

GLOBAL YOUTH MOBILIZATION

POWERING CHANGE: YOUNG PEOPLE LEADING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Interim Report, February 2022

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Thank you to the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Foundation, WHO Foundation and all the donors who have supported the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund. Without their generous support this project would not have been possible.

CONTENTS

Foreword	2
About the Global Youth Mobilization	4
The challenge	5
Our goals	6
Our impact	8
Our reach	10
Stories of impact and emerging recommendations	12
Recommendations	13
Case studies	14
COVID-19 prevention, vaccines and combatting misinformation	14
Mental and physical health	19
Education disruption and employability	24
Gender inequality and combatting domestic and gender-based violence	29
Youth-led decision making	35
Our youth panellists	36
Summary of the Global Youth Summit	39
Advancing through partnerships	40
How you can support	41
Thank you to the Board and Project Team	43
References	45



FOREWORD

YOUTH-LED SOLUTIONS TO THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all. An unparalleled disruption, it has affected every part of our society – every family, every community – in every country across the world.

For young people, the social, emotional and economic impacts of public health restrictions including successive lockdowns have been enormous. School closures, increased unemployment and the suspension or closure of non-formal education and learning support services such as community groups, sports clubs and youth-led groups are still part of everyday life for many. Young people – particularly young women and girls – are more isolated, more at risk, more vulnerable to mental health challenges and more likely to be the victims of domestic and gender-based violence than before.

To support this disrupted generation, in December 2020, the Big Six Youth Organisations – a coalition of the world's largest global youth organisations – joined

forces to launch the Global Youth Mobilization (GYM). Thanks to the generous support of the World Health Organization, United Nations Foundation and COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, the GYM has invested much-needed funds in local and national youth organisations to support the pandemic response and recovery efforts.

Ensuring young people are at the heart of our model and decision-making processes, the GYM has developed and launched a unique direct micro-funding platform for youth-led local solutions. Working in collaboration with national organisations of the Big Six, we have been able to re-energise and revitalise youth development activities.



Now, we are at an inflection point. As the world starts to look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we have an opportunity to learn lessons and build a society that prioritises future generations.

We have an opportunity to invest in young people and empower them to lead and shape their own futures. We have an opportunity to equip them with the life skills to create a world that ensures that the most vulnerable are not left behind and we all grow stronger together.

Young people have been at the forefront of tackling the negative impacts of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. On behalf of the Global Youth Mobilization and all our partners, I invite you to join us in investing in the opportunities before us. Join us in investing in young people, in their ideas, their creativity



Ahmad Alhendawi

Chair of the Global Youth Mobilization Board and Secretary General, World Organisation of the Scout Movement

A message from Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

"WHO is proud to support the global movement to engage and empower young people as a driving force in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with the Big Six and the United Nations Foundation has provided a unique opportunity to learn from millions of young people and be guided by their enthusiasm and ideas to help communities build back better.

What the Big Six have achieved in a year through launching and implementing the Global Youth Mobilization is phenomenal and unparalleled in the youth development sector. We look forward to continuing our support and encourage other partners to join the mobilisation and invest in the health and well-being of future generations."



ABOUT THE GLOBAL YOUTH MOBILIZATION

The Global Youth Mobilization (GYM) is a movement of young people taking action to improve their lives and their communities now and in a post-COVID-19 world.

Powered by the Big Six – the world's largest global youth organisations – and supported by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Foundation, GYM aims to harness this momentum to address the negative impacts of the pandemic on young people and support them to build back better.

With support from the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, GYM is supporting and scaling-up youth-led solutions, reinventing funding models and re-energising youth engagement programmes across the world.

Thanks to the incredible support of our partners and the hard work of everyone involved, the GYM is on track to reach hundreds of thousands of young people by investing much needed funds at a grassroots level and advocating for the role of young people in COVID-19 recovery and response efforts.



About the Big Six Youth Organisations

Formed in 1996, the Big Six Youth Organizations is an alliance of leading international youth-serving organisations, comprising the largest youth movements in the world:



Together, the Big Six actively involve and engage more than 250 million young people in non-formal education and learning, contributing to the empowerment of more than one billion young people during the last century.

THE CHALLENGE

An estimated 1.2 billion young people have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic response measures.¹ Disruptions to education, employment, services and social support have changed the future of an entire generation. Initially blamed, largely ignored in the policy response and increasingly left to their own devices, this disrupted generation is facing an ongoing crisis unparalleled in history.

Youth unemployment and job insecurity rates increased rapidly as young people, already in temporary or informal jobs and in sectors worst affected by the pandemic, were the first to be let go. Widespread disruption to education is affecting life chances and active participation in society, especially for the millions of children and young people who do not have access to digital technology or adequate internet connectivity at home.²

"It is extremely important to me that youth have a meaningful role in decision-making. We can do a lot more than people think we can. We are strong and we can change the world!"

Clara Brown, Youth Panellist, Canada

In addition, gender inequality has been exacerbated with girls and young women disproportionately impacted by a shadow pandemic of increased gender-based and domestic violence. The mental and physical health of many children and young people has been adversely affected by isolation, disruption to normal routines and worries about the future.³

Recognising the uncertain futures faced by many young people, the Big Six Youth Organizations came together to address the impact of these disruptions. They called for urgent action and commitments on nine key policy recommendations. These ranged from prioritisation of mental health support for young people, to active engagement in decision-making, access

to education and supporting youth organisations at all levels.⁴

Turning their recommendations to action, the Big Six initiated the **Global Youth Mobilization**, offering hope to young people for a better tomorrow.



OUR GOALS

In partnership with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Foundation – with generous support from the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund – the GYM reinforces the reality of young people as the solution, not the problem. At the heart of the GYM, young people are leading the solutions to the challenges created by the pandemic, fully engaged in the design and implementation of all initiatives.

The GYM is delivering youth engagement, social action and campaigning for change in three core areas:

"We saw that young people were going home happier, with higher wellbeing and a whole new set of skills, and not to forget a whole new bunch of friends."

Tea Tomažič, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, Slovenia



Activation of grassroots Local Solutions

An open and world-first call to all young people to submit their solutions to the health and societal COVID-19 challenges. More than \$2million is available through small funding opportunities for Local Solutions led by young people and youth-led organisations, as well as an Accelerator Programme to scale up the most effective ideas.

- **Local Solutions projects** A call to all young people, regardless of background or location, to submit their solutions to challenges facing young people and their communities today. These projects are direct investments in young people based on innovative ideas that tackle specific challenges in local communities. Accessible funding options are available in four tiers – from \$500 to \$5,000 – designed for individual young people, informal groups and youth-led community groups. All the funding applications are judged by young people.
- **Accelerator Programme** A unique twelve-week programme that will be offered to Local Solutions awardees to scale up and replicate their projects. This learning experience will be carried out through practical exercise sessions and a mentorship programme enabling participants to further develop their projects for long-lasting impact, beyond their initial seed funding.



Driving national change through the Big Six

Activation of national networks of the Big Six in response to the impact of COVID-19 on young people and their local communities.

More than \$1.8million has been invested in the Big Six Youth Organizations to re-energise national organisations and provide much needed non-formal education and learning.



