

Inaugural Advancing Medical Education
in Africa - Collaborative Leadership
Conference



Conference at a Glance



Conference Title
Advancing Medical Education in Africa: A Collaborative Leadership Conference

Dates
March 24–25, 2025

Location
Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

Organisers
University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), in partnership with the Rwanda Ministry of Health

Theme
Innovation in Medical Education Practices

SUB-THEMES:

▶ New Digital Technologies ▶ Simulation-Based Education ▶ Global Health and Social Medicine ▶ Leadership and Partnership

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

750+
Attendees

46
Participating Countries

117
African Medical Schools Represented

22
Sessions
Plenary Sessions: 6
Breakout Sessions: 12

86
Total Abstracts Submitted
Oral Presentations: 32
Poster Presentations: 56

195
Student Delegates

13
Exhibitors

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

73.5%
East Africa

7.9%
West Africa

3.5%
Southern Africa

2.3%
Central Africa

1.3%
North Africa

53%
Rwanda-Based Delegates

47%
International Delegates

SPEAKERS & CONTRIBUTORS

64
Speakers

117
Medical Deans & Academic Leaders

MILESTONES

- ▶ Formal Launch of the Consortium of Deans of Medical Schools in Africa
- ▶ Election of the Executive Committee: 8 members appointed to lead the Consortium
- ▶ Consortium officially constituted and endorsed by participating institutions

COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY

123,299
Total Impressions

X (formerly Twitter): 50,164
Facebook: 13,257
LinkedIn: 59,878

22,469
Total Engagements

15,177
Post Link Clicks

5,933
Video Views

Executive Summary



Over two days of the **Advancing Medical Education in Africa: A Collaborative Leadership Conference**, held from 24–25 March 2025 at the Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda, participants engaged deeply with sub-themes such as digital innovation, simulation-based learning, social medicine, medical humanities, and leadership in medical education—setting the stage for a transformative conversation about the future of medical training on the African continent. These rich, interdisciplinary discussions reflected a growing momentum to address persistent gaps in quality and coordination while embracing innovation and equity as cornerstones of medical education reform across Africa.

This report summarizes the key discussions, outcomes, recommendations, and notable statistics of the inaugural convening. The conference emerged in response to the widespread recognition of the fragmented nature of medical education in Africa, despite the shared challenges and immense opportunities for continental synergy. In response, the gathering brought together a broad and diverse coalition—deans of medical schools, educators, policymakers, student leaders, private innovators, and global health stakeholders—across Africa and beyond. Their common goal was clear: to

build dialogue and trust, drive innovation, and foster partnerships that would meaningfully contribute to the quality, relevance, and equity of health professional education across the continent.

A historic highlight of the gathering was the formal launch of the **Consortium of Medical Schools in Africa (COMS-A)**, a new collaborative platform envisioned to harmonize standards, bolster accreditation mechanisms, and facilitate transformative cross-border partnerships. This collective effort marks a bold step toward reimagining the continent's approach to medical education, with shared accountability and regional alignment at its core. COMS-A was conceived not as a top-down solution but as a unifying response to the growing demand for collective ownership and action in health education reform.

The University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), in partnership with the **Ministry of Health of Rwanda** served as the principal convener of the conference. Planning efforts were anchored by an International Steering Committee of seasoned experts, alongside a Local Organizing Committee based at the UGHE. Over an intensive eight-month period, these teams collaborated to shape the agenda, identify and confirm high-impact speakers, facilitate stakeholder outreach, and manage

logistical arrangements for participants and exhibitors. This groundwork was essential in curating a dynamic, interactive, and solution-oriented experience.

Although the original goal was to reach all 444 medical schools across the continent, 150 institutions were successfully contacted, and 120 deans confirmed attendance, underscoring the urgency and resonance of this initiative. What began as a 500-participant event expanded to welcome over 750 attendees, including **117 medical school deans from 34 African countries, 36 student leaders, 90 academic presenters, and representatives from global and continental organisations** such as the World Federation for Medical Education, World Health Organisation-AFRO, the Association of Medical Councils of Africa, and the World Medical Association. The strong presence of government ministries, private sector innovators, and academic networks helped ensure a holistic and forward-thinking dialogue.

The opening session was officiated by Rwanda's Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana, who reaffirmed the national commitment to advancing health education.

Executive Summary



The conference was further elevated by solidarity addresses and keynote from global health leaders including Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, Acting Director of World Health Organisation-AFRO, and Dr. Paulin Basinga, Africa Director at the Gates Foundation.

These high-level contributions framed the convening not only as a regional milestone but also as a globally significant moment for African-led reform in health education.

Programme highlights included engaging plenary sessions, expert panels, interactive breakout discussions, poster exhibitions, and live simulation demonstrations, including a powerful outreach simulation on the role of social medicine. One of the most pivotal moments was the Deans' Lunch and General Meeting, where COMS- A was officially launched and its inaugural executive leadership team was elected and inaugurated. This event set the foundation for a new era of structured coordination and shared leadership across African medical schools.

The conference concluded with an award ceremony recognizing excellence in student and non-student oral and poster presentations. A closing keynote was delivered by Prof. Senait Fisseha, Vice President for Global Programmes at the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, who spoke compellingly about the potential

of COMS-A to transform professional health training. Final remarks from Dr. Yvan Butera, Rwanda's Minister of State for Health, reflected continued governmental support for the work ahead and acknowledged the important role of public-private partnerships in realizing this vision.

This was more than a conference—it was the beginning of the movement. It demonstrated a growing collective will to move beyond institutional silos and toward a coordinated African-led transformation of medical education. Delegates are left with a shared commitment to key priorities: enhancing faculty development, institutionalizing competency-based learning, fostering regional collaboration, investing in infrastructure and digital tools, strengthening quality assurance systems, and increasing the flow of knowledge and resources between institutions.

The conference was officially endorsed as an annual event under the leadership of COMS-A, with its secretariat hosted at UGHE. Looking forward, participants pledged to sustain collaboration and pursue locally led reforms that could deliver inclusive, context-sensitive, and future-ready medical education across the continent. The momentum from this inaugural convening signals not just hope but action for a new generation of African health professionals.

We invite you to explore the full conference report at the link below, which offers deeper insights into the sessions, speaker reflections, and key data points. Simply click or scan the QR Code.



