

PEOPLE'S HEALTH MOVEMENT (PHM)

A Global Movement for Health, Justice and Social Change

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WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH MOVEMENT?

The **People's Health Movement (PHM)** is a global network of **grassroots health activists, civil society organisations, social movements, health workers, researchers and academic institutions** working together for **Health for All, health equity and social justice**.

PHM has a presence in **more than 70 countries**, with particularly strong roots in the Global South. It works from the conviction that health is not simply about hospitals and medicines—it is also about **poverty, inequality, food, water, housing, decent work, education, gender justice, environment, climate, peace and human rights**.

In simple terms:

PHM brings people together to understand why people become sick, challenge the systems that produce ill-health, and organise for a healthier and more just world.

WHY WAS PHM CREATED?

PHM emerged from the growing recognition that millions of preventable deaths and enormous health inequalities are connected to **unfair social, economic and political systems**.

The movement was born around the **First People's Health Assembly in Bangladesh in 2000**, where activists and organisations came together and developed the **People's Charter for Health**, which remains a foundational reference for PHM.

PHM believes:

- Health is a **fundamental human right**.
- Health systems must serve people—not profit.
- Communities must have a voice in decisions affecting their health.
- Governments have responsibilities to protect and promote health.
- Social, economic and environmental injustice produces ill-health.
- People themselves are powerful actors in creating change.

PHM'S VISION

HEALTH FOR ALL

But what does Health for All really mean?

It means building societies where:

No one is excluded because they are poor.

No one is denied healthcare because they cannot pay.

No woman is denied healthcare because of gender or discrimination.

No child is left behind because of where they were born.

No community is sacrificed for corporate profit.

No health worker is treated without dignity.

No people are excluded from decisions about their own health.

Health for All is therefore a struggle for justice.

PHM links the **Right to Health** with the struggle for **social, economic, environmental and political justice**.

THE PEOPLE’S CHARTER FOR HEALTH

The **People’s Charter for Health (PCH)** is the foundational political framework of PHM.

It provides a common platform for people and organisations working for:

- Health equity
- Human rights
- Comprehensive Primary Health Care
- Community participation
- Social justice
- Gender equality
- Environmental justice
- Democratic health governance
- Accountability
- Health systems that serve communities

The Charter gives PHM a common direction while allowing communities to organise around their own realities.

PHM IS NOT JUST ONE ORGANISATION

One of the most important things to understand about PHM is that **PHM is a movement—not a conventional organisation with a rigid hierarchy.**

PHM describes itself as a “**network of networks, organisations and individuals.**”

It brings together:

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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COUNTRY CIRCLES

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REGIONAL NETWORKS/CIRCLES

↓

THEMATIC CIRCLES

↓

GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

↓

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & SOLIDARITY

And the movement constantly connects these levels.

HOW IS PHM STRUCTURED GLOBALLY?

1. Country Circles

The foundation of PHM's work.

2. Regional PHM Structures

Connect countries and strengthen regional solidarity.

3. Thematic Circles

Bring activists together around particular health and justice issues.

4. Global Programmes

Provide platforms for research, education, campaigning and global health governance engagement.

5. Affiliated Networks

Organisations and networks that share PHM's vision and work with the movement.

6. Global Steering Council

The principal decision-making body.

7. Global Secretariat

Supports coordination, communication and implementation.

PHM deliberately avoids an overly rigid structure so that activists can organise according to their **local realities and needs**.

THE GLOBAL STEERING COUNCIL

The **Global Steering Council (SC)** is PHM's principal decision-making body.

It provides:

- Strategic direction

- Political guidance
- Movement-wide coordination
- Promotion of the People's Charter for Health
- Development of global positions
- Communication between global, regional and country structures
- Oversight of the movement's programmes

The SC brings together representation from **regional structures, global programmes, affiliated networks and the Advisory Council**. PHM also uses rotation and renewal principles to encourage participation and develop new leadership.

The philosophy is simple:

Leadership should serve the movement—not replace it.

REGIONAL PHM

PHM's regional structures create a bridge between **national struggles and global action**.

Regional PHM helps to:

- Strengthen Country Circles
- Connect activists across countries
- Share experiences and strategies
- Build regional campaigns
- Coordinate solidarity
- Link national struggles to global policy processes
- Strengthen representation in global PHM governance

Example: PHM Southern & Eastern Africa — PHM SEA

PHM SEA brings together activists and partners working across Southern and Eastern Africa around issues such as:

- Health equity
- Climate and health
- Health systems
- Community health
- Health workers
- Social determinants of health
- Health justice
- Gender and health
- Food and nutrition
- Global health governance

- People's mobilisation and advocacy.

