



4th Global Youth Meet on Health (Virtual)

Theme: Youth-led innovative public health actions for Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals

When: April 2021

The global youth population (15-24 years), currently at 1.2 billion is projected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2050. Often neglected and ignored, youth are affected by inequality, increased disease burden, poverty, injustice, lack of education and various prevalent social concerns. Interventions, programmes and policies with and in benefit of youth can improve the prevailing socio-economic, environmental and political aspects of the Non-communicable Disease (NCD) response. Today's youth will not only be the ones who bear the growing burden of NCDs but will be responsible for dealing with it. GYM 2021 is a youth-led conclave that will bring together youth advocates and health and development leaders from across the globe. The three-day meeting will build youth participants' capacity to plan, implement, monitor and scale up integrated campaigns to meet their national NCD targets and accelerate action for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and emerge as NCD champions and professionals. They learn leadership and communication skills to work with stakeholders and develop solutions to protect themselves from exposure to risk factors and ultimately contribute to a healthy present and future generation.

GYM 2021 is strategically timed to take place after the UN High Level Meetings (UN HLMs) on NCDs and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This will provide an important opportunity for the youth delegates to track progress and identify priorities for accelerated action, as a run-up to 2025 and 2030, and other intermediary global milestones.

Youth as drivers of change

Youth hold high potential for bringing socio-economic and political change globally. They are key stakeholders in all work toward achieving UHC and the SDGs. Young people living with NCDs (PLWNCDs) have great potential in building a youth-led public narrative around NCDs by becoming spokespersons to represent youth issues within the NCD landscape. HRIDAY's health promotion programme to meaningfully involve youth has been listed as a "best practice" model and recommended for global replication by World Health Organization.



Youth Centric Action for The Sustainable Development Goals: The 2015 Guard Our Globe Declaration

¹2017 World Population Data Sheet, Population Reference Bureau. Accessed from <https://www.prb.org/2017-world-population-data-sheet/>

²Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed from <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

Brief History of Global Youth Meets on Health



HRIDAY hosted the *1st GYM in 2006*, convening youth from 32 countries from around the world, bringing together organizations from different sectors, calling for inclusion of youth in action on key health issues. A **Youth for Health (Y4H)** movement was launched as an outcome of GYM 2006 aiming to connect youth across the world to undertake health promotion activities and advocacy at national, regional as well as global level. Y4H Charter was presented in the form of an appeal with 225,000 signatures of youth and adults from across the world to the *UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon* by HRIDAY's youth advocates in 2007. The *2nd GYM* was held in 2009 as a pre-conference workshop to the 14th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health (WCTOH) at Mumbai, India. Participants explored issues in tobacco control and conducted several campaigns which led to a global movement on **No More Tobacco in the 21st Century (NMT-21C) launched in 2013 during an International Conference on Public Health Priorities in the 21st Century: The Endgame for Tobacco**. This conference was **inaugurated by WHO Director General Dr. Margaret Chan**. This campaign was endorsed by several Global Health leaders and celebrities at the 16th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health (WCTOH) held in Abu Dhabi in 2015. The *3rd GYM 2015* empowered youth participants with advocacy and leadership skills on all aspects of SDGs. They developed action plans for reaching the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and launched the '**GUARD OUR GLOBE**' movement to call for more investment in youth for sustainable future. Pursuing activities under Guard our Globe, leads us to the 4th GYM in 2021.

The *4th GYM (Virtual) in 2021* (Theme: **Youth-led innovative public health actions for Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals**) will convene youth delegates to explore linkages between NCDs, Environment and Mental Health within the framework of the SDGs and to mark progress following the Global Action Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs (2013-2020). *Following earlier models, GYM 2021 will culminate with release of a Youth Declaration and adoption of concrete and time-bound youth-led Regional Action Plans that will be implemented Post-GYM*. Progress towards these goals will be evaluated at the following GYM. This action-driven process will be followed for all the GYMs that are organized subsequently. GYM 2021 will be a youth-led conclave that will witness the confluence of young health and development advocates and leaders from across the globe. *The meet will strengthen the capacities and skills of these young advocates and leaders, to become Youth Champions and plan, implement, monitor and scale-up integrated campaigns to meet their national NCD targets and accelerate action for SDGs.*

My work in NCDs began in 2012 and part of the enhancement of this was through participation in GYM 2015-my first ever international conference. The networks came naturally and I made friends, but also experts and mentors. After GYM 2015, my confidence increased and I felt more relevant in the work on NCDs and development and my commitment was stronger. After three years, I have been able to lead seven (7) NCD initiatives including the creation of the Cameroon NCD Alliance.