Championing Young People

Advocating for changes in policy, improved representation of young people and global action to overcome the impact of the pandemic are at the heart of the Global Youth Mobilization. Efforts are focused on ensuring young people have a much-needed platform to advocate for the issues impacting them. The GYM is championing youth-led ideas, recommendations and solutions from the grassroots and advocating for changes in international, national and local policies.



OUR IMPACT

To date, the GYM has provided funding to 183 Local Solutions projects across 41 countries and funded 74 National Projects across the Big Six in 56 countries.

Overall, the endeavour is on track to meet all key targets and mobilise hundreds of thousands of young people and youth-led community organisations in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.



218,692

Young people engaged



804,050

Community beneficiaries



77

Countries



Local solutions



183

Projects supported to date



400

Projected total projects



179,104

Young people directly engaged



495,919

Community beneficiaries



\$587,000

Funds dispersed to date for Local Solutions



\$600,000

Funds remaining for 2022

All data are accurate as of 21 January 2022. The figures for young people directly engaged and community beneficiaries are projections based on awarded projects to date. The Local Solutions data relate to the first three funding cycles and do not include the remaining unallocated projects that will be approved during the remaining three funding cycles.



National projects



74
Projects



39,588
Young people
engaged directly in
volunteer activities
through the Big Six



308,131
Community beneficiaries

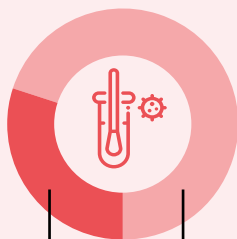


76,677 / 25%
25% of total community
beneficiaries are from
under-represented
groups – primarily rural
youth, refugees and
victims of gender-
based violence

Projects by theme

National projects
 Local solutions

**COVID-19
prevention, vaccines
and combatting
misinformation**



12 28

**Education
disruption
and employability**



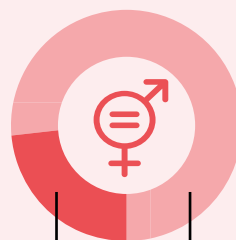
37 91

**Mental
and physical
health**



17 31

**Gender inequality and
combatting domestic
and gender-based
violence**



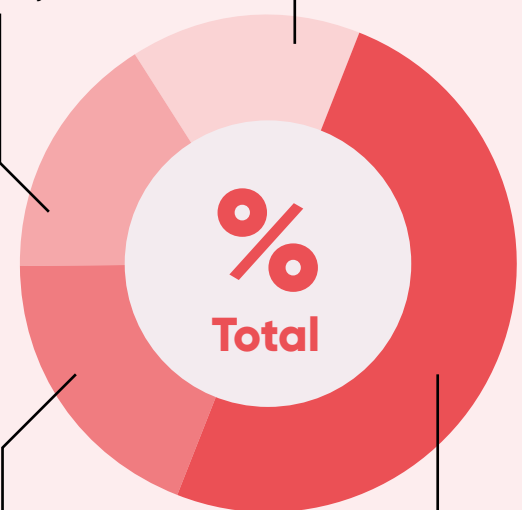
8 33

16%
41 projects

15%
40 projects

19%
48 projects

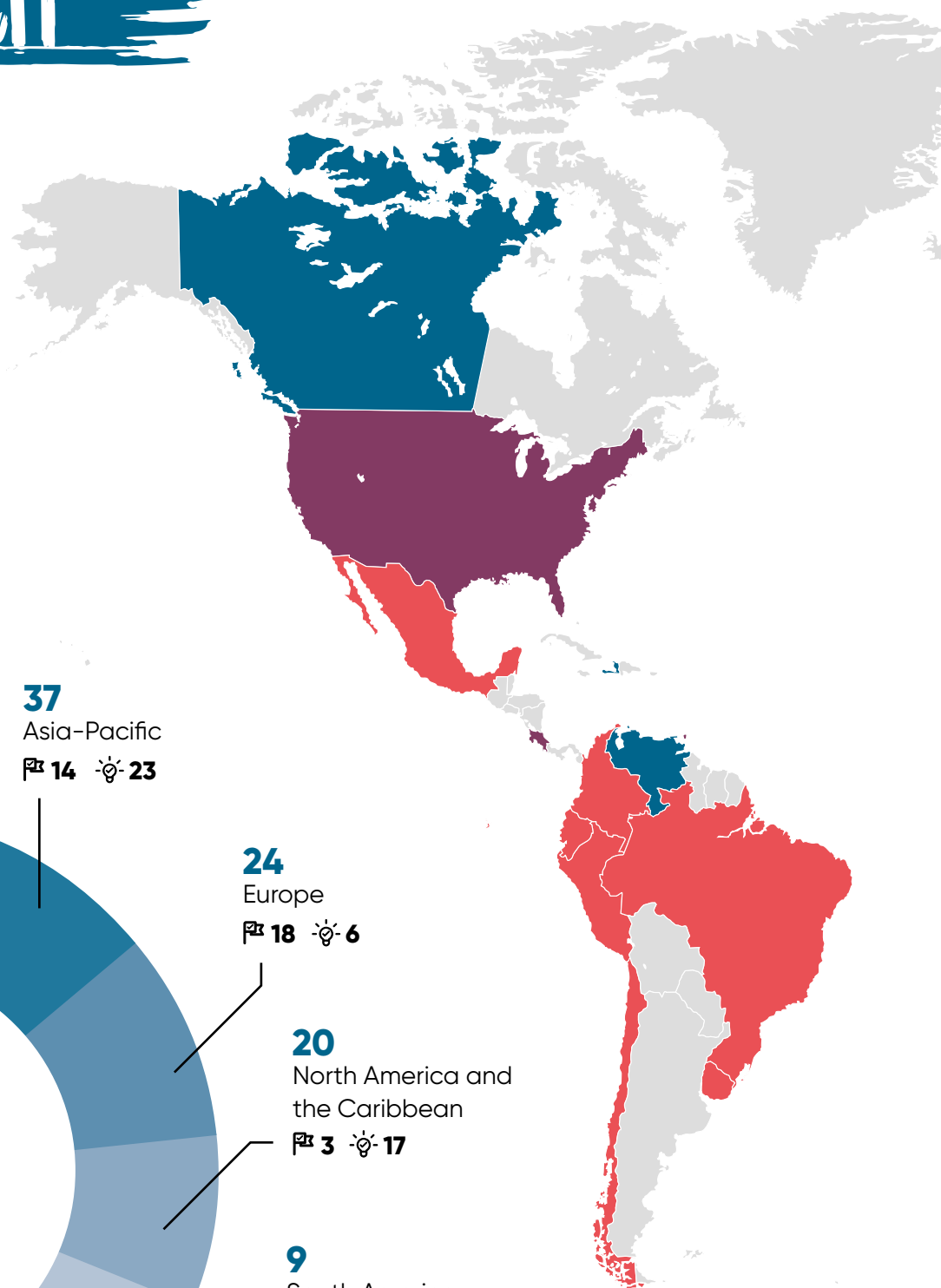
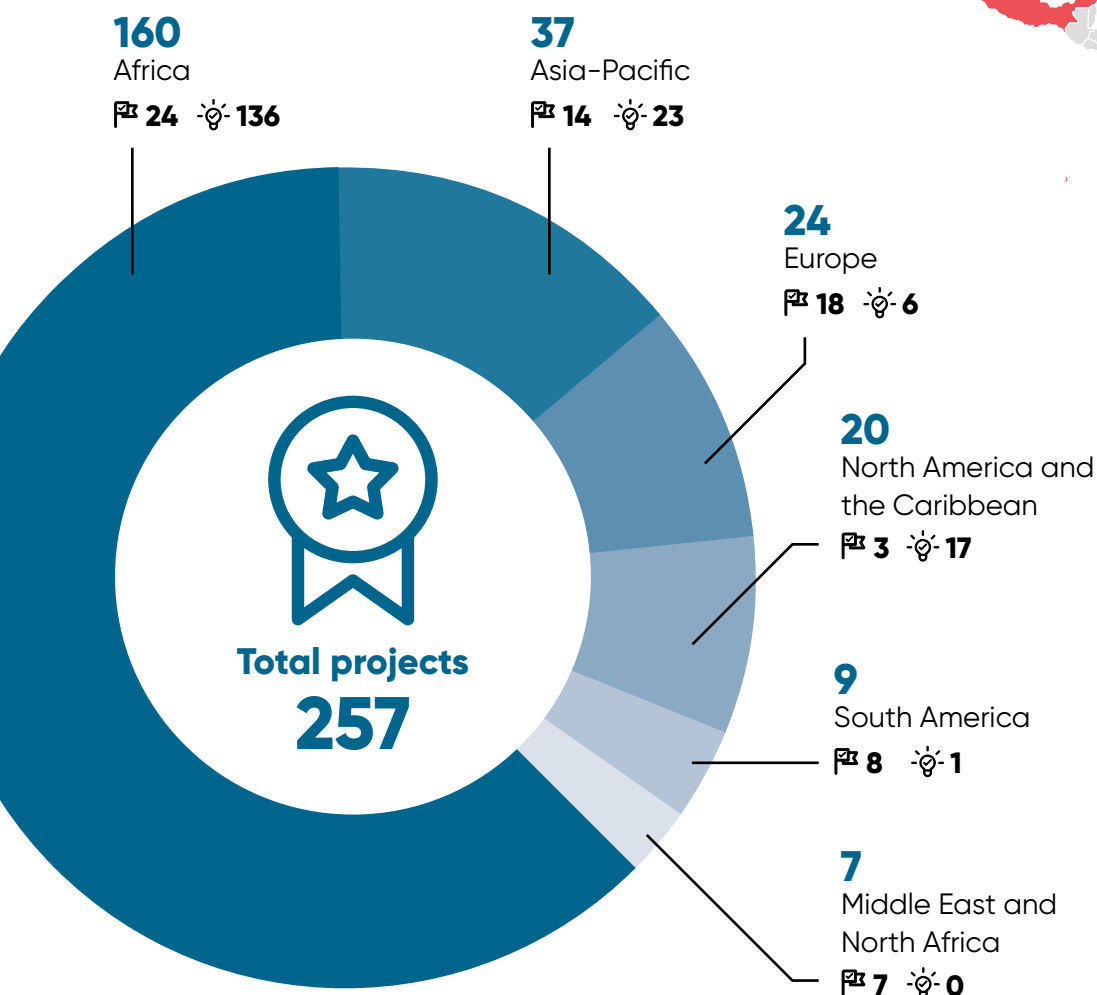
50%
28 projects

