

2026 AFRICA CDC YOUTH PRE-CONFERENCE **YPC 2026**

On the margins of the 5th International Conference
on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2026)

21-22 NOVEMBER 2026 | YPC 2026
23-27 NOVEMBER 2026 | CPHIA 2026
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

**Youth at the Centre of Health Security
and Sovereignty Across Africa**

Africa Ready for the future of health

Africa's public health future will be shaped by the generation now entering and leading its health systems, institutions, laboratories, research programmes, businesses, communities and policy spaces. YPC 2026 will bring young Africans from across the continent together to help shape that future.

Taking place immediately ahead of the 5th International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2026), YPC 2026 is the official youth platform for the conference. It will connect young health professionals, students, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, advocates, communicators and community leaders with one another and with Africa's public health leadership.

The 2026 edition is anchored in Africa CDC's Health Security and Sovereignty agenda and the CPHIA 2026 ambition to move from health dependency and vulnerability towards ownership and resilience. The focus is practical: who will lead, what Africa will build, and how young Africans can help turn health sovereignty into action.

Building on a growing youth movement

YPC was launched in Kigali in 2022, where young participants called for greater inclusion in health decision-making and stronger investment in their skills and leadership. The 2023 edition in Lusaka deepened the focus on youth leadership and gender-responsive health security. These efforts helped strengthen institutional mechanisms for youth participation, including the Youth Advisory Team for Health (YAT4H).

At CPHIA 2025 in Durban, Africa CDC launched the Strategy for Youth Engagement and Participation in Global Health 2025-2028 (YES!Health), creating a continental framework for meaningful youth participation in Africa's health agenda. YPC 2026 moves that agenda forward by linking youth ideas and leadership directly to the conversations, priorities and commitments of CPHIA 2026.

What YPC 2026 will deliver

YPC 2026 is designed as a working platform for young Africans who are already contributing to stronger health systems and want to influence what comes next.

Over two days, participants will exchange ideas, showcase solutions, build relationships and develop priorities that can inform CPHIA 2026.

Our objectives

1. Young Africans closer to decision-making. Create direct opportunities for young people to engage public health leaders, policymakers and institutions, and to shape recommendations on Africa's health security and sovereignty.
2. Surface African-led ideas, research and innovation. Give visibility to youth-led solutions and connect promising work with institutions, partners, mentors and networks that can help it grow.
3. Strengthen the next generation of Africa's health workforce. Build connections and pathways across public health, research, digital health, emergency response, local manufacturing, policy, advocacy and community engagement.
4. Advance YES!Health through action. Translate the Africa CDC youth engagement strategy into concrete opportunities, partnerships and institutional commitments for young Africans.

Expected Outcomes

1. A consolidated set of youth priorities and recommendations to inform discussions and commitments at CPHIA 2026
2. Greater visibility for youth-led research, innovation, advocacy and public health solutions from across African Union Member States.
3. Stronger networks and partnerships connecting young leaders with African public health institutions, researchers, policymakers, funders and implementers.
4. Clearer pathways for young Africans to contribute to health workforce development, preparedness and response, innovation, local manufacturing and community leadership.
5. Concrete opportunities to advance implementation of the YES!Health Strategy and sustain youth participation beyond the conference.

Five Africa Ready tracks

- Digital Health, Research and Innovation
- Building Africa's Public Health Workforce
- One Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Local Manufacturing and Health Sovereignty
- Youth Leadership on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV

See the Annex for detailed information on each track.

Why apply?

Selected participants will join a pan-African community of young people helping shape the next chapter of public health on the continent.

- Influence the youth priorities and recommendations that will feed into CPHIA 2026.
- Engage African public health leaders, policymakers, researchers, innovators and practitioners.
- Showcase your work, research, ideas or community experience.
- Build relationships with peers from across African Union Member States.
- Develop new knowledge and connections across YPC workshops, dialogues and interactive sessions.
- Participate in YPC 2026 and continue into CPHIA 2026 from 23-27 November 2026

Sponsorship: Sponsorship includes flight tickets, accommodation, meals, and CPHIA registration fee for selected young delegates.

Who should apply?

- Be 18-35 years old at the time of application.
- Be a citizen of an African Union Member State.
- Be enrolled in at least an undergraduate programme, or have relevant educational, professional or community experience in public health or related fields.
- Relevant fields may include public health, medicine, nursing, community or environmental health, research, digital health and technology, health policy, public service, development, communications and journalism, entrepreneurship, manufacturing, social sciences or other disciplines contributing to Africa's health security and sovereignty.
- Demonstrate leadership potential and a strong commitment to improving health, including through research, youth-led initiatives, advocacy, innovation, community engagement, professional practice or related activities.
- Be available to participate fully in YPC 2026 and CPHIA 2026.
- Be willing to contribute to peer exchange and the cultural life of the Youth Pre-Conference.

Our commitment to inclusion

Africa CDC is committed to an inclusive and pan-African selection process. Gender balance, geographical representation across African Union Member States, disability inclusion and representation of marginalised and underserved communities will be considered as part of participant selection.

How to Apply?

Complete the online application form by **13 September 2026 at 17:00 East Africa Time (EAT)**. Applications may be submitted in English or French.

Online application form: <https://forms.gle/7wQeWcoiLge4wGdz9>

Please submit:

- A completed online application form.
- A curriculum vitae (CV), maximum two pages.
- Passport biodata page
- Any additional information requested in the application form.

