

Praxis Network Youth for Global Health Equity Statement October 14, 2011

Jointly crafted by FACE AIDS, GlobeMed, Global Health Corps, and Still Harbor

We are a coalition of young people.

We are global citizens who see connections between challenges in our own backyards and those around the world.

We are interdisciplinary and innovative thinkers who know that we need people of every background and skill set to achieve our goals for social change.

We are idealistic enough to believe we can build a more just world, but pragmatic enough to know it will only be done through strategic, deliberate, and bold action.

We have been shaped by rapid globalization, the increasing exchange of ideas and information, and a growing interconnectedness of people across borders.

We acknowledge our place in the longstanding struggle for justice while recognizing our generation's unique opportunity to serve in the 21st century.

As young people, we have a special capacity and responsibility to respond. We will be defined both by what we believe and what we achieve.

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In our lifetimes alone, our world has made immense progress. Millions have been lifted out of poverty, diseases have been eradicated, drug prices brought down, and life-saving technologies developed.

Yet, at the same time, our world has grown ever more unequal. Too many people continue to die of preventable and treatable diseases. Simply put, the current disparities in health outcomes between the world's rich and poor are unjust and unacceptable.

We choose to focus our energy on health because we believe that health is fundamentally about human dignity and the right to survive. Health determines how we live and why we die and is intimately tied to every other indicator of development.

We know that medical science alone is not enough to overcome our world's health disparities. These challenges remain not for a lack of technical solutions, but because of misuse of power, deeply ingrained inequities, and violations of human rights. It is these root causes of injustice and the systems that perpetuate them that necessitate our collective action

Progress has been possible when people have stood up, spoken out, and demanded that health be seen as a human right. Brave individuals across the globe have worked tirelessly to dispel the insidious myth that the poor cannot be treated - that it is too difficult, too costly. They have proven that we can build systems that alleviate suffering and deliver high-quality, comprehensive health care to the poorest communities with outstanding results.

These flagship models are inspiring. But they are not enough. There are simply too few people fighting these injustices, and too often their efforts are isolated and disjointed. Instead of collaboration, dialogue, and openness, we see ego, divisiveness, and cynicism.

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Today, in response, we call for young people around the world to come together in solidarity to advance our collective goals for human life and dignity.

Through collaboration, we will be able to more effectively mobilize and leverage resources, knowledge, skills, and awareness across actors and specific health issues. We will be able to do more than triage crises and smooth inefficiencies. We will be able to transform power and systems to create a more just world.

As young people, we have a crucial role to play in building this globally collaborative community. From securing women's suffrage to ending apartheid, young people have been among the most powerful voices for social change. We are no different. We join together now to lend our voices to the movement for global health equity.

In signing this statement, we commit to critically questioning and defining ourselves, our values, and our role in building a more just world. We commit to collaboration, dialogue, and openness. Fundamentally, we commit to stand up for justice, for human dignity, and for health as a human right.

Every day, we have the opportunity to build a world based on this vision.
Today, we unite in action.