

Building Blocks for a Memorandum of Understanding: The Leadership Institute & the World Health Leadership Network – April 2024

The Purpose:

To set out a proposed framework for The Institute of Leadership (“The Institute”) and the recently formed World Health Leadership Network (WHLNet) to form a partnership in support of growing health leadership capacity globally.

The Context:

There is a compelling case for a membership body to grow health leadership globally across the health professions. WHLNet was launched in October 2023 in Vancouver through and with the support of LEADS Global <https://www.leadsglobal.ca/>. It’s driving force is to create a community of practice in health leadership across the health professions and around the globe¹. WHLNet was modelled to some degree on the success of the Canadian Health Leadership Network (CHLNet) <https://chl.net.ca/> Together, they offer a range of valued products and services in support of health leaders globally (at all levels) and member organizations domestically.

The Institute is a UK-based charity (founded in 1947) and has as its stated mission “to inspire great leadership - everywhere”. <https://leadership.global/>. Membership is open to leaders and managers from all over the world and from all levels. It too offers a wide range of services to assist its individual members with their continuous professional development. Specifically, it offers a diverse leadership development offerings, including webinars and podcasts.

The Opportunity:

The Vancouver “soft launch” of WHLNet was attended by over 40 founding members from over a dozen countries, reinforcing the need to support a global health leadership growth initiative. Representatives of *The Institute*; WHLNet; LEADS Global and CHLNet met subsequently (face-to-face in Vancouver and virtually in early 2024) to explore mutually beneficial opportunities for growing health leadership space globally. It was agreed there is a significant mutual interest in working together, leveraging up the respective strengths and reach of both WHLNet and *The Institute*.

¹ This community conducts and identifies the evidence base for health leadership and determines its implications for practice; while practitioners of leadership enrich the evidence-base through providing feedback on the relevance and practicality of that evidence-base.

WHLNet has a critical mass of health leaders from more than a dozen countries. It is positioned to provide the community of health leaders, managers and staff serving the global health sector with a common platform for professional development and knowledge sharing (e.g. the LEADS Framework). In addition, the establishment of a community for structured connectivity would support cohesion amongst health leadership worldwide, ensuring that WHLNet would benefit from widespread support and engagement. Getting a new community of this type ‘off the ground’ is a challenging task – one approach to turning this concept into reality is for the set-up and operation of WHLNet to be supported by an existing professional membership body.

The Institute is a recognized “go-to” organization (comprised of “XX” members) dedicated to building communities of practice across sectors, across countries and across cultures. The primary benefit to *The Institute* in the proposed MOU with WHLNet is the broadening of its global community. A core pillar of *The Institute*’s strategy is to diversify its membership and to increase visibility across wider geographies. *The Institute* sees clearly that supporting WHLNet would further its vision of powering an engaged community of leaders, pushing the boundaries of best practices and unlocking potential, and support its charitable objects to promote and develop leadership and management.

Proposed approach:

A phased approach is proposed that would be anchored by a co-designed action plan providing for practical milestones and periodic assessment to ensure that mutual benefits are being fully realized. The three phases are closely interdependent (i.e. need not proceed in succession) and include:

Phase 1 (Emergence): Development of an Action Plan for WHLNet by the Strategy Group (See below). The Institute would volunteer to contribute to the Plan, building on the work already done in the document ‘Global Leadership Network Concept World Health Leadership Network’, which describes how the value network concept has been put to work to increase leadership capacity through the Canadian Health Leadership Network (CHLNet). This phase was deemed complete by the endorsement of WHLNet’s phase 1 work at the dinner meeting of the WHLNet representatives in Vancouver in October 2023.

Phase 2 (Initial Operations): Adopting an ‘agile approach’ (i.e. building on the soft launch of WHLNet in Vancouver, and on the two successful jointly sponsored webinars in Dec 2023 and February 2024), to operationalizing the plan would mean that the members of WHLNet would have access to a series of bimonthly online events drawing on the technology and expertise available through “The Institute”. The operationalization of the MOU would include discussion of a membership subscription (building on “The Institute’s” experience). Operationalizing the plan would also involve confirming the portfolio of WHLNet products and services would be promoted and slowly expanded jointly by “The Institute” in discussion with the WHLNet Strategy Group. This phase is currently ongoing.

Phase 3 (Ongoing Operations): WHLNet currently relies on the administrative support of both LEADS Global and CHLNet. Operations will continue to be further developed with more products, services, events, etc. offered, including potentially face-to-face events. *The Institute* would provide some of the underpinning professional body services for WHLNet, including online event support, marketing (including website, membership promotion) and business development (i.e. monetizing existing and new leadership support tools).

The Shared Strategic Objectives for Phases 2 & 3:

The Institute and WHLNet would work together to deliver on three core functions of a “community hub”, namely: (1) providing content to *conjoint members*; (2) facilitating connections between and among community members; and (3) collaborating with other (non-health) communities of practice. *The Institute* is already familiar with these functions, and proficient in all three spheres, and the WHLNet Strategy group already represents a robust range of potentially collaborative communities across countries and across the health professions.

More specific strategic objectives would include:

1. Co-developing an Initial Action plan and Business Plan. The Institute has the background and expertise to work with the WHLNet Strategy Group to develop an initial *Action Plan* that would provide for: Vision, Mission, Objective, Actions, Metrics and Targets for the next 12 months. This would involve ensuring that the business plan provides for the resources needed to support opportunities identified in the WHLNet concept paper and to support in designing the roadmap for future development of WHLNet over the next three years, with a timeline and resource plan, clearly identifying the point at which WHLNet becomes financially self-sustaining (2-3 years?)

2. Developing a Marketing Plan. In support of overall strategic communications objective of promoting the principle of health leadership as a professional career, The marketing plan would position WHLNet as a centre of excellence for health leadership networking, and a resource for individual and community development in the health leadership sphere; supporting connections between WHLNet and similar bodies internationally; and sharing efforts for WHLNet member recruitment.

3. In kind Support of WHLNet Operations. Specific activities would include a. Setting up a WHLNet website, with events, content management and communications attributes suitable for the initial stages of a professional body; b. Supporting a series of member engagement events and publications produced by the Strategy group and membership, including newsletter, blogs, podcasts, webinars, white papers, etc.; and c. Coordinating a programme of planned online CPD activities.

4. Creating Shared Value (CSV). Costs incurred by *The Institute* in helping create shared (expanded) value for shared members will be absorbed in overheads, as part of *The*

Institute's strategy for global membership and partner recruitment. *The Institute* will meet these costs from its own budget. Commitment from WHLNet will include ongoing "in kind" support from current members and comprise willing promotion of *The Institute* as the primary partner globally (although other strategic partnership could also be considered such as a continued relationship with the International Leadership Association).

Next Steps:

1. Initial delivery of opportunities with WHLNet requires marginal, although ring-fenced, additional effort from *The Institute*. The primary operational efforts involve utilising existing systems and resources, exploiting economies of scale and familiarity with procedures.
2. Explore the extent and nature of the potential WHLNet membership worldwide and the data available to support development of a business plan.
3. WHLNet offers an opportunity to create a light-touch, agile, customer-orientated professional network, allowing efforts to be focused on delivering output to WHLNet members and stakeholders, rather than swallowed up in internal discussion.
4. Convene WHLNet Steering Group to consider formalizing a MOU between the working group of interested parties to get started.