

Remarks by SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos

July 1, 2026

Good afternoon. On behalf of all of my colleagues at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), we are deeply honored to receive the International Contribution Award. Thank you! Special thanks go to Luis, who we were lucky to have join us last week as at SNF Nostos 2026, a celebration of 30 years of SNF grantmaking, for a discussion on how international collaboration can strengthen mental health systems.

I'm joining you from Athens via Zoom, which takes me back to the pandemic—and to the turning point it represented in youth mental health. The pandemic was very much a double-edged sword; it added new mental health strain for many people around the world, but it also felt, finally, like an inflection point where the tide was beginning to turn against stigma and there was real global consensus coalescing around the idea that we needed to rethink our approach to mental health support.

In early 2021, SNF launched, with the help of the Child Mind Institute, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Initiative to help strengthen the prevention and treatment infrastructure in place for young people in Greece. Late the following year, building on its success, we launched the SNF Global Center for Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the Child Mind Institute.

I'll mention one representative component of it: fellowships for clinicians, researchers, and communicators from low- and middle-income countries, reflecting a partnership with IACAPAP, among other entities, to build sustainable youth mental health care capacity where very little existed before.

Earlier this year, the SNF Global Center and IACAPAP announced a new round of fellowships, the third, to bring a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, and occupational therapist from Mozambique to a hospital in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for a year of clinical training before they return home to practice. Before the first cohort of this fellowship, there was only a single child and adolescent child psychiatrist in the country. This same model now also extends to practitioners from Kenya, who are training in South Africa.

SNF Global Center fellowships are also supporting home-grown youth mental health projects by researchers in Kenya, Pakistan, Mexico, Jordan, Nigeria, and India.

Meanwhile, SNF Global Center Communicator Fellows in Burundi, Pakistan, Brazil, and South Africa, are working to fight stigma and improve outcomes for young people by changing narratives around mental health.

Young people themselves also have a voice through country-level youth councils and a Global Youth Advisory Council, which was inspired by the youth engagement effort that we started in 2022 Greece, where it has reached over 13,000 adolescents from all walks of life. We were fortunate to have the members of the Global Youth Advisory Council contribute to SNF Nostos

last week as well, and Eduardo and Delice, who you heard from earlier, played a key role in getting this global advisory structure off the ground.

Young people can be clear-eyed, eloquent, insightful advocates for their own mental health needs. It's up to us to listen.

Thank you once again for this honor and to IACAPAP for your partnership. Congratulations to Professor Remschmidt.