

CFHI Commitment to Planetary Health

Introduction

Global Health and Planetary Health are inextricably linked. Human health is not separate from the health of our planet or that of other living organisms on earth; rather, we are all completely interdependent. In a 2022 World Health Day address to the WHO, CFHI Virtual Elective faculty Dr. Renzo Guinto, MD, DrPh, emphasized the need for [urgent action to address planetary health](#) and highlighted the role that we as individuals have in building a sustainable planet..

At Child Family Health International (CFHI), we believe that our best world is one that embraces diversity and inclusiveness, recognizes and seeks to dismantle structural and environmental racism and other inequality, emphasizes the connectedness of humanity, seeks peaceful resolution to conflict, embraces human rights, works toward a sustainable environmental footprint, and safeguards a basic standard of living and health for the entire planet. We recognize that systems of inequality harm people and the planet alike; for example, unethical and neocolonial global health education programs that harm vulnerable communities also harm the environment in myriad ways.

To build planetary health, CFHI offers health educational programs that focus on Planetary Health, highlighting and in alignment with [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15. We are also a member of the Planetary Health Alliance. For a list of CFHI programs featuring Planetary Health themes, [click here](#). CFHI offers [scholarships](#) to help more students access our programs.

We also offer a portfolio of [virtual global health education programs](#). All programs feature immersive virtual experiences with CFHI's global health leaders around the world, focusing on competency-based learning objectives, and reducing the carbon footprint of participants and programs by offering these experiences virtually. Additionally, virtual programs include at least one seminar on Planetary Health led by Carlos A. Faerron, associate director of the Planetary Health Alliance, or a qualified colleagues he nominates. We invite CFHI participants to consider whether a virtual learning opportunity, either on its own or paired with a place-based CFHI experience, is best suited to support their learning goals.

As a longstanding organizational participant in the Global Engagement Survey (GES), CFHI measures the ways that students learn and grow during our virtual and place-based programs. Over the years we have seen through the GES that students tend to increase their awareness of and commitment to conscious consumption as a result of their participation in CFHI's programs. Conscious consumption is one important way to reduce our environmental footprint and promote actions to protect and restore planetary health.

As a participant enrolled in one or more CFHI Global Health Education programs, you have a unique opportunity to build Planetary Health. The Pledge below is a call to meaningful, and doable, actions, that will help ensure you use this opportunity as a platform to:

- Reduce your environmental footprint.
- Take other definitive actions such as using your voice on social media or engaging in conscious consumption.
- Think systematically about your role as a future professional and the ways that you can turn the tide of climate change and safeguard a healthy and thriving planet for generations to come.

We invite you to choose the Planetary Health actions that you can commit to, and sign the pledge.

Let The World Change you!
-The CFHI Team

CFHI Participant Planetary Health Pledge

As a participant in Child Family Health International's programs, I will go into this experience remembering CFHI's motto: Let the World Change You. I will learn from this experience, applying it to my current and future efforts to build Planetary Health.

I will carefully consider the impact my decisions and actions have on the planet, and I will take action to reduce my environmental footprint, reverse climate change, and use my voice and body to build Planetary Health. Specifically, I commit to the following during and after my CFHI Program:

(Please read the below options carefully; Multiple options are listed as not all options will not be logistically or financially feasible for every participant. Select options that are a good fit for you and that you feel you can commit to.)

If I am enrolled in a CFHI Place-Based Program (please select at least 2 that you commit to and are logistically and financially reasonable for you): If you are enrolled in a virtual program, please skip to page 3.

___ I will strive to educate myself (through research and conversations with my host community) about local initiatives to build environmental sustainability and planetary health, including any opportunities to learn about traditional, indigenous, and/or integrative ways of knowing and healing. I will keep notes in my professional journal (or in my video or audio journal, or other

other method of tracking and reflecting on my experience) about ideas and actions that I can learn from and bring home with me to share with others.

___ For my upcoming air travel to my CFHI program, I will [purchase carbon offsets](#) or purchase a direct flight.

___ I will take a humble approach when traveling and recognize that I am immersing myself in a culture different from my own. I will respect my host community and local resources by only taking the amount of food I can eat, being mindful of my water use during showers and laundry, turning lights and fans off when I leave a room and striving to reduce my overall waste and carbon consumption.

___ While on my program, I will ask the CFHI local team about ways to safely engage and travel within the country sustainably, whether this be a weekend trip or to and from clinic locations. If I choose to engage in tourism activities or personal travel, I will strive to select activities that do not harm the environment, respect the local culture, and select recommended providers and agencies that focus on environmental protection and sustainability.

___ When I have the opportunity in my current and future roles as a healthcare professional, provider, administrator, or other roles, I will seek ways to reduce waste, lower my carbon footprint, and be more environmentally conscious and lead my colleagues to do the same. I will apply any lessons learned about conscious consumption within health systems to my work at home.

For all CFHI Participants: On a Day-To-Day Basis, I will: (Please choose 3 that are logistically and financially feasible for you:)

___ I will adjust my food consumption, choosing seasonal and local food. I will reduce my ultra-processed food and meat consumption.

___ I will prevent food waste by planning my meals, finding ways to use all the food I acquire, and composting scraps if possible.

___ I will stop buying clothing from fast fashion companies; I will strive to buy used and vintage clothes.

___ For future air travel, I will consider if flying is necessary, and avoid flights when I can. If I do fly, I will strive to purchase carbon offsets and choose direct flights if financially and logistically feasible for me.

___ I will [calculate my current carbon](#) footprint and make a specific plan to reduce it within a specific timeline.

___ I will wash my clothing with cold water, turn off lights and unplug appliances.

___ I will carefully consider my purchases, only purchase what I need, and avoid excess packaging with my purchases (online and in-person).

___ I will limit driving. I will walk, bike, and use public transport more.

___ I will vote! And call my representatives to let them know how I feel about measures and legislation that impact the health of the planet.

___ I will research the role of trade agreements, patents, intellectual property, multinational business entities, and related private and public sector approaches that affect planetary health in my own and other countries. I will consider and make a plan for how I will interact with and/or affect these systems, structures and policies through my professional, personal, and civic life.

___ I will use my voice on social media to inform and advocate for Planetary Health.

___ I will intentionally select classes and professional opportunities that help me to deepen my knowledge of Planetary health, environmental sustainability, and climate change, and apply this expertise to my professional pursuits.

___ I will use my leadership platforms (such as student groups, global health clubs, etc.) to highlight and keep focus on Planetary Health as a central concern in Global Health. I will help others to understand Planetary Health and encourage them to take actions like those described in this pledge.

___ If I am able, I will give priority to Planetary Health when making financial decisions such as donating to organizations that combat climate change, choosing to invest my money or retirement savings in environmentally responsible companies, and considering credit cards or other products that have planetary health commitments or pledges (see one example [here.](#))

___ Other: (Write in)

Signed by:

_____ Date: _____

References and suggested reading/viewing:

[Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[The Elephant in the Sky](#)

[Universitas 21](#)

[What are carbon offsets?](#)

[Travel Better](#)

[The 35 Easiest Ways to Reduce your Carbon Footprint](#)

[NAFSA Senior Fellows sustainability white paper](#)

[International Bound Survey of Sustainability in Education Abroad](#)

[Video: Highlights of the Survey of Sustainability in Education Abroad](#)

[International Bound Sustainability Education for Study Abroad](#)

[Global Engagement Survey](#)