



PMAC | PRINCE MAHIDOL
AWARD CONFERENCE **2026**

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**GENERATION NOW: YOUTH LEADERSHIP AT THE NEXUS OF HEALTH,
GENDER, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

| BACKGROUND

Today's world is home to the largest generation of young people, presenting an unprecedented opportunity to harness a demographic dividend for sustainable development. Yet, realising this potential demands urgent investment in health, education, and rights, especially for girls, young women, and vulnerable communities. Gender equality is critical not only for individual empowerment but also for unlocking broader social and economic progress.

Children and youth are disproportionately vulnerable to the escalating impacts of planetary health challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. These crises undermine their rights to health, education, and well-being, and disproportionately affect girls and young women through compounded risks. However, young people are not merely passive victims: they are active agents of change, advocating for transformative action at the intersections of gender, health, and environmental justice.

This youth-led session will explore the interconnectedness between demographic transitions, gender dynamics, youth empowerment, and planetary health. It will elevate youth voices, spotlight innovative youth-led solutions, and call for policy actions that centre equity, rights, and intergenerational justice.

| OBJECTIVES

- To explore how structural and environmental determinants, including climate change, disproportionately impact the health and well-being of youth and children.
- To showcase innovative youth-led and youth-centred approaches that promote planetary health and health equity.
- To discuss how investing in youth today, through education, health, and governance, can unlock the demographic dividend for a more just and sustainable future.
- To promote youth leadership by highlighting youth-led initiatives and solutions that address the intersections of health, rights, and environmental justice.
- To foster intergenerational dialogue to bridge young people's and policymakers' perspectives and commitments for more inclusive and equitable policy responses.



Speaker

David Johnson

President/Founder

Let's Unpack It
Barbados

Dr. David Johnson is a dynamic force driving change in the Caribbean's mental health landscape. At 27 years old, he stands as the President and Founder of Let's Unpack It, a groundbreaking youth-led NGO centered on mental health awareness, advocacy, meaningful youth engagement, and resource development. Born and raised in Barbados, David's journey intertwines his dedication to medicine with his fervent passion for youth empowerment.

Under Dr. Johnson's visionary leadership, Let's Unpack It has become a prominent voice for youth in mental health spaces in the region and beyond, reaching global platforms like the Clinton Global Initiative, the One Young World Summit, and the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Honoured as a 2025 National Youth Awardee by the Ministry of Youth (Barbados), David has spearheaded and partnered on initiatives that foster mental health literacy, broaden access to mental health and psychosocial support, and prioritize the holistic well-being of Caribbean youth.

Driven by a vision of equitable health and wellness for all Caribbean citizens, Dr. David Johnson remains unwavering in his commitment to effecting change. Whether he's attending to patients or advocating for systemic reforms, his dedication to realizing this vision remains resolute.