**Request for nominations: The social determinants of mental wellbeing in young people**

The ISC is launching a new project that will bring together experts from a variety of diverse global contexts to develop an understanding of the determinants of declining subjective wellbeing for young people.

On the occasion of [World Mental Health Day](https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day/2023), the International Science Council has agreed to undertake a collaborative project with the WHO exploring the causes of the apparent rapid increase in loss of mental wellbeing in young people. This is in accord with [Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ISC and WHO](https://council.science/annual-report-2022/world-health-organization/) in 2022.

There is [considerable evidence](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health) demonstrating that rates of loss of mental wellbeing among young people have been rising rapidly in the past 15 years and are continuing to rise. Though prevalence data is limited for much of the world, these trends are consistent and alarming. There is much evidence to suggest many issues in mental health have their prodromes in infancy, childhood and adolescence. This recent and accelerating loss in subjective wellbeing for children and youth around the globe has significant implications for lifelong wellbeing, physical health, educational achievements, and relational and vocational outcomes and so should be of significant concern.

The reasons for this apparent recent deterioration in subjective wellbeing in younger people are less clear. Importantly, though the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly [impacted youth mental health](https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-covid-19-crisis-84e143e5/), the evidence suggests rates of mental health challenges for young people were climbing well before the pandemic began.

Mental health issues have increased in every sector of the population, but again, disproportionately so for young people in education, and those facing disadvantages from poor housing and overcrowding, disrupted food security, precarious employment, and other factors.

Mental health problems were already rapidly escalating for adolescents prior to the pandemic for a variety of reasons. The impact of the pandemic has compounded the situation.

Students in the later years of schooling and entering tertiary education have been particularly badly affected. Many young people abandoned their education, and even now levels of truancy and education abandonment remain much higher than prior to the pandemic emerging in 2020.

“[Unprecedented & Unfinished: Policy Lessons and Recommendations from COVID19](https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/UnprecedentedAndUnfinished-2ndEdition-2023.pdf)” – 2nd edition, page 20, DOI: 10.24948/2023.03

Possible determinants playing a role in these rising rates are likely to include a complex interplay of:

* socio-cultural, (e.g. social change, civil unrest)
* historic (e.g. colonization),
* systemic (e.g. the economy, inequalities),
* contextual (e.g. the digital environment),
* biological (e.g. earlier age of puberty)
* personal factors (e.g. early and concurrent educational factors, family environment) and
* the development of executive functions (resilience) which in turn are influenced by perinatal and early childhood factors (sociological, educational, environmental including adverse experience and parental).

These influences on mental health are likely to play out dynamically across time, from early in development (e.g. deprivation) and the relative importance of particular factors will be contextually variable. Though many of these potential determinants are suspected, we lack a deep understanding of their relative importance and the interconnections between them particularly within diverse global contexts. This rich understanding is likely to be essential to understanding where to target interventional efforts which will need to extend well beyond l mental health services to aspects of social and educational care.

Given the immense nature of this challenge, and the number of factors that may be at play and contextual variation, it is challenging to assess where and how societal resources and policy should be targeted to address these rising rates. This lack of nuanced understanding has significant policy implications which extend well beyond the mental health domain. Because of the multidimensional nature of both the causes of change and their impacts, it is critical that a cross-disciplinary approach is taken to exploring solutions. The social return on investment of multisectoral early preventative actions make it essential that we support pluralistic evidence-based policy making by developing a shared understanding of this complex challenge.

The agreed project will bring together experts and youth from a variety of diverse global contexts and fields of study including:

* psychology,
* neuroscience,
* education science,
* sociology,
* anthropology, and
* psychological and developmental medicine

to develop an understanding of the determinants of declining subjective wellbeing for young people.

The ISC will draw an **expert oversight panel** from around the world, including diverse disciplines and global contexts, including**younger experts**.  These will be drawn from nominations from the broad range of academies, natural and social science bodies that are members of the ISC. It will be diverse by discipline and geography. **The project team** will build around younger researchers. Additionally, this project will be informed by a youth group, comprising young researchers and young advocates.  The [WHO Youth Council subgroup on mental health](https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-youth-engagement/who-youth-council) will also be invited to contribute. It is envisaged most of the work would be virtual and the aim is to complete the project in 24 months from initiation.

Nominate your exceptional candidates

Members are invited to suggest suitable experts across the broad range of expertise who may be suitable for the **oversight team** and/or younger researchers to join the **project team**. The ISC’s [young academies and associations](https://council.science/members/membership-notice-board/young-membership/) are particularly encouraged to nominate experts. A two page maximum CV detailing relative expertise and key publications should be included in the application below.

**Submit before 10 November 2023**

If you have questions, for example, you would like to be nominated but you are not part of the ISC Membership, please contact [Alison Meston](mailto:alison.meston@council.science) with email subject “Mental Health Project nomination query”.

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1.) DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

First name \*

Last name \*

Name of ISC nominating organization, which the nominator represents \*

Nominator's email address \*

2.) DETAILS OF THE NOMINEE

First name of nominee \*

Last name of nominee \*

Title of nominee \*

* Professor
* Assistant Professor
* Dr
* Other

Nominee's expertise \*

* Anthropology
* Education science
* Neuroscience
* Psychology
* Sociology
* Pyschological and Developmental medicine
* Other

Name of host institution and department (place of work) of nominee \*

Nominee's role within this institution \*

Type of institution \*

* Government
* Industry
* Intergovernmental
* NGO
* Medical Institution
* Policy Centre / Think tank
* Research Centre
* University
* Other

Please specify the country \*

Please specify which region the nominee's workplace is based \*

* Asia (Western, Central, Eastern, Australasia)
* Europe
* Latin America
* North America
* North Africa
* Middle East
* Sub-Saharan Africa

Nationality/Nationalities of nominee \*

Career stage of nominee \*

* Early career 0-10 years
* Mid-career 10-20 years
* Advanced career 20-30 years
* 30+ years

Gender of nominee \*

* Female
* Male
* Non-binary
* Prefer not to say

E-mail address of nominee \*

Mobile phone number (with country code) of nominee \*

Are they nominated for: \*

* Oversight Committee
* Project Team
* Either the Oversight Committee or the Project Team

3.) JUSTIFICATION

3.a) Overview statement \*

A succinct overview statement (up to 100 words) summarising the basis of the nomination – the nominee’s professional context and experience in relation to the value they bring to the ISC - and encapsulating their core strengths.

0 of 100 max words.

3.b) CV \*

Click or drag a file to this area to upload.



Please upload the nominee's CV as a pdf document (max. 2 pages)

4.) DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

Nominees need to have agreed to their nomination before it is submitted.

Declaration of Understanding (declared by the nominator on behalf of the nominee) \*

* The nominee confirms their intention to accept a position on the oversight committee and/or the Project Team and agrees to the time commitment of 2-3 hours per month spread over the two year project.

Submit nomination

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