“HADAL MA DHISO, GACMO AYAA DHISA”

WORDS DON’T BUILD,
HANDS BUILD.

(Somalia)

Policy without implementation is just words.

The Sawa Project

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UBUNTU IN ACTION

Youth-Led Policy Recommendations for

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN EASTERN AFRICA

ABOUT THE SAWA PROJECT

The Sawa Project is a 21-month initiative by the Kofi Annan Foundation in partnership with MCW Global and the Africa Alliance of YMCAs. Sawa invested in young mental health leaders, aged 25-35, already working to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people across Eastern Africa. The project provided leadership development, mentorship, advocacy training, network building and seed funding.

This resulting policy paper brings together youth mental health policy recommendations from the Sawa leaders. Drawing on their professional and frontline experience, lived experiences, cultural knowledge and the solutions they created through the Sawa Project.

WE ARE CALLING FOR:

- ☐ Policies that arrive in communities, co-designed with young people from the start.
- ☐ Funding that is accessible to youth-led organisations and strengthens their capacity to sustain the work beyond any single grant.
- ☐ Research that includes young people and communities as partners in creating knowledge.
- ☐ Networks that share power and support the wellbeing of young practitioners.
- ☐ Youth-centric mental health support where young people already are.
- ☐ Ethical storytelling approaches that fight stigma and turn communities into places of support for young people.

The full report shares the Sawa leaders' stories, proverbs examples and recommendations; showing what is possible when young people are trusted and resourced to lead.

ACCESS THE FULL REPORT: kofiannanfoundation.org/ubuntuinaction

Kofi Annan Foundation

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