

Dear Members of the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee,

I am Prof. Ramneek Ahluwalia, CEO of Higher Health, and I believe that I will be a valuable addition to the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee. My focus with Higher Health is my commitment to empowering youth through education and skills development, which perfectly aligns with the goals of UNESCO and upholds the values of the NGO Liaison Committee.

Higher Health has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to preparing youth for the workplace. Through its Civic and Soft Skills Programme, Higher Health addresses critical challenges faced by young people in South Africa, particularly those in tertiary education and those outside the formal education system. This comprehensive programme equips the youth with essential soft skills alongside academic qualifications, empowering them to navigate the job market and build fulfilling careers. The focus on the 17 SDGs within the programme further strengthens its alignment with UNESCO's global mission to advance sustainable development.

Higher Health's work exemplifies the integration of health, well-being, and skills development, and encourages lifelong learning by ensuring that young people not only develop the technical abilities needed for employment but also the emotional intelligence, resilience, and civic responsibility necessary to thrive in today's complex world. Higher Health's modules on mental health, financial literacy, gender education, climate change, and digital literacy are directly relevant to the priorities of UNESCO and its member NGOs working on social inclusion, sustainability, and youth empowerment.

Higher Health is also a recognized advocate for gender equality and mental health resilience. Our "Transforming MENTalities" initiative, in collaboration with UNESCO, seeks to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and promote healthy masculinity. This work is vital for reshaping societal perceptions on mental health, civic engagement, and gender relations—issues that are central to UNESCO's global mandate.

I have a deep understanding of the challenges facing today's youth, coupled with my experience in developing innovative, inclusive educational programmes, which I believe will make me an invaluable voice on the NGO Liaison Committee. My involvement would not only bring a wealth of knowledge and practical insights to the table but would also strengthen the connection between youth development and UNESCO's work globally.

As a dynamic leader my involvement in the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee would bring fresh insights, deepen collaboration, and strengthen efforts to empower youth globally. I am passionate about improving the lives of young people and I can foster cross-cultural partnerships to advance the Committee's work.

As a global partner of UNESCO, Higher Health's contributions extend beyond South Africa. The organisation's reach and its impact on young people are a testament to our strategic vision and ability to implement programmes at scale. I am eager to work with other NGOs in the network to strengthen UNESCO's work regionally in educating our societies, encouraging lifelong learning, and promoting gender equality because together, we can do so much more!



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Prof Ramneek Ahluwalia