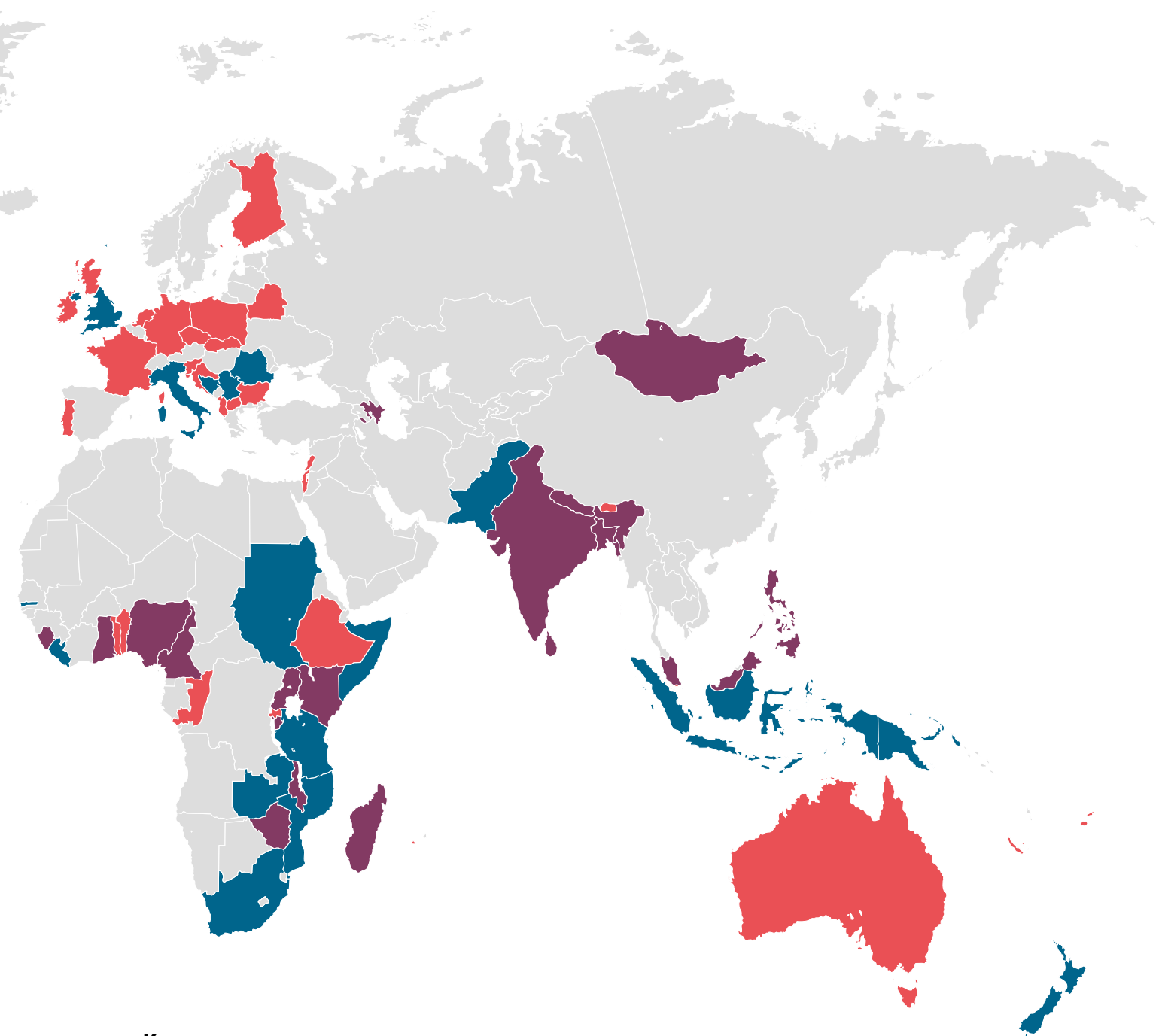


**%
Total**

OUR REACH

In more than 77 countries across the world, the GYM has engaged and directly invested in young people, informal groups, youth-led organisations and national organisations of the Big Six.