Important dates

Applications open	31 August 2026
Application deadline	13 September 2026, 17:00 EAT
Selected applicants contacted	2 October 2026
Attendance confirmation deadline	9 October 2026
YPC 2026	21-22 November 2026
CPHIA 2026	23-27 November 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make changes after submitting my application?

- No. Applications cannot be edited after submission, so please review your responses carefully before submitting.

Can I save the application form and return to it?

- The form should be completed in one sitting. We recommend drafting longer responses in a separate document before pasting them into the form.

What languages can I use to apply?

- Applications may be submitted in English or French. Programme language and interpretation arrangements will be communicated to selected participants.

Can I apply if I am not currently enrolled at a university?

- Yes. Applicants with relevant professional, community, entrepreneurial or other experience in health and related fields are encouraged to apply.

Will selected applicants be sponsored?

- Yes. Selected participants will receive sponsorship that covers flight tickets, accommodation, meals, and the CPHIA registration fee.

Annex: The five YPC 2026 tracks

Track 1: Digital Health, Research and Innovation

Africa's digital health landscape is growing quickly, driven by researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, health workers and communities developing new ways to expand access, improve quality and strengthen health systems. Young Africans are already contributing through research, digital tools, data, policy advocacy and entrepreneurship.

This track will examine what young innovators and researchers need to move from promising ideas to solutions that can be tested, adopted and scaled. Discussions will focus on stronger research ecosystems, mentorship, networks, evidence generation, responsible innovation and connections between young leaders and African public health institutions.

Participants will explore:

- Youth-led digital health solutions and research.
- Research-to-policy and research-to-practice pathways.
- Mentorship, financing, networks and partnerships that help promising ideas grow.
- How digital transformation can strengthen equitable access, health security and African ownership of health solutions



Track 2: Building Africa's Public Health Workforce

Africa's health sovereignty depends on people: a skilled, supported and connected workforce able to lead public health institutions, laboratories, research, emergency response, manufacturing, policy and community health. Young Africans need clearer pathways into those roles and opportunities to build careers on the continent.

This track will bring young people into a practical conversation about skills, employment, leadership and talent pipelines. It will also explore how institutions can create stronger routes from education and early-career experience into meaningful public health work.

Participants will explore:

- Skills and competencies needed for the future of public health in Africa.
- Internships, fellowships, mentorship and early-career pathways.
- Employment and retention of young African health professionals.
- Leadership opportunities for young professionals within national, regional and continental health institutions.

Track 3: One Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response

Health emergencies begin and spread through communities, systems and borders. Young people contribute at every stage: surveillance, community engagement, risk communication, research, misinformation management, early detection, prevention and response. One Health also requires collaboration across human, animal and environmental health.

This track will focus on how young Africans can help build trusted, community-centred preparedness and response systems before, during and after emergencies. It will draw on lessons from youth engagement initiatives across the continent and identify practical ways to strengthen youth participation in national and regional preparedness.

Participants will explore:

- Community trust, risk communication and misinformation management.
- One Health approaches that connect human, animal and environmental health.
- Youth roles in surveillance, prevention, preparedness and emergency response.
- Community resilience and local leadership during health emergencies



Track 4: Local Manufacturing and Health Sovereignty

Africa's health sovereignty depends on the continent's ability to develop, produce and regulate more of the health products it needs. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the risks of heavy dependence on imported vaccines, medicines and other essential products, and strengthened the case for sustainable local production.

Manufacturing is also a major opportunity for Africa's young workforce. Building a competitive health products sector requires scientists, engineers, researchers, regulators, data specialists, entrepreneurs, communicators and business leaders, alongside manufacturing capacity itself.

Participants will explore:

- Workforce development for health product manufacturing.
- Research, development and innovation.
- Entrepreneurship and the growth of African health businesses.
- Policy, regulation and advocacy for stronger African production ecosystems.
- How young Africans can contribute to a future in which the continent has greater ownership of the health products it needs.



Track 5: Youth Leadership on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV

Young people must have a meaningful role in shaping the policies, services and programmes that affect their sexual and reproductive health and their ability to prevent, access treatment for and live well with HIV. Across Africa, youth-led organisations, advocates and networks are already creating solutions, building trust and reaching communities.

This track will provide a dedicated space for young leaders to exchange experience, identify common priorities and develop practical recommendations. It will examine barriers to information and services, strengthen peer learning and connect youth-led advocacy with institutions and decision-makers.

Participants will explore:

- Youth-led approaches to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- HIV prevention, testing, treatment, care and stigma reduction for adolescents and young people.
- Access to trusted information and youth-responsive health services.
- Advocacy, peer learning and stronger youth networks across the continent.
- How youth priorities can translate into policy commitments and action at CPHIA 2026 and beyond.

Have Questions? Reach Out

Ms. Bibiana Tanda

Youth & Gender Officer and YPC Secretariat Member, Africa CDC

Email: TandaB@afriacdc.org

Copy: YouthProgramme@afriacdc.org

AFRICA READY

Youth at the Centre of Health Security and Sovereignty Across Africa

YPC 2026 | 21-22 November | CPHIA 2026 | 23-27 November | Addis Ababa



SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT AFRICA
CDC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY (YES!HEALTH)



SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT
AFRICA'S HEALTH SECURITY AND
SOVEREIGNTY AGENDA (AHSS)

