



**Global and community leaders announce mhNOW initiative
will engage 30 cities by 2030 to close the mental health gap**

*Multi-stakeholder Commitment to Action announced by private, public, and philanthropic organizations
at Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting*

NEW YORK, NY – September 20, 2016 – Global and community leaders across sectors made a Commitment to Action for “mental health now,” or [mhNOW](#), at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meeting today. Led by international thought leaders and key organizations from private, public, and philanthropic sectors, mhNOW is an unprecedented challenge to cities around the world to close the global mental health gap by catalyzing and networking collective actions among leaders in every sector.

mhNOW will take a [multi-stakeholder initiative](#) approach to closing the mental health gap for the first time – the group of over 30 organizations behind the broader initiative includes BasicNeeds, Grand Challenges Canada, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, International Medical Corps, Johnson & Johnson, King’s College London, National Institute of Mental Health, Orygen Center of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, StrongMinds, Verily Alphabet, the World Bank, and the World Psychiatric Association, among others. The Global Development Incubator is incubating mhNOW, serving as the neutral broker to bring the strengths of diverse organizations towards a shared goal.

The mental health gap is one of the world’s most devastating and under-resourced problems, affecting more than 450 million people worldwide and stretching far beyond the narrow boundaries of health. Mental illness will make up more than half of the economic burden of disease over the next two decades – more than cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases combined – and the global cost of all mental disorders combined is estimated to reach \$6 trillion by 2030. Additionally, mental disorders are a particular challenge for youth – suicide is a top-three cause of death among youth worldwide, and 90% of children who die by suicide have a mental illness.

Because the effects of mental illness touch livelihoods, productivity, and even whole economies, mhNOW is taking a cross-sector and city-driven approach to close the mental health gap. Cities – with their inherent networks, density, creativity and entrepreneurial capacity – bear the highest burden of mental health but also have the highest potential to achieve meaningful mental health impact.

mhNOW will engage 30 cities by 2030, mobilizing and channeling support to exceptional city projects that address mental health by providing resources, recognition, and technical assistance for outstanding initiatives in three target areas: (1) scaling local evidence-based innovative programs; (2) mobilizing youth leadership; and (3) improving the evidence base for the return on investment in mental health using city-level and global data indicators.

“Mental illness is humanity’s largest burden – one in four of us will experience mental illness sometime in our lives, and in developing countries, over 90% of people with mental illness receive no treatment,” said Chris Underhill, co-lead of mhNOW and founder of BasicNeeds. “The good news is that proven strategies for cost-effective and high-quality mental health treatment exist – we just need to activate them. This new initiative will empower cities to spark that action on mental health to close the gap.”

The launch of mhNOW follows tremendous progress in the last couple years around raising the visibility of global mental health – mental health was included in the United Nations’ development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, for the first time and the World Bank and World Health Organization recently held a high-level convening around mental health – but will aim to spark collective action to truly close the mental health gap.

“Mental health is more than just a healthcare issue. Our solution draws on untapped resources within communities, from community workers, to businesses, to youth, to law and order officials, and everywhere in between,” said Moitreyee Sinha, co-lead of mhNOW and Director of the Beyond Health portfolio at the Global Development Incubator, an organization that incubates partnerships to scale social impact. “We are flipping the current approach to mental health on its head – bringing together the right mix of people to activate bold local collection action on mental health by working with urban leaders on efficient, evidence-based policies and interventions.”

mhNOW will operate both at the global level and the city level. At the global level, mhNOW will activate systems change by demonstrating rapid action to close the mental health gap in global cities and mobilizing youth as the next generation to lead.

At the city level, mhNOW and its partners will work with local leaders – including mayors, private sector leaders, and civil society leaders – to form collaborative relationships that promote and direct local resources to fuel priority projects. During its first year as part of the CGI commitment to action, mhNOW will engage communities in various countries including Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Vietnam, Singapore, and the United States and in cities that span from Nairobi and Chennai to Seattle and Flint.

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About the Global Development Incubator

The Global Development Incubator (GDI) launches start-ups focused on social impact, incubates partnerships to spark collective change, and lays the foundations for promising organizations to reach their potential. We take a hands-on approach and partner with innovators over 2-3 years to design structured pathways proven to transform ideas into lasting change. We have a track record of taking on complex issues with many moving parts and always prioritize the collective vision to move the needle on important issues. Learn more at www.globaldevincubator.org or follow us on Twitter at [@GlobalDevInc](https://twitter.com/GlobalDevInc).

About the Clinton Global Initiative

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, convenes global leaders to create and implement solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together 190 sitting and former heads of state, more than 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date, members of the CGI community have made more than 3,500 Commitments to Action, which have improved the lives of over 430 million people in more than 180 countries. For more information, visit clintonglobalinitiative.org and follow us on Twitter [@ClintonGlobal](https://twitter.com/ClintonGlobal) and Facebook at facebook.com/clintonglobalinitiative.