PHM'S THEMATIC CIRCLES

PHM's **Health for All Campaign** provides an umbrella for thematic activism.

The current thematic circles include:

Environment & Ecosystem Health

Climate change, environmental destruction, ecological health and environmental justice.

Gender Justice & Health

Gender inequality, women's health, intersectionality and accountable health systems.

Nutrition & Food Sovereignty

Food systems, nutrition, hunger, food sovereignty and corporate influence.

Political Economy for Health

Understanding how economic systems, power, trade, finance and inequality shape health.

Equitable Health Systems

Primary Health Care, health rights, privatisation, health workers and community participation.

War, Conflict, Occupation & Forced Migration

Health consequences of conflict, displacement, occupation, militarisation and humanitarian crises.

THE FOUR MAJOR GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

PHM currently works through **four major global programmes**:

1. GLOBAL HEALTH WATCH — GHW

The **Global Health Watch** is PHM's alternative world health report.

It challenges dominant approaches to global health and brings together:

- Evidence
- Political analysis
- People's experiences
- Health-system analysis
- Social determinants of health
- Alternative solutions

GHW asks:

Who benefits from the way global health is organised—and who is left behind?

INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S HEALTH UNIVERSITY — IPHU

The **International People's Health University (IPHU)** is PHM's activist education and capacity-building programme.

It helps develop activists who can:

- Understand health inequalities
- Analyse power and political economy
- Conduct research
- Develop campaigns
- Communicate effectively
- Engage policymakers
- Organise communities
- Advocate for the Right to Health
- Connect local struggles with global movements.

IPHU is not simply a classroom.

It is designed to help people **turn knowledge into organised action.**

WHO WATCH

Democratising Global Health Governance

WHO Watch enables PHM activists to follow, analyse and engage with the decision-making processes of the **World Health Organization**.

Activists:

- Analyse WHO agenda items
- Track negotiations
- Prepare policy analysis
- Produce briefings
- Engage government delegations
- Build civil-society positions
- Communicate developments to communities and movements.

At the **79th World Health Assembly in 2026**, PHM's WHO Watch involved 16 PHM members in political analysis, advocacy, movement building and capacity strengthening.

The principle:

Global health decisions should not be left only to governments, corporations and technical experts. People must have a voice.

HEALTH FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

The **Health for All Campaign (HFAC)** is PHM's broad organising and campaigning platform.

It connects:

LOCAL STRUGGLES → NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS → REGIONAL ACTION → GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

It provides space for activists to work on issues including:

- Health systems
- Food sovereignty
- Gender justice
- Climate and environment
- Political economy

- War and displacement
- Health rights
- Community health
- Social determinants of health.

WHAT DOES A PHM COUNTRY CIRCLE DO?

This is where PHM becomes **real and practical**.

Country Circles organise according to the needs of their countries.

There is **no single rigid model**. A Country Circle may be a loose network of organisations and activists or may develop a more formal structure.

Country Circle programmes can include:

Community mobilisation

Right to Health campaigns

Primary Health Care advocacy

Health-system monitoring

Community health-worker advocacy

Health policy analysis

Budget analysis

Social protection advocacy

Gender and health justice

Climate and health

Food and nutrition

Medicine access

Health worker rights

Disability-inclusive health

Youth mobilisation

Research and documentation

Media and public education

Government accountability

Global health governance advocacy

FROM COMMUNITY PROBLEM TO GLOBAL ACTION

Imagine a community saying:

“Our health centre has no medicines.”

PHM does not simply write a report and walk away.

The movement can help communities:

1. DOCUMENT

What is happening?

2. ANALYSE

Why is it happening?

3. ORGANISE

Who else is affected?

4. ADVOCATE

Who has responsibility?

5. MOBILISE

What collective action is needed?

6. ENGAGE GOVERNMENT

What commitment can be secured?

7. MONITOR

Has anything changed?

8. CONNECT

What can other countries learn from this experience?

This is the power of a movement.

PHM COUNTRY CIRCLES ARE NOT JUST HEALTH NGOS

A PHM Country Circle can bring together:

- Community activists
- Health workers
- Doctors and nurses
- Community Health Workers
- Researchers
- Universities
- Women's organisations
- Youth organisations
- Farmers
- Fisherfolk
- Disability organisations
- Human-rights organisations
- Trade unions
- Faith-based organisations
- Environmental organisations
- Journalists
- Lawyers
- Social movements
- Civil society organisations.

Different people. Different expertise. One common struggle.

HEALTH FOR ALL.

WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN PHM?

Because you don't have to fight alone.

