

Global Health Equity Network

Zero Health Gaps Pledge

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The Global Health Equity Network (GHEN) brings together private sector executives, government representatives, academics, and civil society leaders to advance a collective vision of Zero Health Gaps. In our vision, all individuals have the fair and just opportunity to fulfil their human potential in all aspects of health and wellbeing. This means that there are no differences in healthy years in a person's life span, within and across communities. Achieving a world with Zero Health Gaps goes together with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, creating a future where climate and human sustainability becomes a reality. This requires leaders across the global economy to participate in multistakeholder collaborations, share and learn from each other, invest and dedicate resources, commit to and sustain action, and measure and report impact.

Over the decades, it has become increasingly clear that health equity is critical to strengthening organizations and society – but vast inequities in health and wellbeing outcomes between and within countries persist. Today, the gap in life expectancy between Japan and Lesotho is 30 years.¹ Within the US, the gap in life expectancy between black males and white males is an average of 5 years, with pockets of even greater disparity.² Three key root causes of health disparities are inequality within societal systems, non-medical drivers of health, and systemic flaws in the healthcare system, including access to and quality of care. The non-medical drivers of health include environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors with significant impacts on health and wellbeing outcomes. The gap in years of human potential lost can be reclaimed by transforming the way organizations work, including the private sector. Collective impact can help close the health inequity gaps we see today. Leaders across industries can help drive this change by placing health equity at the core of their decision making for strategy, operations, and investments.

Placing health equity at the core is the right thing to do and it is the right business thing to do. A workforce that is healthy is more productive. A company that operates with health equity as a core principle is more likely to increase customer trust and loyalty. The communities where people live, play, and interact directly influence their health – yet another reason for organizations to work with communities to promote health equity. Collaborating with private and public sector organizations across the ecosystem who are also committed to health equity makes for a healthier supply chain workforce, which is inherently more resilient and sustainable.³

While positive health equity action is appreciated, a world with Zero Health Gaps requires a multi-disciplinary approach and concerted action. Actions include (but are not limited to) supporting strong Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs; providing accessible high-quality health and mental health services; paying employees across the supply chain a living wage; investing in safe living environments, and many others.⁴ Each organization can play a unique role in advancing health equity, starting with a pledge to action, informed by ongoing measurement of impact, and supported by a community of likeminded leaders who continue to accelerate progress. These leaders can embed health equity as the human impact progress of their ongoing climate and sustainability work, namely through ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) strategies.⁵

¹ [World Bank](#)

² [U.S. life expectancy at birth by race - Human Progress](#)

³ See Business Case for Health Equity for additional insights

⁴ See Action Guide for Health Equity for additional steps to take

⁵ World Economic Forum, "[Investing in Health Equity: Why Strong ESG Strategies Health Build a Healthier, More Inclusive World.](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Investing_in_Health_Equity_2022.pdf)"
https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Investing_in_Health_Equity_2022.pdf