Key

- GYM National Project
- GYM Local Solutions
- National Projects and Locations Solutions

Note: Demographic data for the young people leading each project are available upon request. This map and the split of countries does not reflect the political views of the Big Six Youth Organisations, WHO or United Nations Foundation

STORIES OF IMPACT AND EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS

The GYM is addressing the complex and overlapping negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people. As a consequence, the activities that the GYM is funding are very broad, hugely varied, reflect the diversity and reach of the response and recovery movement.



The following stories of impact demonstrate the tremendous progress being made across the four project themes:



COVID-19 prevention, vaccines and combatting misinformation



Mental and physical health



Education disruption and employability



Gender inequality and combatting domestic and gender-based violence

Many other Local Solutions initiatives are underway, helping to break down the digital divide, tackle climate change and develop leaders and entrepreneurs.

A large proportion of National Projects are focused on revitalising youth development activities and restarting critical non-formal education and learning that was forced to stop during successive lockdowns. These projects are reported within the 'Education disruption and employability' theme.

Please visit [**Global Youth Mobilization**](https://globalyouthmobilization.org) to learn more.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From our discussions and engagements with young people, youth-led organisations and national organisations of the Big Six we are calling on multinational agencies and institutions, governments, policymakers and corporations to:



- 1** Prioritise **effective, accessible and evidence-based risk communication strategies and community engagement** efforts to combat the spread of misinformation.
- 2** Empower and engage **young people to take active roles in COVID-19 prevention and protection measures** at local, national and international levels.



- 3** Ensure **equitable access to healthcare for children and young people**, regardless of background, gender or employment status, with mental health as a key priority.
- 4** Increase funding for lifesaving, **youth-led mental health services**.
- 5** **Invest in local solutions and adaptive programming**; encourage greater collaboration between non-governmental, public and private sector providers.



- 6** Invest in flexible, digital-first and holistic approaches to education that **combine effective classroom learning with non-formal education and learning solutions**.
- 7** Give young people access to resources including mentoring, peer-to-peer support and financial investment, so they are empowered to implement their ideas and test their own solutions.
- 8** Involve **young people and young leaders in intergenerational dialogue, decision-making** and planning at all levels, in both policymaking and the adoption of youth-led solutions.

- 9** **Increase financial support for the non-profit sector**, particularly non-formal education organisations, to ensure they can survive future crises and serve new community needs.



- 10** **Create safe spaces for young women, girls and members of the LGBTQ+ community** to share experiences, support one another and increase awareness of the danger of gender and domestic-based violence.
- 11** **Strengthen capacity of local organisations to be able to respond to violence reporting** and monitor services and referral pathways; strengthen cyber laws and online harassment reporting schemes, with a particular focus on preventing gender-based and sexual orientation-based violence, as well as violence towards children.
- 12** **Recognise menstrual hygiene as a human right** and combat the stigma associated with menstruation to ensure no one is prevented from accessing education, social services or other services.



COVID-19 prevention, vaccines and combatting misinformation



40

Total number of projects



12

National Projects



28

Local Solutions



55,507

Young people directly engaged



308,131

Community beneficiaries

The problem

The spread of inaccurate information about COVID-19 – its causes, how it can spread, the safety of vaccines and the effectiveness of public health measures – can have disastrous consequences for individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Ultimately, the spread of incorrect or false information can kill the most vulnerable in society.⁵ The challenge of countering misinformation, combatting vaccine hesitancy, and increasing prevention measures has become a critical part of the pandemic response and recovery efforts.

If vaccine doses are distributed equitably, and the most vulnerable across the world are prioritised, we will all be safe. But unfortunately, to date, the vast majority of vaccines have been administered in high and middle-income countries. Africa has the slowest vaccination rate of any continent, with just under 15% of the population having received at least one dose of a vaccine.⁶ Vaccine hesitancy remains very high within certain communities, often in under-represented and low-income families.



The solutions



Education and prevention, vaccine confidence and uptake – Nigeria

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Inspire World International Foundation (IWIF), Chris Chukwunyere Njoku



Intended young people engaged 15,000



Community beneficiaries 2,000

The emergence of COVID-19 exposed the inequities that exist among vulnerable populations in Nigeria, with young people particularly affected. By building the technical capacity of young people to advocate for public health messages, this Local Solutions project has encouraged over 100 young people to receive COVID-19 vaccinations with hopes to reach many more.

Local community leaders, social media influencers, religious leaders and teachers were trained to become Global Youth Mobilizers and hosted vaccination outreach programmes in rural and urban communities. The campaign includes digital and outreach materials in the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa languages to reduce barriers to COVID-19 education.

The project includes a digital educational campaign addressing COVID-19 vaccine myths through online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp and live webinars. The aim is to reach 15,000 young people to increase their confidence in COVID-19 vaccines.

“Our project is currently addressing the high COVID-19 cases among young people that we were witnessing. Through our educational outreaches in schools, communities and online, young people are adopting public health preventive practices.”

Chris Chukwunyere Njoku, IWIF co-founder and executive director





Ambassadors for community safety against COVID-19 – Ghana

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name West Africa for Peace Foundation (WACPF), Brenda Adiaba



Intended young people engaged 100



Community beneficiaries 1,000

The WACPF designed this peer-to-peer learning programme to empower and inform young people about COVID-19 protection measures. The trained ambassadors work with their communities to distribute masks, hand sanitisers and information to debunk myths about the virus and vaccines. To date, 15 ambassadors have been recruited and will be trained to lead positive behavioural change, leading to a reduction of vaccine hesitancy in the community.

"Young people are now willing to take on leadership roles in their communities to educate adults without fear. In a country like Ghana, young people educating adults is seen as disrespectful, hence young people have, over the years, not dared take up such roles. This project has changed the narrative as adults are listening and not taking offense, which is a good sign of change."

Brenda Adiaba,
Project Lead





Human building bridges – Venezuela

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name

Luis Alvarado Bruzual



Young people engaged

300



Community beneficiaries

5,000

"We, the young people, are addressing the consequences of COVID-19 by working with creative, youth-led solutions that will contribute to building resilience in a post-pandemic reality."

Luis Alvarado Bruzual,
Project Lead

This Local Solutions project trains and encourages young activists to take leadership roles in their communities and advocate for vaccine equity as a human right. Social media platforms, podcasts, radio and video broadcasts have reached 5,000 young people with instrumental messages about public issues including COVID-19. Online discussions about pandemic prevention have helped increase vaccine uptake among young people.

Young people are gaining the skills to participate in public dialogues about vaccination hesitancy and other humanitarian crises in Venezuela. Six of the young people involved co-authored an e-book about activism strategies to strengthen civil society.





Rebuilding and helping the community – Croatia

National project



Organisation/young person name Scout and Guide Association of Croatia/Croatia-WOSM



Intended young people engaged 120



Community beneficiaries 6,120

"The pandemic has made me realize that we need to take action to protect those who are most vulnerable. It is vital that young people are given a safe space to socialize and learn new skills, which is why I was happy to be a part of this wonderful project and hope to continue in 2022!"

