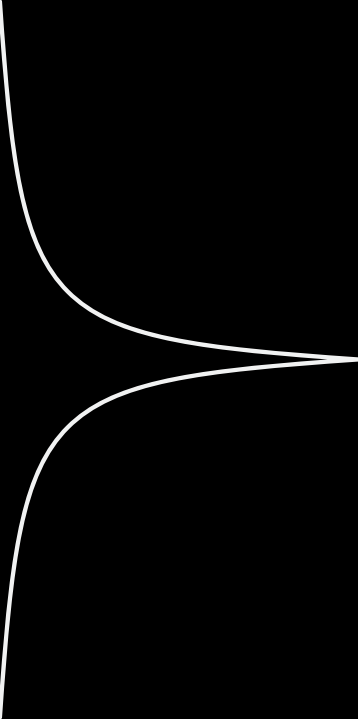
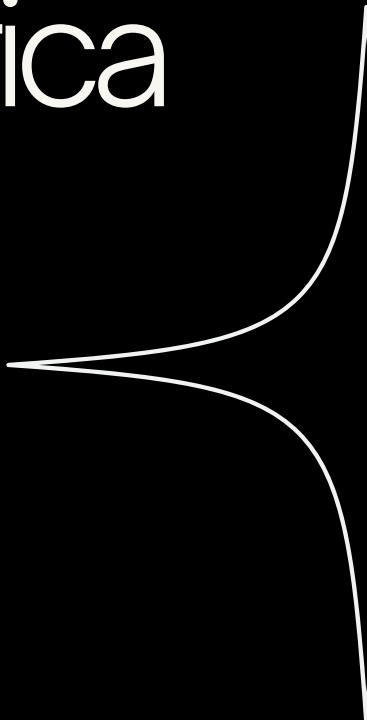




Impact & Resilience



Integration and Partnerships in Africa



Practical Insights and Tools for Cultivating
Equitable Mental and Community Wellbeing



Table of Content

1

WELCOME MESSAGE & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2

THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE: MENTAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

3

EQUITABLE WELLBEING: CHALLENGES BETWEEN THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND GLOBAL NORTH

4

THE IMPORTANCE OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY AND COLLABORATION

5

FIELD PROJECTS & CASE STUDIES: MOROCCO, GHANA, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA

6

RESOURCES AND ONLINE TOOLS

Welcome message from the founder



AJ Kim
CEO, Founder, gdly

Welcome to a journey that spans continents and cultures, driven by a commitment to foster global community values and meaningful change and connection. Over 15 years ago, while working in an abandoned village in India, combating famine and extreme poverty, I pledged to dedicate my efforts to creating global social impact.

This promise culminated in the launch of the "Inner Peace to World Peace" initiative in 2023—a three-year project aimed at promoting equitable well-being and mental health across the global south. Our outreach has successfully engaged over 1,000 individuals in 17 cities worldwide, including Seoul, Toronto, Delhi and Zanzibar.

From personal experience, I have found that cultivating inner peace and strengthening self-awareness are transformative, profoundly influencing every aspect of my professional and personal life. Today, as we navigate an era marked by economic uncertainty, and the overwhelming influx of information and digital content, the need for stability and mental well-being is more pressing than ever. In response, people are increasingly seeking deeper, meaningful connections that foster both personal and professional growth—especially in a post-pandemic world accelerated by advancements in artificial intelligence and heightened uncertainties.

In this context, gdly was founded with a mission to support and strategize individuals and organizations to engage in impactful activities and sustainable movements. We aim to embody global solidarity and drive significant social impact, improving community well-being and planetary health. This handbook presents five significant fieldworks that serve as insightful case studies, providing stakeholders and audiences with practical and inspiring ideas to guide their efforts in creating positive, inward and outward social changes. We hope this introduction sets the stage for a transformative experience as you explore the initiatives and strategies detailed in this report, each designed to empower communities and foster a healthier, more equitable world.

CHAPTER 1.

The Global Challenge: Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health



Executive Summary

Mental health is a critical global issue, with nearly 1 billion people suffering from mental disorders, with depression a leading cause of disability worldwide¹. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for comprehensive mental health strategies. However, the landscape of mental health care varies greatly between regions, particularly between the Global South and Global North. While the Global North generally has more developed mental health infrastructures, the Global South struggles with inadequate training, limited funding, and cultural stigmas that hinder access to care. Addressing these disparities requires global collaboration, with a focus on sharing resources, fostering cultural sensitivity, and advocating for greater investment in mental health, especially in under-resourced regions. Building self-sufficiency in mental wellbeing is also crucial, and can be supported by leveraging frameworks like the United Nations' Inner Development Goals and online training tools to empower communities to address mental health challenges independently.

[gdly's Inner Peace to World Peace Global Impact Project](#) traveled to Africa to conduct various sessions targeting youth mental health throughout 2024², integrating mindfulness programming alongside local partners in Morocco, Tanzania, South Africa and Ghana, impacting individuals with tools and strategies to combat mental health. Through the carefully designed ISEC content, participants engage in introspective practices, learn sustainable approaches, explore entrepreneurial principles, and contribute to the success and well-being of their communities. ISEC focuses on four core pillars: Inner peace, Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, and Community success. Its primary objective is to foster self-awareness, cultivate compassion, and enhance value-driven leadership skills and strategies.

