

BIG 6 YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS



PROJECT PARTNERS



World's largest youth organizations, representing 250 million members, and WHO launch global mobilization to respond to disruptive impacts of COVID-19 on young people

Funding for community programmes, engaging youth in solutions to address COVID-19, and convening Global Youth Summit are key features of this new mobilization

14 December, 2020: A new ground-breaking global youth mobilization was launched today to invest in and scale up youth-led solutions and engagements in response to COVID-19. The initiative was launched by an alliance of the world's largest youth movements and organizations, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Foundation.

The "[Global Youth Mobilization for Generation Disrupted](#)" is being led by the Big 6 Youth Organizations (Young Men's Christian Association; World Young Women's Christian Association; World Organization of the Scout Movement; World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award), which together actively involve more than 250 million young people, and aims to support young people to engage in and design efforts to turn around the impact of the pandemic.

The Global Youth Mobilization will feature the convening of a Global Youth Summit in April 2021, and a fund of US \$5 million to support local and national youth organizations, including grants for youth-led solutions and an accelerator programme to scale up existing response efforts.

The leadership of the WHO, Big 6 and youth organizations around the world are calling on governments, businesses and policy makers to back the Global Youth Mobilization effort and commit to investing in the future of young people. These measures will directly support young people engaged at the grassroots level to tackle some of the most pressing health and societal challenges resulting from the pandemic.

"WHO is honoured to join this truly exciting and powerful global movement to mobilize and empower youth worldwide to be the driving force of the recovery to COVID-19," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Joining forces with the Big 6 and the United Nations Foundation provides WHO and the world a unique opportunity to learn from hundreds of millions of young people and be guided by their sustainable solutions to help communities build back better from the pandemic."

While the direct health impacts of the pandemic on young people have been generally less severe, they are disproportionately affected by the long-lasting consequences of the pandemic. Such effects include disruptions to education, economic uncertainty, loss or lack of employment opportunities, impacts on physical and mental health, and trauma from domestic violence. For example, mental anxiety brought on by COVID-19 has been identified in nearly 90 per cent of young people; more than 1 billion students in almost every country have been impacted by school closures; and 1 in 6 young people worldwide have lost their jobs during the pandemic.

At the same time, young people are also driving change and implementing solutions in response to COVID-19 by taking action through community-based interventions and voluntary service, such as acting as first responders and delivering food and supplies to those in need. The Global Youth Mobilization will draw attention to the urgent need for solutions to support young people, and to highlight the critical leadership role young people are playing in their communities to counter the effects of the pandemic.

“We are proud to team up with the WHO to provide opportunities and funding to help millions of young people across the globe to respond to local challenges related to COVID-19 in their communities,” said the leadership of the Big 6 in a joint statement. “The mobilization will provide direct financial and programmatic support to youth organizations at the national and international level. We believe that young people have the solutions to solve their own problems, and by providing a global youth platform, combined with national activation for youth projects, we can unleash the skills, enthusiasm and desire for young people to be a force for good in their communities.”

Supported by the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO and powered by the United Nations Foundation, the Global Youth Mobilization features a strategic partnership with the WHO and its newly launched [Youth Council](#). It will involve other United Nations agencies, as well as a number of high-profile global partners, brands, and advocates, from FIFA to YOUNGA by BridgingTheGap Ventures, and the creation of a youth council of social media influencers, including the Influential platform. The initiative, developed in consultation with young people from across the globe, will be youth-led, community-driven, evidence-based, and inclusive of diverse communities rooted in meaningful youth participation and engagement.

Tharindra Arumapperuma, 25, a youth representative of the project board and Emerging Leader for The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award said: “I am really excited and honoured to be launching this ground-breaking Global Youth Mobilisation. Young people have been ignored, forgotten and let down during the pandemic. This unique opportunity opens a new pathway to support young people around the world and will help them to harness their diverse skill-sets to create real change in their communities. I hope to use my personal experience in youth work to create more impactful opportunities. It’s remarkable to see - and be part of - such an exciting project, with organizations coming together to find new avenues and opportunities for young people looking for hope and certainty during these challenging times.”

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About the Big 6 Youth Organizations

Formed in 1996, the Big 6 Youth Organizations are an alliance of leading international youth-serving organizations. The 'Big 6' comprises the five largest youth movements in the world: [Young Men's Christian Association](#) (YMCA), [World Young Women's Christian Association](#) (YWCA), [World Organization of the Scout Movement](#) (WOSM), [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts](#) (WAGGGS), [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC) and a leading programme for youth development, [The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award](#) (The Award). Together, the Big 6 actively involve in excess of 250 million young people, contributing to the empowerment of more than 1 billion young people during the last century. For more information visit www.bigsix.org

In response to the unique challenges facing young people today, and to coincide with the launch of the Global Youth Mobilization, the Big 6 have also published a new policy paper: 'Young People Championing Post-Pandemic Futures'. The paper is a joint call to action on behalf of 250 million children and young people that make up the Big 6 Youth Organizations and includes recommendations concerning education, employment, mental health and digital inclusion. Read the full report and calls to action at bigsix.org.

About the World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from more than 149 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing. For updates on COVID-19 and public health advice to protect yourself from coronavirus, visit www.who.int and follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitch](#).

About the United Nations Foundation

The United Nations Foundation brings together ideas, people, and resources to help the United Nations drive global progress and tackle urgent problems. Our hallmark is to collaborate for lasting change and innovate to address humanity's greatest challenges. Learn more at www.unfoundation.org

About the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

To support the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners in their global response to COVID-19, the United Nations Foundation helped launch the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which has raised more than \$238 million for lifesaving work around the world to prevent, detect, and respond to COVID-19. Learn more about the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO, powered by the United Nations Foundation at www.covid19responsefund.org.