Filip, 28, Scout volunteer



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Croatia is battling two crises: one created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the other by two strong earthquakes combining to have a major impact on communities and young people. In response, volunteer Scouts are providing critical public health information to combat the rise of COVID-19, prevent the spread of infections and support local communities by distributing food and water.

In addition, they have collected donated toys and educational materials and created over 50 "Happy Centres" to encourage children and young people to continue with their education and interact with others in a safe space.



Emerging recommendations

Governments, policymakers and communities must:

- Prioritise effective, accessible and evidence-based risk communication strategies and community engagement efforts to combat the spread of misinformation.
- Empower and engage young people to take active roles in COVID-19 prevention and protection measures at local, national and international levels.





Mental and physical health



48

**Total number
of projects**



17

**National
Projects**



31

**Local
Solutions**



20,626

**Young people
directly
engaged**



76,796

**Community
beneficiaries**

The problem

According to the WHO, the pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health support to tackle loneliness and isolation has increased.⁷ Research by Mind, a UK-based charity, found that 9 in 10 young people said that loneliness made their mental health worse during the pandemic.⁸ Critically, in low-income countries and places experiencing humanitarian crises, the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing stress, anxiety and depression. According to an IFRC report,

in Afghanistan, the pandemic has significantly increased anxiety levels, with restrictions causing spikes in loneliness, depression, harmful drug use, self-harm and suicidal behaviours.⁹

The secondary impacts of lockdowns and connected public health measures should not be underestimated. Many of the young people, youth-led organisations and national organisations of the Big Six that the GYM is supporting have identified the impact on mental and physical health as one of the biggest challenges facing them.



The solutions



Youth we 3erve – Hong Kong

National project



Organisation/young person name The Hong Kong Award for Young People, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award



Young people engaged 36



Community beneficiaries 531

In Hong Kong, more than 50% of young people aged between 18 and 24 report symptoms of depression.¹⁰ The Youth we 3erve project is a 12-month mental health training programme involving 300 youth participants to date. These ambassadors will work with their communities to combat the effects of social distancing and online classes, aiming to prevent further negative mental health consequences.

"The (youth) ambassadors now know more about mental health than before, they have learned ways to relieve stress and are starting to care more about the people around them by serving and supporting others."

Hunter Sin, Service and Operation Officer





COCO 'Come back from COVID-19' – Mongolia

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name YMCA, Urangoo Khongorzul



Intended young people engaged 400



Intended community beneficiaries 700

"Sometimes it can be difficult to engage people in what we are trying to achieve. But it makes our heart warm when we see the changes that our project is making with the support of the GYM. We believe that young people bring the biggest impacts in our society and they will become decision makers in the future."

Urangoo Khongorzul,
Project Lead



In Mongolia, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the physical and mental health of young people. Anxiety disorders, depression, suicidal thoughts and sleep deprivation are of particular concern.

The 'Come back from COVID-19' or COCO project is working with young people to overcome these challenges by creating a safe and comfortable environment at a local YMCA centre with access to professional psychologists during mental health meetings

and therapy sessions. By sharing their feelings and experiences with peers in this safe space, young people are learning the necessary tools to apply healthy coping strategies during difficult times. To promote healthy physical lifestyles, the COCO project hosts sporting events through a local youth centre.

To date, over 300 young people from the community have been involved and the project hopes to reach a total of 400 young people and benefit 700 community members.





The Karsa project – Indonesia

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Karsa, Jordan Jans and Amadeus Arsha



Young people engaged 100



Community beneficiaries 400

In rural areas of Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic has created health risks including increased drug addiction. Designed, implemented and led by two 16-year-olds, the Karsa project pairs youth volunteers with health practitioners to provide support such as mental health consultations, food packages and hand sanitisers to those in need.

"People are more aware of health problems, whether physically or mentally, and youth are inspired to also dive into the community and contribute."

Jordan Jans,
Project Lead





Girls' Clubs as a promoter of leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic – Albania

National project



Organisation/young person name YWCA Albania, Tana Aliqj



Young people engaged 160



Community beneficiaries 1,000

“Our project has encouraged many girls to openly express their thoughts and ideas and feel protected. It has taught them how to turn their insecurities into courage, promoting their leadership skills to better address the lack of effective mental health services, gender-based violence and digital abuse – all of which have been further exacerbated by COVID-19.”

Tana Aliqj, YWCA Albania Leader



WorldYWCA

COVID-19 and associated lockdowns in Albania have heightened challenges for young people including mental health, reproductive health, self-image, gender-based violence and gender-based stereotypes. Through 12 Girls' Clubs across the country, this project is giving safe spaces to young girls to increase their resilience and ability to create and advocate for strategies that address different forms of violence, with a focus on cyber- and gender-based violence.

Young women's leadership skills are being promoted, nurtured and grown to respond to the pandemic.



Emerging recommendations

Governments, policymakers and communities must:

- Ensure equitable access to healthcare for children and young people, regardless of background, gender or employment status, with mental health as a key priority.
- Increase funding for lifesaving, youth-led mental health services.
- Invest in local solutions and adaptive programming; encourage greater collaboration between non-governmental, public and private sector providers.



Education disruption and employability



128

**Total number
of projects**



37

**National
Projects**



91

**Local
Solutions**



90,296

**Young people
directly
engaged**



480,164

**Community
beneficiaries**

The problem

More than 1.5 billion students from almost every country have been impacted by school closures.¹¹ In January 2022, schools were still closed in Uganda – the longest break in education in the world.¹² For those most marginalised and at risk in our societies, the future of education and employment has never been more uncertain.

According to the World Bank, over 80% of emerging and developing countries registered a recession in 2020.¹³ One in six young people worldwide lost their jobs during the pandemic.¹⁴ In South Africa, the unemployment rate stood at over 32% in

the first quarter of 2021.¹⁵ In Colombia, unemployment spiked in May 2020 at over 21%.¹⁶

Non-formal education and learning can be of great value to help young people prepare for a new and changing job market. However, education systems and institutions of learning at all levels remain behind the curve and are at risk of letting young people down because of a lack of support, investment and innovation. Young people must be supported to adapt quickly and address inequalities that are widening because of the pandemic.



The solutions



Youth empowerment to combat the negative effects of COVID-19 – Cameroon

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Cameroon Youth in Development, Elvis Ayafor



Young people engaged 20



Intended community beneficiaries 3,500

This Local Solutions project trains young people to work towards a more sustainable future by supporting their communities with job creation, agricultural initiatives, addressing gender-based violence and educating on COVID-19 prevention.

So far, 20 young people have been trained and are combatting education disruption by sharing books, bags, pens and tuition support with students. In addition, the project has helped over 1,000 people Cameroon become self-employed.

“Through our project, young people in my community are now being recognised and empowered when it comes to decision making and addressing the problems created by COVID-19. Young people are now in key leadership positions that were handled by the elderly before. This is a big and important change.”

Elvis Ayafor, Project Lead





WoW – Wheels of Wisdom – Bangladesh

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Grow Your Reader, Sadia Jafrin



Young people engaged 70



Intended community beneficiaries 12,000

In Bangladesh, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the pre-existing education disparities that reduced opportunities for many vulnerable children and young people. The WoW – Wheels of Wisdom project makes use of three street vans to provide books and mobile hot spots to students in rural communities.