¹ World Health Organization. "Mental health." *World Health Organization (WHO)*, 17 June 2022, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>. Accessed 6 September 2024

² January 3-24, 2024 and June 5-August 11, 2024

The Global Challenge: Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health

Mental health remains a global challenge as according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations, the COVID-19 pandemic increased global rates of mental illness by 25%, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive mental health strategies.³ WHO Director of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Dévora Kestel, highlighted this global challenge, stating that “while the pandemic has generated interest in and concern for mental health, it has also revealed historical underinvestment in mental health services” as the average total health budget governments allocate to mental health is only 2%.⁴ The impacts of COVID-19 and mental health challenges are felt among populations globally, yet have particular impacts and concerns for youth; governments, civil societies and communities must focus on improving mental health challenges into the future (WEF 2020) as globally, one in seven youth aged 10-19 experience a mental disorder, with depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders among the leading causes of disability and illness among youth. Failing to address mental health challenges in youth extends challenges into adulthood, affecting both overall physical and mental health, or consequences resulting in unnecessary loss of life, as suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds.⁵

Mental health affects not only health and well being, but impacts global productivity. According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety disorders contribute to a total loss of 1 trillion in productivity. Since 75% of all mental disorders arise before the age of 25, this has significant consequences for individuals, families, communities, both on local and global scales. During economic downturns, young people suffer due to less established skills and networks, fewer transferable skills. For youth, this can translate into greater economic marginalization as they struggle to reach career milestones or ambitions, which can lead to a predisposition for poor mental health. While COVID-19 placed the challenges of mental health into the forefront of public discussion, the urgency to prioritize mental health rises will continue to compound due to climate change and ongoing conflicts that continue to place immense pressure on global populations.⁶ Despite advancements in understanding mental health, treatment remains scarce, inaccessible, and often stigmatized, with a significant treatment gap in many regions.

Recognizing such global challenges, the WHO launched the Special Initiative for Mental Health in 2019, aiming to transform mental health systems, integrate mental health into universal health coverage, and drive sustainable change.⁷ The initiative seeks to increase access to care for 100 million people across 12 countries and represents a critical step toward addressing the global mental health crisis by focusing on system-level action and long-term solutions. The mental health impact of recent global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geo-political events, and environmental change is likely to persist and require coordinated care approaches for those in need of support, especially to address critical issues among youth.

³ United Nations. “COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health.” *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*, 13 May 2020, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_policy_brief-covid_and_mental_health_final.pdf. Accessed 6 September 2024.

⁴ Mental Health for All: The Case for Investing in Digital Mental Health to Improve Global Outcomes, Access, and Innovation in Low-Resource Settings Manuel Faria 1,2,3,*, Stella Tan Pei Zin 3, Roman Chestnov 3, Anne Marie Novak 4, Shahar Lev-Ari 1,4 and Michael Snyder 1,, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10649112/pdf/jcm-12-06735.pdf>. Accessed September 6th

⁵ World Health Organization. “Mental health of adolescents.” *World Health Organization (WHO)*, 17 November 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>. Accessed 6 September 2024.

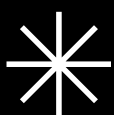
⁶ Global Mental Health: Where We Are and Where We Are Going Modhurima Moitra1 · Shanise Owens2 · Maji Hailemariam3 · Katherine S. Wilson4 · Augustina Mensa-Kwao4 · Gloria Gonesse4 · Christine K. Kamamia4 · Belinda White4 · Dorraine M. Young4 · Pamela Y. Collins1,4 Accepted: 15 May 2023 / Published online: 31 May 2023, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10230139/pdf/11920_2023_Article_1426.pdf Accessed September 6

⁷ Kestel, Dévora. “The State of Mental Health Globally in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Progress on the WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019-2023)” | United Nations.” *the United Nations*, 10 October 2022,

<https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/state-mental-health-globally-wake-covid-19-pandemic-and-progress-who-special-initiative>. Accessed 6 September 2024

CHAPTER 2.

Equitable Wellbeing: Challenges Between the Global South and Global North



Equitable Wellbeing: Challenges Between the Global South and Global North

The disparity in mental health resources between the Global South and Global North is stark. Countries in the Global North typically have more developed mental health infrastructures, including better access to trained professionals, social services, and funding. In contrast, the Global South faces significant challenges, including a lack of trained professionals, inadequate funding, and cultural stigmas that hinder access to care. Ghana, for example, has only 18 psychiatric institutions to serve its entire population of 30 million (site). Inequities exist in funding for global mental health, with limited, gradual progress in terms of building local capacity for mental health care programs and research.⁸ As such, mental health funding is disproportionately low in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), limiting access to services. Additionally, societal and cultural barriers exist, leading to increased stigmatization and discrimination associated with mental health. The consequences fall onto populations as individuals avoid seeking care, or face backlash and judgment from communities, exacerbating mental health issues.⁹

This inequality of resources means the landscape of mental health services varies significantly across regions, influenced by factors such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, and access to healthcare. Underserved groups, particularly women and younger people, are the most severely impacted¹⁰ as treatment for mental health illnesses continue to be underfunded, disproportionately impacting vulnerable populations.¹¹ Understanding these global differences is essential to address the mental health crisis effectively. Within the Global South, many nations face unique challenges in providing adequate health care for their populations, often shaped by power imbalances driven by historical legacies, economic disparities, and geopolitical dynamics. As a result, the formulation, implementation, and outcomes of health policies in these regions are impacted overall.

Furthermore, a significant disparity exists within power, knowledge and resources between high-income countries, where much mental health research is conducted, and LMICs where the burden of mental health conditions is often projected to be the highest.¹² International organizations and their initiatives, such as the WHO's Mental Health Action Plan (extended to 2030) is shaping mental health policies in the Global South in significant ways as they possess substantial influence in agenda setting, yet their decisions may not always align with the unique needs and contexts of individual countries and diverse contexts.¹³ Research in LMICs, conducted by high-income countries, also often favors neoliberal and evidence-based methodologies, which can fail to empower local actors to challenge the western motives and values or to leverage community based solutions. As such, global mental health philosophy, rooted in neoliberal values, may prioritize economic productivity over holistic well-being—where mental health services are evaluated primarily based on their economic efficiency and ability to restore individuals to economic productivity. Mirroring western, evidence-based interventions therefore raises concerns about universal applicability, setting precedence of global over local, which can disrupt culturally safe and inclusive interventions needed.¹⁴ Therefore addressing global mental health effectively must recognize the complex interplay of social and cultural context.

