

4th Global Youth Meet on Health

#Youth4Health **#GYM2021**

20 - 21 APRIL, 2021

Meaningful youth engagement for leading action on Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals.

Jointly co-organised by HRIDAY and World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia

GYM 2021 Youth Declaration

We, the Youth, represent the largest segment (16%) of the global population. At the moment, we are not just at a critical juncture undergoing life transitions in terms of physical, sexual, emotional, social and developmental aspirations, related to education, career and livelihood, and relationships with others, but also struggle to protect ourselves and our communities from the devastating global COVID-19 pandemic. Let us acknowledge-Youth are not the future- they are the present as well.

Taking note of the need to meaningfully engage young people in discussions and deliberations concerning their health, development and well-being, it is imperative to provide them with opportunities to voice their needs and priorities, to inform decision making. The pandemic is already shifting the trajectory of education, health and work culture for us and has further implications on our physical and mental health and well-being. Countries, across the globe have committed towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), for which it is important to open doors for meaningful youth engagement. We see our role as leaders, influencers, service providers, researchers, peer educators, activists, community outreach workers – including in the pandemic response and beyond.

Young people are living their reality now, not in the future. They are bearing the brunt of the pandemic and have been hit the hardest with economic and societal setbacks. It is the vulnerable young people-who are at risk of losing their jobs, undergoing catastrophic life transitions, such as dropping out of school and slipping into poverty. They require the greatest support in the COVID-19 era. In line with the World Health Organization's ambitious Triple Billion Targets by 2023, youth hold a critical role, and offer valuable contributions to address specific needs, and overcoming financial obstacles, to advance the agenda of UHC.



Our rights, health and well-being should be at the center of a multi-stakeholder action plan to create healthy, safe, and sustainable living environments. Youth-led civic engagement can pave way for effective health promotion, building COVID resilient communities and health systems to #BuildBackBetter.

In midst of the challenges, youth are exposed to today, it is an opportune time to build their resilience, competence and capacity for an idealistic rhetoric of young people changing the present and future!

Call to Action

We all gather virtually for the 4th **Global Youth Meet on Health (#GYM2021)** under the shroud of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. While the circumstances are challenging, they do not weaken our resolve and commitment. We turn these challenges into opportunities and innovations to promote global health and wellbeing. During this decisive decade of our existence, by 2030, we, the youth health champions of the 4th Global Youth Meet on Health, from 35 countries, call on decision-makers, civil society organisations, UN and key stakeholders with the following:

Youth should be meaningfully engaged at all levels, from conceptualisation to implementation of health and development policies and programmes, monitoring and evaluating progress and integrating transparency and accountability as components of effective implementation.

Opportunities to be created for youth to lead health and development agenda, through peer interaction and engagement to deliver equitable and essential services, spreading accurate information, championing mental health and conducting research.

Undertake youth-led capacity building for supporting engagement in virtual and in-person formats, mentorship, facilitation and coordination for shared ownership and decision making.

Take forward integrated frameworks for all adolescent health programmes, to improve the programming and measurement of adolescent well-being

Help strengthen the regulatory policy environments to protect young people from marketing tactics of the unhealth commodities industry, with a specific focus on prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).



For improving health, education and skills, entrepreneurship and employment outcomes, increase investments at global, regional, national and sub-national levels and facilitate youth engagement at every step of decision making.

Highlight and take ambitious steps to protect the health of youth from the devastating effects of air pollution exacerbated by climate change.

Engage multiple-sectors and stakeholders to protect youth health and create healthier living environments. National governments should adopt a whole-of-society approach and engage sectors beyond health through multi-sectoral action plans for adolescent health and development.

Availability of support and resources from UN bodies and donors to support mentor-mentee programmes and implementation of GYM Regional Action Plans, post GYM 2021 to accelerate youth led action within the COVID-19 response plans.

Leverage opportunities within adolescent health programming, to focus on young people living with health conditions and those at risk, as a part of UHC. Ensuring that the rights of adolescents and youth are integrated within human rights legislation, healthcare and education systems, and that legislative tools are used effectively to eliminate the pervasive and unacceptable impact of stigma, discrimination and bullying.

To advance efforts for ending gender-based violence and discriminatory practices that retard the health rights, physical and mental development of youths during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

High priority accorded to young people in UHC and sustainable development frameworks, ensuring that health systems meet the needs of youth in the time of COVID-19 and throughout the recovery phase, including public health promotion, testing, treatment, vaccination and provision of mental health services.