By training the van drivers to serve as librarians and interact safely with children, the project has had a positive impact on local communities. To date, WoW has distributed over 5,600 books to 4,300 children and has provided them with more than 21,000 hours of internet access.

"Our main objective is to give an alternative opportunity to the children from low-income communities to preserve their interest in learning and getting back to school after re-opening. Since they have no internet access to join online classes, there is a huge chance they will lose their interest in learning. This project will show them the way to learn continuously."

Sadia Jafrin, Grow Your Reader founder and Project Lead





Creative solidarity project – Colombia

National project



Organisation/young person name YMCA Colombia



Young people engaged 4



Intended community beneficiaries 2,500



The Creative solidarity project of the YMCA in Colombia seeks to address the limited employment options facing many young vulnerable people that can lead to mental health strain, domestic violence and increased risk of drug use and school dropouts. Through leadership and entrepreneurial training, young people are transforming their community environments to address issues such as poverty, exclusion, internal conflict and social violence. So far, the project has helped to improve the living conditions of 2,000 young people from vulnerable communities.

"Young people are extremely creative, innovative and brave. They have amazing solutions to the social problems we are facing in our post-modern society. They are the future."

Liliana Herrera Vasco,
YMCA Assistant
Project Manager





The Czecho-Slovakian DofE online academy – Czechia and Slovakia

National project



Organisation/young person name Partnership between The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, the Scouts and YMCA in Czechia and Slovakia



Young people engaged 2,000



Community beneficiaries 160,000



By focusing on non-formal education and learning activities, this unique partnership between three of the Big Six Youth Organizations is engaging young people in the hardest-to-reach parts of society and motivating them to overcome the impact of education disruption. Interactive online workshops have improved participants' communication and inter-personal skills and increased their capacity to deal with mental health challenges.

"Our project aims to improve the experience and outcomes for young people by developing leader skills with a focus on creativity, communication, leadership and presentation skills. Through this we hope to support them to mentor more participants and develop their Award centres towards sustainable growth."

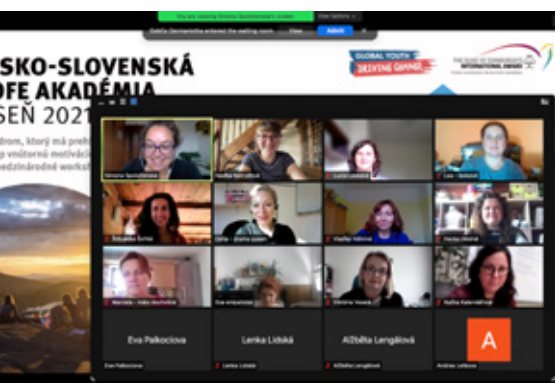
Michal Jež,
Programme Director



Emerging recommendations

Governments, policymakers and communities must:

- Invest in flexible, digital-first and holistic approaches to education that combine effective classroom learning and non-formal education and learning solutions.
- Give young people access to resources including mentoring, peer-to-peer support and financial investment, so they are empowered to implement their ideas and test their own solutions.
- Involve young people and young leaders in intergenerational dialogue, decision-making and planning at all levels, in both policymaking and the adoption of youth-led solutions.
- Increase financial support for the non-profit sector, particularly non-formal education organisations, to ensure they can survive future crises and serve new community needs in a post-pandemic reality.





Gender inequality and combatting domestic and gender-based violence



41
**Total number
of projects**



8
**National
Projects**



33
**Local
Solutions**



52,263
**Young people
directly
engaged**



87,389
**Community
beneficiaries**

The problem

According to UN Women, one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence.¹⁷ Throughout the pandemic, violence against women and girls, especially domestic violence, has intensified.¹⁸ According to 60% of the IFRC's National Societies, violence against children increased during the pandemic.¹⁹

A shadow pandemic making girls and women more vulnerable has taken hold that has far-reaching and long-term implications for societies in every country. In addition

to increases in domestic and gender-based violence, a special UN report found that a plethora of other factors has increased vulnerabilities and widened the gender equality gap.²⁰ These include the loss of employment for women, who often hold the majority of informal and low-paid jobs; the additional risk carried by the world's nurses, a workforce made up of mostly women who have been at the forefront of the pandemic response; and the rapid increase in unpaid care work that mostly girls and women provide already.



The solutions



Family Planning is my right and my choice – Rwanda

National project



Organisation/young person name WAGGGS, Association des Guides du Rwanda



Young people engaged 12



Community beneficiaries 10,000



WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS

To address an increase in adolescent pregnancies that has widened the gender inequality gap in Rwanda, this project provides young people access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services. 24 peer educators have been trained on sexual reproductive health and rights and family planning. These peer educators are working with community schools to provide comprehensive sexual education to adolescent girls and boys. Through two clubs at rural schools, so far 50 participants have learned about bodily autonomy and family planning.

“Young people, particularly young women, face issues in accessing information regarding their sexual reproductive health and rights, so I want to contribute to the actions of changing lives of young girls and boys through this project.”

Faustine Ikaze Shimo





Mental health slumber party – Uganda

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Amanda Bosco



Intended young people engaged 20



Intended community beneficiaries 50

To support members of the trans community in Uganda, this Local Solutions project provided an informal and safe space to discuss mental health challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Following safety regulations, participants socialised by playing board games and holding a story telling circle to share experiences.

The slumber party served as an informal support group, encouraging young people to discuss sustainable ways to cope with the social and health implications of the pandemic. Participants benefited from the group interaction, particularly combatting the negative wellbeing impact of isolation and limited social activity.

"Our project focused on building the capacity of young people by providing knowledge and the skills necessary to cope with the effects of the pandemic on their lives, while simultaneously implementing a comprehensive and inclusive approach to enable them to become change makers in their communities."

Amanda Bosco,
Project Lead





Empowering the young people to break menstrual taboos amid the COVID-19 crisis – Nepal

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name YWCA Nepal, Roni Shakya



Young people engaged 50



Community beneficiaries 50

Through in-person and virtual learning sessions, this project reached 50 beneficiaries, including young men, with information about menstrual hygiene management and sexual reproductive health to help sensitise communities and address taboos associated with these topics. Young women and girls in Nepal are trained and empowered to provide safe spaces for young people to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on menstrual health. In partnership with local government, the team has also offered young people in need homemade sanitary pads, hand sanitisers, face masks and soap to promote health and COVID-19 safety practices.

“Through this fund, I am able to mobilise and create awareness among young people, distribute essential materials to needy people and most importantly help them to feel self-empowered on menstrual hygiene management in my community, which is the best part of this project.”

Roni Shakya,
Project Lead





Project thrive – The Gambia

Local Solutions project



Organisation/young person name Girls' Pride, Fatoummata Jabbi-Kassama



Young people engaged
50



Community beneficiaries
500

"My team and I feel so excited and motivated that we were able to reach 500 adolescent girls who could not afford to buy monthly pads during their periods. We were happy to provide these girls a safe space where they could discuss issues related to sexual and reproductive health such as sexually transmitted infections, self-care, myths and misconceptions."

Fatoumatta Jabbi-Kassama, Project Lead

Girls in The Gambia tend to miss 10–20% of school days during their menstrual cycles; COVID-19 lockdowns decreased access to menstrual hygiene products and increased exposure of these young women and girls to sexual and domestic gender-based violence.