⁸ Global Mental Health: Where We Are and Where We Are Going Modhurima Moitra¹ · Shanise Owens² · Maji Hailemariam³ · Katherine S. Wilson⁴ · Augustina Mensa-Kwao⁴ · Gloria Gonesse⁴ · Christine K. Kamamia⁴ · Belinda White⁴ · Dorraine M. Young⁴ · Pamela Y. Collins^{1,4} Accessed September 6

⁹ Mental health atlas 2020. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021.

¹⁰ Mental Health for All: The Case for Investing in Digital Mental Health to Improve Global Outcomes, Access, and Innovation in Low-Resource Settings Manuel Faria^{1,2,3,*}, Stella Tan Pei Zin³, Roman Chestnov³, Anne Marie Novak⁴, Shahar Lev-Ari¹,

¹¹ Global Mental Health: Where We Are and Where We Are Going Modhurima Moitra¹ · Shanise Owens² · Maji Hailemariam³ · Katherine S. Wilson⁴ · Augustina Mensa-Kwao⁴ · Gloria Gonesse⁴ · Christine K. Kamamia⁴ · Belinda White⁴ · Dorraine M. Young⁴ · Pamela Y. Collins^{1,4} Accessed September 6

¹² Limenih G, MacDougall A, Wedlake M, Nouvet E. Depression and Global Mental Health in the Global South: A Critical Analysis of Policy and Discourse. *International Journal of Social Determinants of Health and Health Services*. 2024;54(2):95-107. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/27551938231220230>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

CHAPTER 3.

The Importance of Global Solidarity and Collaboration



The Importance of Global Solidarity and Collaboration & Self-Sufficiency in Mental Wellbeing Trainings

Building self-sufficiency in mental wellbeing requires the effective use of existing tools and resources. The United Nations' Inner Development Goals (IDG) provides a framework for promoting mental wellbeing globally¹⁵. Additionally, various online platforms offer free or low-cost training resources, enabling individuals and organizations to build capacity in mental health. Additionally, Mental health interventions can innovate mental health program delivery by developing purpose built systems, particularly aimed at youth.

Building self-sufficiency to address mental health is paramount to success, especially for youth. The impact mental illness has on the vulnerable developmental processes that occur in young people, and the high personal and economic costs, most mental health systems are not purpose built to meet differing needs. For youth, this is problematic as most systems focus on children under 17 or adults, neglecting the difficult challenges beyond adolescents, which cause significant distress and erect barriers to accessing care due to reluctance to engage in inappropriate systems.¹⁶ As such, a “youth mental health” approach is emerging within high-resource settings, acknowledging the heterogeneity of ages 10-25 and the necessity to create developmentally and culturally appropriate methods specific to this age group.”¹⁷ These include low barriers to entry programs that are accessible, community-based, and emphasize non-judgemental and non-stigmatizing programming to empower youth, build a sense of trust, and engage comfortably with services. Addressing stigma is essential to increase rates of engagement with traditional mental health services, which tends to be low globally, and therefore placing services in high-traffic youth spaces, as well as online digital resources improves mental health offerings.¹⁸

To address these inequities, global solidarity and collaboration are essential. By fostering partnerships across borders, organizations can share resources, expertise, and best practices to improve mental wellbeing worldwide. Collaborative efforts can help bridge the gap between the Global South and Global North, ensuring that mental health services are accessible to all. Globally, digital interventions are growing to address mental health, as digitalization has profound implications for the long-term growth and sustainability of any healthcare system and its ability to address unmet patient needs¹⁹. Digital mental health interventions can reach individuals or populations which may not be able to access traditional mental health care otherwise by utilizing mobile applications, on-demand platforms, telehealth specialty consults, etc, which are affordable and scalable as a means to reach vulnerable populations within remote, underserved, or dangerous environments impacted by war, conflict, or environmental decline.²⁰ Online services also circumvent fears and stigmas to seek treatment, significantly extending the capacity of health services. This is particularly important when 4 out of 5 people in low and middle-income countries do not receive any form of mental health care due to stigma and low government spending and personal budgets²¹.

¹⁵ *Inner Development Goals – Inner Growth for Outer Change*, <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>. Accessed 7 September 2024.

¹⁶ World Economic Forum. “A Global Framework for Youth Mental Health: Investing in Future Mental Capital for Individuals, Communities and Economies.” *Www3.weforum.org.*, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Youth_Mental_Health_2020.pdf. Accessed 6 September 2024.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Mental Health for All: The Case for Investing in Digital Mental Health to Improve Global Outcomes, Access, and Innovation in Low-Resource Settings Manuel Faria 1,2,3,*, Stella Tan Pei Zin 3, Roman Chestnov 3, Anne Marie Novak 4, Shahar Lev-Ari 1,4 and Michael Snyder 1., <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10649112/pdf/jcm-12-06735.pdf>. Accessed September 6th

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ World Economic Forum. “These are the top 10 innovations in mental health.” *The World Economic Forum*, 14 September 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/09/these-are-the-top-10-innovations-tackling-mental-ill-health/>. Accessed 6 September 2024.

Recent studies examined the potential of online mental health interventions in supporting access to mental health care in the global North and global South, revealing their efficiencies within improving symptoms across the examined regions²². Barriers continue to exist in the Global North such as lack of public awareness and logistical barriers in the global South that must be addressed. Global partnerships must continue to develop logistical capabilities and culturally sensitive online resources before implementing across marginalized communities, which necessitates the inclusion and participation of local populations to ensure accessibility of social context and living conditions. Online tools are addressing inequitable access to care globally and must continue to be developed in solidarity.