Through PHM you can gain opportunities to:

-  **Connect** with activists across countries.
-  **Learn** through IPHU and other political education initiatives.
-  **Research** health inequalities and social determinants.
-  **Campaign** for health rights.
-  **Speak** in national, regional and international spaces.
-  **Build alliances** with organisations and movements.
-  **Work on climate and environmental health.**
-  **Strengthen community health activism.**
-  **Develop leadership and advocacy skills.**
-  **Amplify community voices.**

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A DOCTOR.

You can participate if you are:

- A community activist
- Health worker
- Student
- Researcher
- Farmer
- Youth leader
- Women's rights activist
- Disability activist
- Environmental activist

- Journalist
- Community Health Worker
- Academic
- Trade unionist
- Human-rights defender
- Civil society organisation
- Social movement
- Concerned citizen.

PHM's strength comes from **bringing different kinds of knowledge and experience together.**

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

START WHERE YOU ARE.

- 1. Find your PHM Country Circle.**
- 2. Join an existing campaign or activity.**
- 3. Participate in a thematic circle.**
- 4. Join an IPHU programme.**
- 5. Contribute research, writing or evidence.**
- 6. Participate in WHO Watch.**
- 7. Support Global Health Watch.**
- 8. Organise a community health campaign.**
- 9. Connect your organisation to PHM.**
- 10. If your country has no active circle—help build one.**

PHM explicitly encourages people to connect with existing activists and, where appropriate, develop a Country Circle or local chapter around issues of common concern.

PHM IS A MOVEMENT OF ACTION

PHM is not about attending meetings for the sake of attending meetings.

It is about:

KNOWLEDGE → ORGANISING → ADVOCACY → ACTION → CHANGE

A community problem becomes evidence.

Evidence becomes advocacy.

Advocacy becomes mobilisation.

Mobilisation creates pressure.

Pressure creates accountability.

Accountability creates change.

PHM'S UNIQUE STRENGTH

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE + GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

A health worker in Malawi can learn from an activist in India.

A community organisation in Zambia can exchange experience with one in Brazil.

A researcher in South Africa can collaborate with activists in Kenya.

A women's organisation in Tanzania can connect its struggle to global health justice campaigns.

This is PHM.

A global movement rooted in local struggles.

PHM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CLIMATE & HEALTH JUSTICE

Climate change is increasingly a health issue.

Floods.

Droughts.

Extreme heat.

Food insecurity.

Water insecurity.

Disease outbreaks.

Displacement.

Mental health impacts.

Destroyed health infrastructure.

Lost livelihoods.

PHM asks:

Who is responsible? Who suffers? Who decides? Who pays? And what must change?

This is why climate justice is increasingly connected with PHM's work on **environment, health equity and social justice**.

PHM SOUTHERN & EASTERN AFRICA

PHM SEA

PHM Southern & Eastern Africa connects health activists and organisations across the region.

The regional movement can support:

- Country Circle strengthening
- Regional campaigns
- Climate & health advocacy
- Health systems advocacy
- Community health-worker movements
- Research and documentation
- Activist education
- Regional solidarity
- Global health governance engagement
- Government accountability

- Cross-country learning.

From country struggles to continental action.

PHM'S POWER IS IN ITS PEOPLE

PHM has a relatively small formal Secretariat and relies heavily on **volunteers and activists** throughout the movement. Its programmes, Steering Council and other structures depend significantly on people contributing their knowledge, time and commitment.

That means:

YOU ARE NOT JUST AN AUDIENCE.

You can become:

A researcher.

An organiser.

A trainer.

A campaigner.

A community mobiliser.

A policy advocate.

A storyteller.

A leader.

A movement builder.

THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH MOVEMENT INVITES YOU

DON'T JUST COMPLAIN ABOUT THE HEALTH SYSTEM.

UNDERSTAND IT.

ORGANISE AROUND IT.

CHALLENGE IT.

IMPROVE IT.

BUILD SOMETHING BETTER.

The struggle for Health for All needs **health workers, communities, researchers, young people, women, farmers, activists, academics, journalists, disability advocates and ordinary citizens.**

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

BECOME PART OF THE STRUGGLE FOR HEALTH FOR ALL

You can:

JOIN

LEARN

ORGANISE

RESEARCH

ADVOCATE

MOBILISE

CAMPAIGN

BUILD SOLIDARITY

CREATE CHANGE

Health is a right.

Justice is a necessity.

People must have power over the decisions that affect their health.

VISIT PHM

PEOPLE'S HEALTH MOVEMENT

[Visit the official PHM website — phmovement.org](http://phmovement.org)

There you can explore:

- Health for All Campaign
- Global Health Watch
- International People's Health University
- WHO Watch
- Thematic Circles
- Country and regional activities
- Publications and campaigns
- News and events
- Opportunities to participate.

[Get Involved with PHM](#)