

COMMUNITY INNOVATION BILL OF RIGHTS

A Compact for Equitable Partnership in Global Mental Health

PREAMBLE

We, the undersigned funders and partners, recognize that the future of mental health lies in the hands of those closest to the pain and the healing. We acknowledge that current funding structures often inadvertently punish the most embedded, ethical, and resilient grassroots organizations. To bridge the gap between funder expectations and community reality, we commit to respecting the following rights:

ARTICLE 1: The Right to Accessible Capital

We recognize that 75% of community-led organizations operate on less than \$15,000 USD annually.

THE PLEDGE: We will not let minimum check sizes or budget ratio caps automatically disqualify high-impact grassroots actors. We commit to creating micro-grant pathways or waiving budget ratios for smaller grants.

ARTICLE 2: The Right to a Living Wage

We recognize that 50% of community teams are unpaid or volunteer-run, and that "sweat equity" is a recipe for burnout, not sustainability.

THE PLEDGE: We will not view staff salaries and overhead as "waste." We commit to funding the people who do the work, ensuring that resilience is supported by a paycheck - that the people helping others can help themselves, too.

ARTICLE 3: The Right to Resourced Compliance

We acknowledge that asking volunteer teams to produce professional audits and complex impact metrics is an unfunded mandate.

THE PLEDGE: If we require an audit for organizations with budgets below usual government audit thresholds, we will fund the accountant. If we require complex, bespoke data, we will fund the M&E officer. We will not demand professional outputs from volunteer inputs.

ARTICLE 4: The Right to Ethical Direct Funding

We recognize that routing funds through government or large intermediary channels can expose small organizations to corruption, extortion, and delays.

THE PLEDGE: We will not prioritize our administrative ease over the organization's ethical safety. We commit to exploring direct funding mechanisms that bypass intermediaries.

ARTICLE 5: The Right to Define Innovation

*We recognize that while some tools offer **lateral** scale, physical community spaces offer **intergenerational** depth and trust.*

THE PLEDGE: We value physical safety and trust as valid and scalable forms of innovation.

ARTICLE 6: The Right to Professional Respect

We recognize that youth and community leaders are experts in their own context.

THE PLEDGE: We will not tokenize youth nor community voices. When we seek their counsel or leadership, we will compensate them, respecting their intellectual property and time.

ARTICLE 7: The Right to Radical Simplicity

We recognize that complex applications and unread reports waste hundreds of hours of time annually for both funders and implementers.

THE PLEDGE: We will not ask for more information than we can responsibly review nor require. We commit to simplified reporting (e.g., verbal check-ins) and streamlined applications wherever possible to return time to the mission.

SIGNED BY THE BELOW, To build a mental health ecosystem that is not just compliant, but transformative.