Several tools exist already, which can be further leveraged to reach greater volumes of people globally. These include online courses through platforms such as Coursera, WHO's mhGAP, and other platforms offering mental health training. In addition, the United Nations framework helps create and implement mental wellbeing initiatives. Traction is gaining within LMIC in the development and utilization of digital health interventions. Some examples include the [Eramus](#) MEGA Project, a EU funded initiative within the WHO's Mental Health Gap Action program targeting children's mental health in South Africa, Zambia, and other Southern African countries; [YourDost](#) is an online platform that provides counseling and helps foster emotional wellness in India; In Ghana, [Mind IT](#) uses innovative tech tools such as a toll-free short code allowing users to answer questions related to well-being, helps screen for mental illnesses and identifies affordable care that's located nearby, while [TrustCircle](#) addresses barriers to mental health care in Kenya.²³ Many of these programs are jointly funded through Global North initiatives, therefore successfully demonstrating how collaboration allows for shared resources, improving tools, training, and knowledge, while reducing duplication of efforts and reaching wider populations. This also impacts advocacy as such initiatives collectively amplify calls for greater investment in mental health, particularly in under-resourced regions. Collectively, these initiatives develop greater opportunities for youth and individuals to drive their mental health by using accessible resources and contributing to overall self-sufficiency in managing mental health.

Conclusion

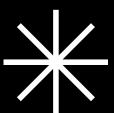
Addressing global mental health disparities requires robust collaboration between the Global North and Global South, emphasizing the sharing of resources, cultural sensitivity, and investment in under-resourced regions. Initiatives like the WHO's Special Initiative for Mental Health and various digital platforms offer promising solutions, but success hinges on adapting to the unique cultural and socio-economic contexts of different regions. By leveraging tools like the Inner Development Goals framework and online mental health resources, we can empower communities, particularly youth, to build self-sufficiency in mental wellbeing, ultimately bridging the gap in global mental health care.

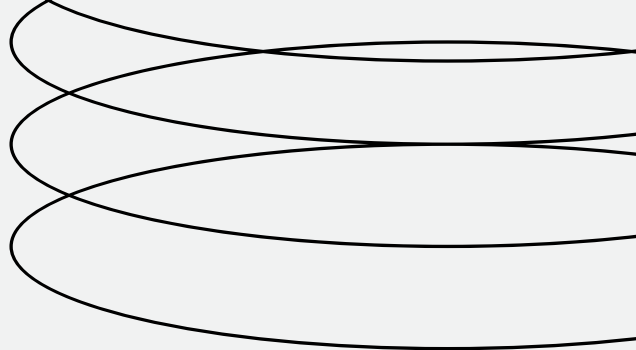
²² Mental Health for All: The Case for Investing in Digital Mental Health to Improve Global Outcomes, Access, and Innovation in Low-Resource Settings Manuel Faria 1,2,3,*, Stella Tan Pei Zin 3, Roman Chestnov 3, Anne Marie Novak 4, Shahar Lev-Ari 1,4 and Michael Snyder 1,, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10649112/pdf/jcm-12-06735.pdf>, Accessed September 6th

²³ Gharib, Sarah El. "5 Tech Tools Improving Access to Mental Health Care in Low- and Middle-Income Countries." *Global Citizen*, 7 October 2020, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/5-tech-tools-mental-health-low-income-countries/>. Accessed 6 September 2024.

CHAPTER 4.

Field Project: Case Studies in Africa





Overview

Target Group	Location	Partnership	Focus
Youth and Young Professionals	Morocco	Global Shapers	Young leaders in Morocco are driving change in their communities by promoting mental wellbeing. TheGlobal Shapersinitiative focused on leadership development and mental health awareness among youth, leading to significant community impact.
High School and College Students	South Africa	Youth in Transition	South African students face numerous challenges, notably high h levels of stress and anxiety. Youth in Transition supports these challenges through workshops and peer counseling, contributing to improved mental health outcomes.
Human Rights Activists in African Regions	Tanzania and African Regions	AHRN	Mental health challenges among human rights activists are often overlooked. AHRN supports activists in Tanzania and other regions to address burnout and trauma through targeted mental health interventions.
Green Economy Entrepreneurs and Young Professionals	Ghana	Recycle Up Ghana	Entrepreneurship can be mentally taxing, especially in emerging economies. Recycle Up Ghana supports green economy entrepreneurs by integrating mental wellbeing practices into their business development programs.
Young Mothers and Women	Tanzania	Sauti ya Mtoto Foundation (SMF) and New Hope New Winners Foundation (NHNWF)	Both foundations focus on empowering young mothers and women through comprehensive programs addressing mental health, education, and violence prevention. They aim to foster resilience and build capacity to lead healthy, informed, and economically sustainable lives.

Ghana: Bridging Environmental Sustainability and Mental Wellbeing



Mindful Leadership and Mental Wellbeing:

Mindful leadership training is a powerful tool for navigating life's challenges with clarity and compassion. It equips individuals with self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and stress management skills, enabling individuals to lead with empathy and resilience. Women and youth in particular benefit from training due to heightened societal pressures and barriers. GDLY's ISEC program goes beyond mindful leadership training by linking inner resilience to community resilience with targeted interventions aimed at professional and personal growth of individuals and serves as a powerful catalyst for personal growth and social impact, equipping individuals with the tools and mindset necessary to thrive as compassionate and purposeful leaders.

In Ghana, mental health stigma is deeply entrenched within society. Mindful leadership training plays a crucial role developing tools to break down societal barriers by fostering open conversations about mental health aimed at reducing stigma while promoting a supportive community environment. Through mindfulness practices, individuals learn to manage stress and anxiety, enhancing overall well-being and the ability to contribute positively to communities. This approach aligns with the World Health Organization's goals of promoting mental health as a key component of overall well-being.

Within Ghana,, gdly focused on two priority initiatives, *empowering sustainable change and integrating mindfulness with green economy initiatives*. Our partner, Recycle Up Ghana (RUG), is pioneering initiatives dedicated to addressing Ghana’s waste challenges through innovative youth educational and entrepreneurial programs. With 41% of the Ghanaian population between the ages of 15-34 and over 1.2 million unemployed youth, RUG’s mission is to empower youth through entrepreneurship training, mentorship and support services to encourage opening businesses that tackle societal challenges, particularly in the green economy. This collaboration with Recycle Up Ghana exemplifies how mindful leadership training can be integrated with green economy initiatives to amplify impact. By incorporating mindfulness into existing programs, we aimed to address mental health, promote economic empowerment and environmental stewardship.