My journey in NCDs began as an enthusiastic fifteen year old teenager echoing health hazards of tobacco consumption in an inter-school debate competition. However, 1st GYM, 2006 will always be close to my heart as it was the first international meet on health that I attended. Thereafter, I received an opportunity to participate in the 2nd GYM as a resource person to share my learnings and experiences with peers. This role helped me gain confidence and skills to become an NCD voice which I continue to advance even today, as a professional.



Mr. Mbiyzenyuy Ferdinant Sonyuy
President-Reconciliation and Development Association (RADA).



Dr. Kanika Kishore
Assistant Professor at Miranda House College, India

GYM Alumni speak



Mr. Elvis Ndikum
Air health trainer with the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA)

During the 3rd GYM, I developed leadership skills urgently needed to foster national and global endeavours to reach the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The meet with resolve to ‘GUARD OUR GLOBE’ was a unique opportunity to mobilize local and global stakeholders to support government in curbing NCDs, while achieving the SDGs and UHC among youths at country levels.

Key focus areas for GYM 2021

- **Adolescent Health issues:** Decoding the need to including intersectoral action for adolescent health, mental health and wellness, sexual and reproductive health, injuries, violence, infectious diseases, Youth leadership in addressing COVID-19, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), alcohol and drugs, nutrition and micronutrient deficiency, undernutrition and obesity, physical activity, tobacco use, their rights and Noncommunicable diseases, cyber bullying, meaningful involvement of youth in addressing AYA's health issues at the country level, Sustainable Development Goals, Universal Health Coverage. Interlinkages between COVID-19 pandemic and adolescent health and emphasis on AYA health issues during health emergencies.
- **Public health, UHC and SDGs:** Understanding global public health in the context of the pivotal role of youth in addressing co-morbidities and related behavioural, social, cultural and economic determinants. Participants will also be sensitized about the overall scenario of global health and the dual burden of communicable and noncommunicable conditions, addressing physical as well as mental health issues. They will also understand the prevention and management focus under UHC and look for comprehensive solutions that are common across global health priorities within the umbrella of UHC and SDGs. Current challenges with respect to issues such as maternal and child health; adolescent health; communicable diseases and pandemics (like COVID-19) and environmental health will also be highlighted.
- **Commercial determinants of Health:** Understanding impact of marketing, advertising and promotion by unhealthy commodities industry; conflict of interest situations; industry interference with policy formulation and enforcement.
- **Youth-friendly policies:** Familiarization with best practices in prioritizing youth-centric policies in the response to public health challenges.
- **NCD risk factors:** Addressing tobacco use, alcohol use, unhealthy diets, inadequate physical activity and sedentariness, environmental risk factors (indoor and outdoor air pollution). This will also include a focus on the current situation of physical and social distancing and their impact on physical and mental health.

Strategies

- **Youth mentoring:** build and nurture mutually beneficial, long-standing relationships between NCD leaders and young champions, to develop their leadership and mentoring skills, with an intent to amplify NCD prevention and control within their countries, regions as well as globally.
- **Policy perspectives:** challenges and opportunities for youth leadership and action.
- **Identifying areas for youth engagement:** short-, mid- and long-term objectives and action items.

Expected Outcomes

- The participating youth develop strong inter-personal and communication skills to become Youth Champions in the adolescent health narrative at National, Regional and Global levels.
- The youth champions receive an opportunity to become a part of the Global discussions and deliberations and join the GYM Youth Committee for subsequent GYMs.
- The youth representatives contribute to and release a Regional Action Plans for prevention and control of major disease conditions and their risk factors (in their regions) and the GYM 2021 Youth Declaration.
- The youth devise innovative strategies to remain connected and active through virtual and digital platforms, keeping on ground and online activation progress synergistically.

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Our Technical Partners



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*Youth Coalition on
NCDs (formed
under the aegis of
UN Major Group for
Children and Youth)*



Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

ASEAN Tobacco Control Resource Center

To partner with us

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