Working in schools and other facilities in the poorest regions of The Gambia, this project has trained 500 young women and girls on body positivity, addressing menstrual taboos and how to protect themselves from sexual and domestic gender-based violence.



Emerging recommendations

Governments, policymakers and communities must:

- Create safe spaces for young women, girls and members of the LGBTQ+ community to share experiences, support one another and increase awareness of the danger of gender and domestic-based violence.
- Strengthen capacity of local organisations to be able to respond to violence reporting and monitor services and referral pathways; strengthen cyber laws and online harassment reporting schemes, with a particular focus on preventing gender-based and sexual orientation-based violence, as well as violence towards children.
- Recognise menstrual hygiene as a human right and combat the stigma associated with menstruation to ensure no one is prevented from accessing education, social services or other services.





IFRC Youth Innovation

To activate the GYM approach, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) offers a Youth Innovation Academy called 'Limitless' to its millions of volunteers and staff members. Originally seed funded by the GYM, Limitless provides professional development and networking opportunities, helping young people initiate innovative projects in their local communities to address the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19. To date, 333 projects in 66 countries have been directly funded by the programme;

the young people leading the projects also attended a series of workshops about the innovation process, learned about funding and gained feedback to improve their initiatives. 50 of the projects will receive additional funding and the leads will receive mentoring to scale up the ideas moving into 2022.

Limitless is an inclusive and accessible programme offering multilingual events, materials and tools, and enabling applications in 17 languages. The application platform also enables low bandwidth access and offers participants the possibility to receive advice from the network.

"We make up the largest percentage of the population, we are young and enthusiastic with great and wonderful innovative ideas, addressing the issues that we face in our communities; all we need is guidance and support."

Esther, Kenyan Red Cross

"I want to extend my heartiest gratitude to the donors who are supporting GYM and funding projects. Such projects bring about a huge change in society. Keep supporting, change lives and make resilient communities."

Haseeb, Pakistan
Red Crescent

"We would like to remind young people that there are no bad ideas and it's important that we take action, because our ideas can be huge or can be little. What matters it's that we want to make a positive impact in our communities."

Ana, Ecuadorian
Red Cross



YOUTH-LED DECISION MAKING

Global Youth Mobilization puts youth-led solutions at the heart of the pandemic recovery. We believe it is essential to harness the surge of activism, creative solutions, passion and commitment demonstrated by young people in response to COVID-19. This is why we are investing more than \$2million in young people's ideas, innovations and futures.

Specifically, the GYM Local Solutions initiative is a unique open call to all young people, regardless of background or location, to submit their solutions to the health and societal COVID-19 challenges facing youth and their communities today. Applications can be submitted in five languages and young people can work offline to ensure community groups in rural communities or areas

with low connectivity can still apply. Funding is available in four tiers, from \$500 to \$5,000, and awarded on a three-month review cycle.

Funding for Local Solutions is a direct investment in young people, informal groups and youth-led organisations. In partnership with Salesforce, we've built a bespoke funding platform that supports the application, review, award and reporting process.

 **salesforce.org**

The Local Solutions platform is powered by **Salesforce.org**. The Global Youth Mobilization is grateful for their generous partnership, support and guidance in helping to build and shape the platform.



OUR YOUTH PANELLISTS

Aligned with the ethos of youth-led decision making, young people are in control of allocating all the funding for Local Solutions projects. A group of more than 40 Youth Panellists from around the world decide how the funding is allocated and who is awarded the grants.

Everyone involved with the Global Youth Mobilization has benefitted from the experience of working with the Youth Panellists. Their professionalism, commitment and dedication to their roles has been extraordinary and provides a template for future youth development funding models.

Views from the Youth Panellists:

"Being a Youth Panellist warms my heart because I get to be a part of empowering other young people, like myself, to be leaders. I love this project because it has given young people a voice and an opportunity to make change within their communities. Young people are the future and based on the number and quality of applications I have seen so far, I see a bright future with amazing leaders."

Ariel Smith,
USA

"The three biggest lessons I have taken from GYM Local Solutions are:

(1) how youth can make a difference all around the world, just from their devices,

(2) how a successful non-profit organisation functions and

(3) that we all have so much to be grateful for, and we can make positive changes together across distances and time zones if we commit to work together as a team... It is extremely important to me that youth have a meaningful role in decision-making around the world, we can do a lot more than people think we can. We are strong and we can change the world!"

Clara Brown,
Canada

"Young people have the capability to lead now and not necessarily to wait for the future! [This] is a key step in promoting inclusivity of young people and this ensures that appropriate policies meant to empower them are formulated and implemented accordingly [...] Young people are "hungry" to take the lead in helping their communities overcome the effects of the pandemic."

Sitati Wasilwa,
Kenya

"We need to progress towards a change that will allow people to live equally and harmoniously. This is the type of change young people are working towards in their communities and by funding them we are investing in the change we advocate for. I was thrilled when I first heard about the prospect to be a panellist at the GYM, because it is rare that youth are given the chance to be in decision-making spaces... It is my responsibility as a panellist to read beyond words to understand the cultural and societal context any application derives from."

Kosalina Vignarajah,
Sri Lanka and Canada

"Half of the world's population consists of young people under the age of 30 and there cannot be solutions to the problems they face without their own input. I have seen how young people have the energy, passion and courage to challenge convention needed to identify and address complex global problems with high levels of innovation [...] I would love to see more multi-disciplinary solutions addressing the psychological, social and economic impacts of sexual and gender-based violence in the communities."

Benson Onyango,
Uganda





Thank you to all our amazing Youth Panellists!

Panel 1: Education, Employment and Digital Access

- Adrian Reid – Jamaica
- Fallone Émilie Mouga – Cameroon
- Ariel Smith – USA
- Michelle Vásquez Pazmiño – Ecuador
- Luciana Marino – Argentina
- Marlène Iradukunda – Burundi
- Sachia Reid-Thomas – Barbados
- Josephine Nakabuubi – Uganda
- Jayan Senevirathna – Sri Lanka
- Obak Stephen – Uganda
- Dominick Nowakowski – USA
- Alexandros Kordas – Greece
- Kaung Zayar Min – Myanmar

Panel 2: Health and Wellbeing

- Lydia Jones – United Kingdom
- Shani Waithe – Barbados
- Milena Chacón Retana – Costa Rica
- Clara Brown – Canada
- Kaniz Farzana Manamee – Bangladesh
- Emily Williams – Canada
- Sitati Wasilwa – Kenya
- Blessing Mutambanuki – Zimbabwe
- Kumar Ritesh Agarwal – India
- Tahmina Binte Shiraj – Bangladesh
- Khon Si Hein – Myanmar
- Supreeth Balaji – India

Panel 3: Gender Equity, Inclusion and Empowerment

- Blessmore Chikwakwa – Zimbabwe
- Renata Glembotskaya – Belarus
- Kosalina Vignarajah – Sri Lanka
- Petrecia Morrison – Jamaica
- Benson Onyango – Uganda
- Kaigama Ismael – Cameroon
- Kaniz Fatema Promee – Bangladesh
- Rajputtee Roodrani – Mauritius
- Madhusudhan L N – India
- Franco Rashid – Uganda



SUMMARY OF THE GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

Over three inspiring days in April 2021, the GYM hosted a Global Youth Summit bringing together young people, leaders, policy makers and changemakers in one space to discuss the issues and find solutions to the challenges facing young people across the world.