Recycle Up! Incubator	This program actively contributes to establishing a robust circular economy in Ghana by ensuring efficient resource utilization. This partnership infused mindful leadership into the three-phase incubation process, which helps social entrepreneurs develop, prototype, and grow business ideas. Currently in its 5th cohort, the program empowers entrepreneurs to create sustainable businesses that address both environmental and social issues.
Community Green Economy Project	This initiative empowers women and youth to create green jobs from local waste, thereby boosting Ghana’s green economy. This collaboration integrates mindfulness practices into the technical and vocational training modules, entrepreneurial skills training, and business development support. This holistic approach helps participants build resilience and maintain mental well-being while driving economic and environmental progress.
Women in Circular Economy	The objective of this program is to collect and recycle plastics while supporting women through job creation and training opportunities. Mindful leadership sessions focused on stress management and emotional intelligence, particularly for the 200 women waste-pickers empowered through this program. This project included the construction of a recycling hub, processing an average of 80 tons of plastic waste monthly, contributing to a milestone for environmental sustainability while showcasing the benefits of integrating mental well-being into economic initiatives.

Impact and Outcomes

gdly and RUG’s joint efforts have yielded significant results, both in terms of mental well-being and environmental sustainability. These sessions demonstrated that integrating mental well-being into green economy initiatives is not only possible but also essential. This collaboration showed that when individuals are equipped with the tools for mindfulness and resilience, they are better able to contribute to their communities and drive sustainable change. These sessions demonstrated how mindful leadership and environmental sustainability compliment each other, creating impacts locally and globally.

Date	Location	Impact
July 4th	Kumasi	This session was the first mindful leadership session with over 100 elderly women waste-pickers, focusing on happiness, life satisfaction, and light physical engagements. The session provided a safe space for women to reflect on their well-being and discuss challenges, fostering a sense of community and support.
July 5th	Kumasi	This session involved 13 young professionals and entrepreneurs from RUG's incubator program. It focused on resilience, mindfulness practices, and social entrepreneurship, helping participants navigate the challenges of building sustainable businesses in industries like fashion, health, and skincare.
July 11th	Accra	The final session brought together more than 15 young professionals for an in-depth discussion on mental health and meditation. The open dialogue allowed participants to share their experiences and challenges, building a network of support and solidarity.



Morocco: Empowering Youth Mental Wellbeing and Leadership

Socioeconomic and Cultural Context

Morocco is a nation rich in history, culture, and economic potential. However, it faces significant challenges, particularly among its youth. With approximately 30% of Moroccans under the age of 30, the country has a large youthful population. Yet, despite ongoing economic growth, youth unemployment remains a pressing issue, with rates hovering around 20% in urban areas. The entrepreneurial ecosystem, though growing, is in early stages, with limited access to capital and a nascent support infrastructure, making the entrepreneurial journey particularly arduous for young Moroccans.



Mental health is another critical yet often overlooked aspect of this landscape. The pressures of building and sustaining a business in such a competitive environment frequently lead to high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. These challenges are exacerbated in Morocco's culture, where vulnerability and openly discussing personal struggles are not commonly accepted. The cultural stigma surrounding mental health issues can result in accumulated, untreated mental health conditions, making it essential to address these challenges in a culturally sensitive manner.

Cultural and Religious Context of Mental Well-Being

In Morocco, Islam plays a central role in daily life for approximately 99% of the population, therefore religious and cultural norms significantly shape perceptions and approaches to mental health. Mental well-being is often intertwined with spiritual practices and community support, with religious teachings promoting virtues like patience, gratitude, and reliance on faith during difficult times. While this collective perspective can foster resilience, it may also inhibit individuals from seeking professional mental health care, as challenges are sometimes viewed as spiritual deficiencies or personal failings.

The approach to mental health, based on strong family and community bonds, can stigmatize mental health issues as they're often misunderstood or attributed to supernatural causes. Through exposure to global perspectives via digital communication, travel, and education, a noticeable shift is occurring among the younger generations who are becoming increasingly open to addressing mental health challenges. Discussions around mental well-being remain sensitive, and the topic is often considered somewhat taboo, yet progress is underway among Moroccan youth.

Professionally, young Moroccans encounter numerous challenges related to mental health, exacerbated by career and societal expectations and prevalent stigmas. These challenges are compounded by the negative social reactions and discouragements that often accompany the public acknowledgment of mental health issues, which can affect their academic and professional reputation. For instance, a college student dealing with depression may face significant societal pushback, including discouraging remarks about the implications of acknowledging her condition publicly, such as potential impacts on her academic and professional reputation.

Integrating Mindful Leadership with Youth Empowerment

The Global Shapers Community, an initiative by the World Economic Forum, is active in Morocco through its local hub, which brings together proactive young Moroccans. These young leaders work on a variety of social projects ranging from economic development to climate education, focusing on key areas like education, environmental sustainability, and inclusion. The hubs' initiatives, such as "Feel Out Loud," aim to enhance mental health awareness among university students, while "Shapers in Action" offers webinars that introduce young people to the values and visions of the Global Shapers community.

Gdly's collaboration with the Global Shapers Hubs is centered on integrating mindful leadership practices into their existing programs, including "Meet the Leader" and other community gatherings. This partnership is pivotal in a context where entrepreneurial stress and cultural stigmas around mental health create substantial barriers to success and well-being through open discussions, presentations, and interviews.

