



Global Mental Health Peer Network  
[www.gmhpn.org](http://www.gmhpn.org)

*"We may have different religions, languages, different coloured skin but we all belong to the human race. We need to stand up for diversity and find the beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people. We might not be racists, but we need to be anti-racist and come together in peace."*

~ Zak Martah

## POSITION STATEMENT: GLOBAL CALL FOR ACTION FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Supporting the UN Youth Initiative can make a bigger impact by bringing young and old together through generational experiences and diverse platforms to increase awareness of relevant issues.

The [Global Mental Health Peer Network \(GMHPN\)](http://www.gmhpn.org) appreciates that every individual is unique and brings value to the world, particularly the youth. Young and old, our uniqueness and individual traits are very often the roots of acts of inequality and human rights violations on a global scale. Young and old have similar basic needs namely the need for shelter, clothing, food, water, healthcare, support and spirituality, but sadly cannot ignore the reality of existing inequalities within communities. Apart from racism, sexism, gender, able-ism, differing socio-economic status, cultural and spiritual orientation, 'adultism', there are 'youthism' and 'age-ism' which most certainly increase social and legal inequalities among communities, directly and indirectly impacting on the wellbeing and empowerment of youth.

Cultural and social products give way to what is considered acceptable within communities and while we acknowledge the importance of culture and social systems as they are placed in our belief systems, we emphasise that diversity is what makes our world a beautiful place to live in.

In so far as mental health is concerned, studies by the World Health Organisation (WHO) show that gender and income inequality greatly affect an individual's state of mental health. Similarly, other [related research](#) indicates that inequality damages mental health in a variety of ways and that people in more unequal societies are much less likely to feel they can trust each other. This ultimately affects one's sense of belonging or lack thereof; and in the context of mental health and youth, inequality often silence the voices of young people.

It is however not too late to self-initiate a change in our perspectives on inequality, in fact every action we take against injustice, is a step towards creating a better world and enriching quality of life. GMHPN promotes the notion of taking the position of "**anti-any- kind-of -inequality**". Intergenerational diversity is what makes our world a beautiful place to be in and we should take care in treating every individual with the same respect and dignity as the next individual.

We call on all Governments to commit to actively promote respect for personhood and equality in policy, practice and service delivery regardless of the people's age socio-economic status or anything that makes a person different from another. Similarly, we ask that communities respect the voices and experiences of youth, and appreciate and celebrate the diversity of the humanity.

We need to move towards integration, inclusion and solidarity – young and old!

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