From education disruption, employment and skills, vaccine equity, financial literacy, human-trafficking, the rise in domestic and gender-based violence, the Sustainable Development Goals, digital citizenship, the role of non-formal education and learning, to climate change and more – the Summit covered topics on the minds of young people everywhere.

**"We want to be heard.
We want to be part
of the process."**

Helga Mutasingwa,
GYM Board Youth
Representative, The
World Association of Girl
Guides and Girl Scouts

The Summit called on Governments and policy makers to prioritise the following considerations in COVID-19 recovery plans:

- No health without mental health
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Bridging the digital divide and community development
- Education and skills development for the new normal – investment, innovation and prioritisation for non-formal education and learning
- Building back equally – vaccine equity for all

Watch all the sessions from the Global Youth Summit [here!](#)

This unique event featured:



**152 countries
represented**



**14,000 people
engaged over 3 days**



**3 plenary sessions
and over 45
breakout sessions**



**More than 70 hours of
virtual sessions provided
by 50+ partners**



**16 governments
and UN agencies
pledged support**



ADVANCING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

From its inception, the Global Youth Mobilization has relied heavily on strategic partnerships to advance its objectives.

The Big Six Youth Organizations, World Health Organization and the United Nations Foundation opened their networks and invited partners including government agencies, international organisations and donors to join the GYM and support its efforts to alleviate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people. The Global Youth Summit demonstrated the strength of these partnerships by delivering a broad-ranging and inspiring event for young advocates. These relationships continue to bear fruit through the promotion of the Local Solutions projects, collaboration on advocacy engagements and planning for the GYM Accelerator Programme.

Along with strategic partners, the GYM engaged in a variety of advocacy opportunities in 2021. In August, the GYM team took part in the Youth Innovation Festival organised by the **Office of the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth**. The GYM team, composed of young panellists and Board members, delivered two sessions and engaged with hundreds of young people virtually, promoting the opportunity to access funds for local solutions and advocating for greater participation of young people in creating COVID-19 recovery policies.

In September, the GYM team partnered with the United Nations Foundation to co-organise the Unlock the Future event and spearhead the establishment of the **Unlock the Future Coalition** and development of the Unlock the Future Declaration. The coalition brought together Save the Children, Girl Up, Global Shapers, BRAC, Civicus and Restless Development with GYM and the UNF, which called for working jointly on fostering more opportunities for young people's civic engagement, ensuring their representation in decision-making processes and increasing funding for youth-led and youth-focused movements.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT AND GET INVOLVED

Everyone can follow GYM's progress and exciting next steps. Keep track of the latest updates on Local Solutions and National Projects on social media and the Global Youth Mobilization website.

2022 will see the launch of the Accelerator Programme and a focus on advocacy and policy. However, efforts to champion the voices of young people needs support from all types of experts. Contact GYM if you would like to be part of the next steps to overcome the impact of the pandemic on young people.

If you work in a government department, international agency, corporation or foundation, we call on you to do the following:



Fund and support the Global Youth Mobilization

Help us further our impact by investing in our Global Fund for Local Solutions and the Big Six Youth Organizations to help young people overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to increasing funding for child, youth-led and youth-focused networks and movements, and working with funders to make funding more strategic, inclusive and accessible.



Promote our work and commit to youth representation

Spread the word about our work and showcase our impact. Campaign with us to ensure that young people from all backgrounds are at the heart of decision-making processes and improve meaningful representation for all young people, including those most impacted by discrimination and inequality.





Commit to enabling intergenerational support for young people

Work with us to increase intergenerational dialogue and prioritise young people and future generations, securing gains that make a difference to their lives and to the planet.



Invest in young people through our Local Solutions funding model and Accelerator Programme

Share your expertise and experience by mentoring young people and Awardees through the Local Solutions fund. Work with us to help young people find opportunities, develop leadership skills and mobilise in the face of emerging threats and challenges.

Join our Mobilization today. Please contact solutions@globalyouthmobilization.org for more information.

If you are a young person or youth-led organisation, apply for funding today for a Local Solution to the COVID-19 pandemic!

Do you or the young people you support have an idea for a solution to overcome a challenge created by the COVID-19 pandemic? Want to support your local community? Would you like to campaign for change in your local area? You can apply for funding from \$500 to \$5,000 today.

No matter how big or small your project may be, we encourage you to have the confidence to apply for funding. All you need to do is complete a short application form describing your idea, what you want to achieve with the funding and upload a short video explaining why you should be awarded the funding. All funding will be agreed and awarded by panels of young people.

Find out more [here](#) today!

"Young people have the potential and the dynamics to bring positive change. Your contributions in resources will be a great support."

Faustine Ikaze Shimo,
World Association of
Girl Guides and Girl
Scouts, Rwanda





THANK YOU TO THE BOARD AND PROJECT TEAM

The Global Youth Mobilization would like to thank all our supporters and partners and members of the Big Six Youth Organizations for their time, dedication and commitment to the endeavour.

Board Members

- **Ahmad Alhendawi**
Chair of the Global Youth Mobilization Board and Secretary General, World Organisation of the Scout Movement
- **Tharindra Arumapperuma**
Youth Representative, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
- **José Andrés Estrada**
Youth Representative, World Organisation of the Scout Movement
- **Meti Gemechu**
Youth Representative, World Young Women's Christian Association
- **Casey Harden**
General Secretary, World Young Women's Christian Association
- **Xavier Castellanos**
Under Secretary General, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
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- **John May**
Secretary General, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
- **Helga Mutasingwa**
Youth Representative, The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
- **Carlos Madjri Sanvee**
Secretary General, World Young Men's Christian Association
- **Anna Segall** Secretary General, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
- **Loris Tarazi (2022) and Daisy Moran (2021)** Youth Representative, World Young Men's Christian Association



Board Observers

- **Dr Gaudenz Silberschmidt**
Director Health and Multilateral Partnerships, World Health Organization
- **Kate Dodson** Vice President for Global Health Strategy, United Nations Foundation and **Rochelle Atizado** Sr Communications Manager, Public Affairs, United Nations Foundation

Project Team

Project Coordination Team

- **Hana Pasic** Co-Lead
- **Sam Williams** Co-Lead
- **Ashley Tee** Local Solutions and National Projects Coordinator
- **Paleni Amulungu** Digital Communications, Partnerships and Advocacy Coordinator
- **Ana Clara Marti** Project Administrator

Big Six Designated Leads

- **Suchi Gaur** World Young Women's Christian Association
- **Amjad Saleem, Lauren McCormack and the team from the Solferino Academy** International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- **James Etheridge and Charles Rich** The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
- **Nathalie Thomas** World Young Men's Christian Association
- **Magdalene Thomas, Sophy Kotti and Victoria Illingworth** World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
- **Annie Weaver, Maxine Mpofu and Hannah Graham** World Organisation of the Scout Movement

"Global Youth Mobilization is making a difference in the lives of young people and communities in developing countries! Please support Global Youth Mobilization to continue with the good work they have started. They are giving light to communities in a pandemic which many organizations cannot do."

Brenda Adiaba, West Africa Centre for Peace Foundation, Ghana



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