Date and Location	Focus	Impact
June 5-7, Fez	Stakeholder Engagement and Learning Journey	This session engaged with local stakeholders and young leaders, guided by members of the Global Shapers Fez Hub, to introduce Fez's prominent history, culture, and institutions, exploring the ecosystem that sustains the city and attracts global attention. This included a visit to a startup called Mobdie, which leverages digital and tech innovation to educate children, the Chamber of Commerce Fez, KUB 789 - Incubator of the Private University of Fez (UPF), Incubooster. This session also included participation in the Inaugural Conference of the Healthtech Hackathon at the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry of Fez.
June 6th, Fez	Moderated Presentation and Interview	This hybrid session combined a presentation, interview, and Q&A session, covering topics of mindful leadership, culture, communication, and the unique challenges of navigating the entrepreneurial landscape in Morocco. The session provided participants with insights into how they can develop a resilient mindset, cultivate effective communication skills, and lead with empathy and purpose.
June 26th, Marrakesh	National Meetup and Talk	This event gathered young leaders from Fez, Casablanca, Rabat, and Marrakesh and provided a platform for deep conversations surrounding the social entrepreneurial journey, mental well-being, as well as challenges and resilience required to succeed in Morocco's dynamic environment. Participants shared their experiences, exchanged tips, and gained insights on how to navigate the path forward in their respective sectors.



Outcomes of Mindful Leadership Integration

Participants in these programs have reported feeling better equipped to manage stress and anxiety, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of mental health in both their personal and professional lives. These discussions have been instrumental in breaking down cultural stigmas, fostering more open conversations about mental health issues. The focus on mindful leadership and resilience has also provided young entrepreneurs with essential tools to navigate Morocco's challenging business environment, enabling them to lead with empathy, communicate effectively, and build supportive networks. This holistic approach not only addresses individual needs but also contributes to broader societal change, encouraging a shift towards greater mental health awareness and acceptance in Morocco.

The efficient execution and delivery of these two sessions were made possible by the aligned values and passion of the progressive and active community leadership teams within the Global Shapers Fez and Marrakech Hub. The sessions not only provided practical tools for mental well-being and leadership but also fostered a sense of community and mutual support among participants.

Conclusion

Gdlys collaboration with the Global Shapers Hubs highlights the importance of addressing mental well-being in a culturally sensitive manner while fostering leadership and entrepreneurial skills among Moroccan youth. By integrating mindful leadership into their work, we have not only enhanced the capacity of these young leaders but also contributed to building a more resilient and supportive community in Morocco. This case study demonstrates the potential for impactful change when global initiatives align with local cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

As Moroccan society modernizes, young professionals are becoming more open to discussing and addressing mental health challenges. This group is increasingly advocating for their own well-being, influenced by global conversations on mental health and the growing availability of resources. Young Moroccans are not only adapting to global cultural trends but are also actively participating in shaping these discussions within their own context. This openness is a positive development, leading to more acceptance and a healthier approach to mental and emotional well-being.

The transition among young Moroccans towards embracing mental health awareness reflects a broader global trend of destigmatizing mental health issues. As this demographic continues to engage with global cultures and communication channels, they are increasingly advocating for their mental and emotional well-being, driving positive changes in how these issues are perceived and addressed in their communities. While challenges remain, particularly in ensuring adequate mental health infrastructure and services, the trajectory is promising, with young professionals leading the way toward a more open and supportive environment for discussing mental health in Morocco. This combination of deep-rooted cultural practices with emerging global influences is paving the way for a new generation that is both grounded in tradition and forward-looking in their approach to well-being.

South Africa: Recovering from the Shadow of the Past through Youth Mindful Leadership



Socioeconomic and Cultural Context

Cape Town, South Africa, known for its stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage, continues to wrestle with the profound effects of its turbulent apartheid history. These historical scars deeply impact marginalized communities, particularly within the black population, manifesting in significant socio-economic disparities and high crime rates that shape the lives of many young people. Issues like crime, drug abuse, gangsterism, poverty, and peer pressure pose considerable mental health challenges for youth.

South Africa's education system is one of the most unequal in the world, a stark reality highlighted by Amnesty International in February 2020. The disparity is alarming: the top 200 schools in the country produce more distinctions in Mathematics than the next 6,600 schools combined. The educational journey for many is fraught with obstacles: out of 100 learners who start school, only 40 will reach their Matric year, 30 will pass, and merely 14 will pursue higher education. This inequity contributes to a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities for the majority of students. Compounding these educational challenges is the pervasive violence within the country. Cape Town, for example, reported approximately 2,200 murders in 2023 alone, marking it as one of the cities with the highest murder rates not only in South Africa but globally ([South African Police Service](#)). Such violence reinforces the country's reputation for danger and instability. Economic instability and widespread corruption exacerbate these issues further, undermining efforts to implement effective mental well-being and youth development programs. The lack of funding and resources within the educational system deepens the challenges faced by young people, perpetuating cycles of poverty and violence and hindering any progress towards rectifying these deep-seated issues.

In response to these challenges, fostering mindful leadership and equitable well-being among college and high school students becomes critically important. Partnering with *Youth in Transformation*, established in 2016, the focus has been on equipping students aged 15 to 25 with essential skills for self-awareness, resilience, and ethical leadership. Youth in Transformation actively collaborates with local schools lacking resources and support. Programs like STEAM+, which involves tutoring in math, science, and robotics, and The Butterfly Project, which supports girls with tutoring, mentoring, and scholarships, play pivotal roles. These initiatives foster a sense of community, social responsibility, and skill-sharing among participants.

Integrating Mindful Leadership with Youth Empowerment

Mindful leadership extends beyond traditional leadership training by emphasizing emotional intelligence, compassion, and a deeper connection with oneself and others. This approach is crucial in environments where young people, especially from marginalized black and colored communities, face significant socio-economic and emotional challenges due to historical and systemic injustices. The persistent legacy of apartheid has left deep divisions, evident in today's public education system. Many schools in black and colored communities are underfunded and lacking resources, contributing to an alarmingly high dropout rate. Moreover, the youth unemployment rate in South Africa stands at around 60% for individuals aged 15 to 24, with even higher rates in marginalized communities.



