SPEAK YOUR MIND

Executive Summary
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SYM is the first ever multi-country, nationally-driven, globally-united campaign designed to catalyse greater action on mental health. The campaign is supporting people around the world to speak their mind to global leaders and join the fight for mental health for all.

The campaign was developed and launched in mid-2019 but has quickly spread far and wide. It is currently active in 15 countries: Argentina, Australia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tonga, US, UK and New Zealand, and is powered by United for Global Mental Health, with the generous support of a number of global partners including our Title Partner, HSBC.
Speak Your Mind is calling for greater investment, empowerment, and education to improve mental health nationally and globally.

It is achieving this by raising the voice of people with lived experience to be included in decision-making and reframing mental health as a critical issue at local and international levels. Speak Your Mind is already having a tangible impact on global health policies and campaigners are driving legislative change at a national level. In a short time, the action campaigners have taken on mental health has driven real change - change that stands to serve the millions of people around the world who desperately need better mental health care.

On the national level

The past year was a testament to the strength of the Speak Your Mind capacity building model, which centred on workshops, regular calls and webinars. This was clear in Sierra Leone, where the SYM workshop and follow-up from the Mental Health Coalition contributed to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation launching a Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan (and committing to reform the 1902 Lunacy Act); Tonga, where thanks to campaigning by the Speak Your Mind Tonga lead, the percentage of funding allocated to mental health was tripled; Nigeria, where SYM campaign partners managed to achieve the outlawing of a pesticide that was one of the leading means of carrying out suicide in the country; and Liberia, where the first-ever mental health-specific budget line has been agreed.

In a survey conducted across all 15 SYM countries, all reported being part of a global movement for mental health as one of the most helpful aspects of participating in Speak Your Mind.

“Speak Your Mind campaign has been a good and new thing for us, it has been giving us new knowledge about campaigning and connecting us with the other organisations who work in mental health”

- Indonesia SYM team
On the global level

A global milestone for Speak Your Mind was at the World Health Assembly where the first World Health Organization (WHO) Mental Health Technical Briefing was held and mental health was mentioned in 20 official speeches, nine of which were by global health officials and ministers and three from SYM countries. SYM featured at Walk the Talk and was presented there by country campaigners alongside global advocates including Director General of the WHO, Dr Tedros and Cynthia Germanotta, newly appointed WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Mental Health, amongst others.

The Speak Your Mind campaign launch at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) was attended by SYM campaigners, the Queen of Belgium, the UN Deputy Secretary General, the President of the General Assembly, the Director General of the ICRC, the WHO Director General and more.

all speaking to the notion that there is no health without mental health

At the annual Goalkeepers event, mental health was announced as an Accelerator for the first time, covering three key areas of progress in global mental health.

This also included the launch of a new global partnership with HSBC and SYM; the partnership announcement and social media campaign leading to World Mental Health Day reached 63.8 million externally on HSBC social channels.

At UNGA, with support from mental health advocate, Zak Williams, we launched Speak Your Mind Voice petition, which encourages everyone to speak their mind for #40 seconds and tell their governments why they need to take action on mental health. For World Mental Health Day we also received support from world leaders, including the Secretary General of the UN, António Guterres; the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern and other senior public figures such as the Director General and Secretary General of Red Cross and Crescent Movement, Elhadj As Sy; Executive Director of UNICEF, Henrietta Fore; Secretary General of World YMCA, Carlos Sanvee, as well as author and comedian Stephen Fry and the cast of Emmy Award-winning musical, Dear Evan Hansen. They each “spoke their mind” for mental health in a #40 second video, helping us put mental health on the international stage. To watch the video, please click here.

World Mental Health Day celebrations continued with the opening of the Museum of Lost & Found Potential in London. The Museum shows the potential that is lost to people, communities, families and businesses when people do not have access to mental health support and the potential that is gained when they do, garnering international media coverage. Powerful speeches from author and campaigner Scarlett Curtis along with HSBC’s Global Private Banking CEO Antonio Simoes opened the Museum. Objects that represent what had been lost and found by people from 16 countries, including SYM campaigners and HSBC employees, Graham from Scotland and Allison from Canada were thoughtfully distributed throughout the Museum.

In February 2020, Speak Your Mind partners from all around the world will be gathering in Kenya to review our first year, and collaboratively design our objectives and plans for the years ahead.

UnitedGMH is working towards a world where everyone, everywhere has someone to turn to when their mental health needs support. Our ambition is that in 10 years time, people can look back and see significant shifts in the way people think, feel, behave and act on mental health - nationally and globally.

We hope you will join us in 2020 to make this global movement for change even stronger!