from Indigenous traditional knowledge systems while challenging attempts at spreading disinformation that can undermine planetary health.

I will share and expand my knowledge for the benefit of society and the planet; I will also actively promote transdisciplinary, inclusive action to achieve individual, community, and planetary health.

I will attend to my own health, wellbeing, and abilities in order to provide care and serve the community to the highest standards.

I will strive to be a role model for my patients and society by embodying planetary health principles in my own life, acknowledging that this requires maintaining the vitality of our common home.

I will not use my knowledge to violate human rights and civil liberties, even under threat; recognising that the human right to health necessitates maintaining planetary health.

I make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honour. By taking this pledge, I am committing to a vision of personal, community, and planetary health that will enable the diversity of life on our planet to thrive now and in the future.



## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE PLANETARY HEALTH

Say YES to a plant-rich diet; Grow your own veggies

Say NO to food wastage

Follow the 3R Mantra: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Adapt sustainable food systems (e.g., Home Aquaponic System)

Manage your daily water usage

Select energy efficient appliances

Track and manage your carbon footprint

Avoid single-use plastics

Shop responsibly and consciously

Be mindful when shopping for clothes - support environmentally friendly companies

Harness solar energy

## MEET THE TEAM

Prof. Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Executive Director

Dr. Renzo Guinto, Chief Planetary Health Scientist

Prof. Goplasamy Reuben Clements, Chief Conservation Scientist

Mr. Oliver Simon Lacey Hall, Senior Communications and Partnerships Advisor

Ms. Saidatul Maisarah Faiesall, Special Assistant to the Executive Director

Ms. Nazia Ahmad, Programme Manager

Ms. Nur Hazirah Marzuki, Senior Communications Executive

Dr. Fatimah Ahamad, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

Dr. Nadia Nantheni Rajaram, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

Dr. Menaka Ganeson, Innovation Officer

Ms. Siti Hannah Zuhairah Mohamad Ariff, Education Officer

Ms. Sarah Hanani Ahmad Tajuddin, Programme Officer (International)

Mr. Andrew Jason Clement George, Programme Officer (Youth)

Ms. Hamizah Norrizam, Social Media Officer

Ms. Nor Wahyuni Abdull Rahim, Administration Executive



# OUR ADVISORS



## **Mr. Ben Ramalingam**

Ben is a leader, strategist, researcher and author specializing in international humanitarian and development work and is currently leading the pilot phase of the United Kingdom Humanitarian Innovation Hub. He oversees a global portfolio of strategic projects with the Red Cross, WHO, MSF, UNICEF, OECD, Royal College of Surgeons, Nesta and the UK Space Agency. In 2020, he was named a Humanitarian Change Maker of the decade to improve crisis response work in the 2010s.



## **Dr. Maria Guevara**

Maria is a multilingual medical humanitarian specialist with 18 years of humanitarian experience and 10 years management practice through her work with Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders. She is trained in pulmonary, critical care and tropical medicine, with a strong background in complex humanitarian settings, global health policy, and advocacy.



## **Dr. Pablo Suarez**

Pablo is Associate Director (Programs) for the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and an advisor for Oxfam America's Private Sector Team. He has consulted for the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (Germany) and other international organizations, working in more than 30 countries. He is a visiting scholar at Boston University and a guest scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.



## **Ms. Margie Ong**

Margie is the Chief Executive Officer of Thoughts In Gear, a Sustainability and Social Impact consulting firm. Her goal is to translate sustainability intentions into actions - with clear strategic frameworks, roadmaps and actionable plans. She works with corporations to include Sustainability and ESG principles into their core business; and with non-profits for strategic and systemic impact. Graduated as an Electrical Engineer, Margie has a Sustainability Leadership certification with the London Business School.



## **Tan Sri Professor Emeritus Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid**

Prof Zakri was the Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia (2010-2018) and co-chaired the UN's mega-study, "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment" (2001 - 2005). He is also the founding Chair of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and a member of the UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board. He has been appointed by the United Nations as the Co-Chairman of STI Advisory Board of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. He has been appointed as the member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Scientific Advisory Board.

# ANNEX AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## The Centre has published 21 articles in the following journals

- The Lancet
- The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health
- The Lancet Global Health
- Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences
- The Lancet Planetary Health
- The Journal of Climate Change and Health
- International Review of Psychiatry
- Environmental Health Perspectives
- British Medical Journal (BMJ)
- BMJ Global Health

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Twitter:** SunwayCPH

**Facebook:** SunwayCPH

**Instagram:** sunwaycph

**Tiktok:** sunwaycph

## Sunway University

As one of Malaysia's leading and internationally recognised private universities, Sunway University is positioned amongst top universities in the world by QS World University Rankings. Sunway University is ranked #601-650 in the QS World University Rankings 2023 and is the #1 non-government linked private university in Malaysia in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023. Sunway University has been awarded #1 in Graduate Employability among all universities in Malaysia by Talentbank Group through the National Graduate Employability Index.

The University emerged as an Overall 5 Star rated (Excellent) institution in the QS Stars University Ratings, as well as Five-Star ratings for the individual categories: teaching, facilities, employability, social responsibility, inclusiveness, academic development internationalisation and actuarial studies.

Collaborating with world class partners - Lancaster University and Le Cordon Bleu International, Sunway University offers premier education with international repute. The University also partners with the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and University of California, Berkeley.