Program Implementation and Outcomes

The program emphasized the importance of early mental well-being training. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues, and providing tools for self-awareness and emotional management is essential for overall development. Sessions focused on exploring the deeper meaning of self and recognizing vital connections with others and the broader community. Participants engaged in meditation techniques, gaining insights through meaningful questions, and participated in group exercises that facilitated discussions on values and morality. These sessions were pivotal in helping participants understand the importance of mental well-being and leadership in their personal and professional lives. By fostering a sense of community and mutual support, the program empowered young leaders to navigate their challenging environments with resilience and clarity. Additionally, YIT hosts a weekly coaching group addressing relevant issues, helping learners grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Conclusion

Gdly's collaboration with *Youth in Transformation* underscores the critical need for mindful leadership and mental well-being programs in marginalized communities like those in Cape Town. By equipping young people with the tools for resilience, self-awareness, and ethical leadership, we are helping to break the lingering cycles of poverty and violence within communities. The program's success demonstrates the potential for meaningful change when global initiatives align with local cultural and socioeconomic contexts, paving the way for a more equitable and supportive future for South Africa's youth.

Date	Focus	Impact
August 8	College Leaders' Mental Well-being and Leadership	This workshop for a group of 15 college leaders, tailored specifically for those in leadership roles at the collegiate level. The session provided tools for self-assessment and techniques for maintaining mental clarity and emotional stability, which are critical in managing both personal and academic responsibilities. Participants engaged in interactive activities designed to strengthen their leadership skills, such as role-playing scenarios that require quick thinking and empathetic leadership.
August 10	High School Students' Mindful Leadership and Community Values	A group of 25 high school students participated in a workshop focusing on mindful leadership and the importance of community values. This session was designed to prepare young students for future leadership roles by integrating mindfulness practices with core community and ethical values. The training included exercises on self-reflection, discussions on the impact of leadership on community cohesion, and strategies for applying mindfulness in daily interactions and decision-making processes.

Tanzania: Enhancing Mental Health and Wellbeing for Women and Young Mothers



Socioeconomic and Cultural Context

Tanzania, a developing nation in East Africa with a population of approximately 59 million, faces significant challenges in addressing the needs of its youthful demographic, which makes up over half of its population. The country struggles with high levels of violence against children and young women, with reports indicating that nearly 30% of young women experience sexual abuse before age 18, and a staggering 70% of youth encounter physical violence during childhood (GOT/UNICEF/CDC 2010).

Socio-economic pressures disproportionately affect women and young mothers, who contend with poverty, limited education, and high unemployment rates. These conditions foster a sense of hopelessness and chronic stress, compounded by traditional gender roles that expect women to prioritize caregiving over personal wellbeing. This often leads to neglected mental health needs, further exacerbated by the stigma and discrimination faced by young, unmarried mothers.

The scarcity of mental health services, especially in rural areas, and the prevalent stigma around mental health issues mean many women do not receive the support they need. Conditions like postpartum depression and anxiety frequently go undiagnosed and untreated, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve the mental health and overall well-being of Tanzania's most vulnerable populations.

Challenges of Gender-Based Violence and Early Pregnancy

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant issue, with 40% of women aged 15-49 having experienced physical violence, and 17% subjected to sexual violence. These experiences deeply impact women's mental health, perpetuating cycles of trauma and disenfranchisement. Additionally, Tanzania experiences high rates of early marriage and childbirth, exacerbating women's economic dependence, limiting educational opportunities, and contributing to persistent gender inequality (World Bank, 2022).

Workshops & Training Impact

Sauti ya Mtoto Foundation (SMF) and New Hope New Winners Foundation (NHNWF) are pivotal in advocating for the rights of children, youth, and women in Tanzania. SMF, founded in 2017, focuses on grassroots and national levels dedicated to child protection, women's empowerment, and youth advocacy. NHNWF, established in 2014, complements these efforts by providing mental health education, advocating against violence, and strengthening community capacities through training and support. In Dar es Salaam, a series of workshops aimed at empowering women and young mothers through the ISEC Program emphasized mindfulness, self-care, and leadership. These workshops targeted various groups from January 20-24, 2023, attended by a total of 140 participants.

Date	Focus	Overview and Impact
January 20 & 21	Women's Leadership and Community Wellbeing	Workshops engaged 50 women aged 20-60, including both established business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. The program aimed to address and mitigate challenges related to mental health issues, domestic violence, and restrictive societal norms that often hinder women's productivity and community involvement. The sessions fostered a greater understanding of self-care and community integration, empowering women to leverage their roles for broader communal benefits.
January 22	Wellbeing for Young Mothers	This tailored workshop for 15 young mothers aged 18-28 concentrated on equipping participants with tools for self-care, mindfulness, and fundamental mental health management. This training was strategically developed to enhance resilience by providing essential coping strategies for mental health challenges, empowering young mothers to navigate the complexities of motherhood and personal well-being effectively.
January 23	Girls' Leadership	This session at Kinondoni Primary School targeted 25 girls aged 11-14, covering leadership training, self-care practices, mindfulness fundamentals, and menstrual health education designed to boost confidence and promote informed decision-making. These skills are vital for empowering young girls throughout their educational journeys and personal development, equipping participants with the skills to face future challenges confidently.

Conclusion

The challenges faced by girls, young mothers, and women in Tanzania stem from deep-rooted socioeconomic dynamics and gender inequality. The dedicated efforts of organizations like SMF and NHNWF are critical in addressing these challenges. Through targeted education, advocacy, and direct support, these organizations significantly improve mental health outcomes and foster safer, more equitable environments for women and youth in Tanzania. Collectively, this work helps individuals while contributing to broader societal well-being and sustainable development.



Strengthening Support for Human Rights Defenders in Africa

Challenges Faced by Human Rights Defenders in Africa

Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Africa operate in a highly complex socio-political environment characterized by a variety of challenges that significantly impact their work and personal safety. These challenges stem largely from the region's political instability, conflicts, and authoritarian governance structures, which vary in intensity across different countries. Many African countries experience frequent political instability, which may include violent conflicts, coups, and contentious elections. Countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and the Central African Republic have been particularly vulnerable to ongoing conflicts, which not only disrupt the social order but also create perilous conditions for HRDs. In these environments, activists often face severe repression and are targeted by state and non-state actors for their efforts to promote basic freedoms and human rights.

Authoritarian regimes across the continent, found in nations like Eritrea, Burundi, and Zimbabwe, pose another significant challenge. These governments are often characterized by a lack of democratic processes, suppression of free press, and a harsh crackdown on dissent. HRDs working under such regimes are routinely subjected to surveillance, harassment, arbitrary detention, and even torture. The instability in many parts of Africa, exacerbated by conflicts and oppressive governance, has led to significant internal and cross-border migrations. This mass movement creates complex humanitarian crises, putting additional strain on regions already struggling with limited resources. HRDs working within these contexts not only advocate for the rights of those displaced but also often find themselves among the displaced, trying to continue their work under even more challenging circumstances.



Capacity Building and Support Initiatives

The Africa Human Rights Network (AHRN), registered under Tanzania's NGO Act No. 24 of 2002, provides crucial support to over 115 civil society NGOs across the Great Lakes Region and wider Africa. AHRN's core mission is to enhance the promotion, protection, and capacity-building of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Africa, thereby strengthening the role of civil society organizations. AHRN offers a range of capacity-building activities including training within the following areas:

Human Rights	These sessions equip HRDs with a deeper understanding of human rights frameworks and strategic planning skills necessary to launch effective advocacy projects.
Digital Security	To counteract the risk of cyberattacks employ safe digital practices for secure communication and data storage.
Language	English and French language courses are offered to enhance ability to communicate on international platforms, expanding their reach and influence.

One of AHRN's key initiatives is the partnership with the International Shelter City Network, which provides temporary relocation and safe havens for HRDs at risk. This network enables defenders from the Great Lakes Region to continue their work without the immediate threat of retaliation. Key components include Shelter City Dar es Salaam, launched in 2017, offering three-month relocation in Tanzania, providing social, medical, psychological, and networking support to HRDs and Shelter City Cotonou, beginning mid-2019 in Benin. This pilot project focuses on supporting French-speaking HRDs from West Africa, recognizing the linguistic diversity of the region.

Integration of Mental Health Support

On August 2, AHRN and Gdly conducted a one-day workshop that engaged around 20 activists. This workshop was part of our mental health program designed to enhance the psychological resilience and overall well-being of HRDs, acknowledging the stress and emotional burden inherent in their work. The session focused on:

Mindfulness and Stress Management	This segment introduced techniques designed to help HRDs center themselves and maintain their mental health amid stressful situations. Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and mindful reflection were covered, emphasizing the importance of staying present and engaged while also managing emotional responses to potentially traumatic events.
Self-awareness	Participants explored the concept of self-awareness, which involves understanding one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and drives. By becoming more aware of their internal states, HRDs can better manage their reactions to external pressures and maintain a clear focus on their goals and responsibilities.
Emotional Wellbeing Fundamentals	The ability to detach emotionally from work is crucial for HRDs to prevent burnout and maintain long-term engagement with their challenging roles. The session covered strategies for setting boundaries between personal and professional life. The session delved into the fundamentals of emotional wellbeing, which include recognizing signs of mental health struggles, understanding the resources available for support, and developing resilience. This ensures that HRDs can find space to recharge and avoid the pitfalls of over-identification with their work.

Conclusion

AHRN's multifaceted approach to supporting HRDs in Africa underscores the critical need for comprehensive protection and capacity-building strategies in the human rights sector. By integrating mental health support into their programs, AHRN not only addresses the immediate safety needs of HRDs but also enhances their long-term sustainability and effectiveness in promoting human rights across Africa. This holistic support mechanism ensures that HRDs can continue their vital work under safer and more resilient conditions, contributing significantly to the advancement of human rights across the continent.



CHAPTER 5.

Resources



Mental Well-being and Resilience Training Resources

Mental Health America (MHA)

- Website: [Mental Health America](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)
- Resources: Mental health assessments, educational materials, and wellness tools.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- Website: [NAMI](https://www.nami.org)
- Resources: Educational resources, support groups, and tools for mental health awareness and resilience.

Mindfulness for Youth

- Website: [Mindfulness for Youth](https://www.mindfulnessforyouth.org)
- Resources: Mindfulness exercises and resources tailored for young people.

Youth.gov

- Website: [Youth.gov](https://youth.gov)
- Resources: Guides and training materials for building resilience and mental health in youth.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

- Website: [NIMH](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- Resources: Publications and resources on mental health conditions and coping mechanisms.

American Psychological Association (APA)

- Website: [APA](https://www.apa.org)
- Resources: Information on psychological well-being, stress management, and resilience building.

Headspace

- Website: [Headspace](https://www.headspace.com)
- Resources: Free introductory meditation and mindfulness practices.

The Calm Zone (YoungMinds)

- Website: [The Calm Zone](https://www.thecalmzone.org)
- Resources: Relaxation techniques and resilience-building exercises for young people.

Smiling Mind

- Website: [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au)
- Resources: Mindfulness and meditation programs designed for different age groups, including youth.

The Jed Foundation (JED)

- Website: [The Jed Foundation](https://www.jedfoundation.org)
- Resources: Tools and resources for mental health and emotional well-being, with a focus on young people and college students.

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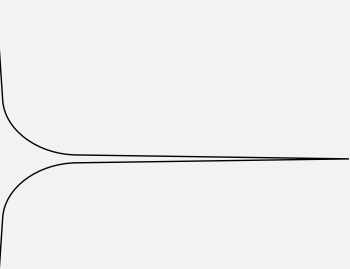
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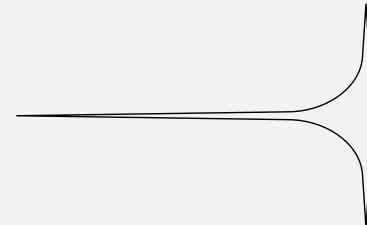
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