



COMS-A

The Consortium of Medical Schools - Africa
Consórcio das Escolas de Medicina - África (COMS-A)
Consortium des Écoles de Médecine - Afrique
(COMS-A)
ائتلاف كليات الطب - أفريقيا (COMS-A)

COMS-A 2025

MARCH-DECEMBER

REPORT



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Message from the COMS-A Executive Committee

Dear COMS-A Members, Partners and Well-Wishers,

As we reflect on the period from March to December 2025, we are encouraged by how quickly COMS-A has moved from launch to action. Since our inauguration at MedEdAfrica 2025 in Kigali, where 115 founding member schools from more than 30 countries came together, our membership has grown to over **145 institutions**. This expanding network is strengthening collaboration, advancing curriculum innovation, and supporting a shared agenda for high-quality, contextually relevant medical education across Africa.

During this period, we established the COMS-A Secretariat, appointed standing committees, and began implementing core programs in leadership, faculty development, maternal, newborn and child health, and gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights. This includes development of the COMS-A Leadership Academy and Faculty Development Academy, designation of Regional HPE Training Centers and Africa Centers of Excellence, the launch of SHINE to support women leaders, and collaboration with WHO AFRO on curriculum harmonization. Building on these foundations, we remain committed to service, continuous improvement, and innovation in medical education, contributing to stronger institutions, better learning environments, and a more resilient health workforce for the continent.

In appreciation and solidarity,
COMS-A Executive Committee



COMS-A Milestone timeline

Below is a COMS-A Milestone timeline summarizing major activities month by month. Dates are based on available information, with some activities running across multiple months.

April

- Establishment of the COMS-A Secretariat
- Adoption of COMS-A logo and shared vision for collaboration and curriculum harmonization.
- COMS-A Legal Registration process kick-off
- Initial engagement with WHO AFRO on regional medical curriculum harmonization.
- Launch of data collection from member schools to map programs, capacities, and needs.
- Drive for membership and partnerships expansion

March

- Advancing Medical Education in Africa Conference (MedEdAfrica 2025), 750+ participates, Delegates from 64 countries, 117 Medical Schools from Africa represented.
- Establishment of the Executive Committee comprising of 8 members, voted by the COMS-A Founding members.
- University of Global Health Equity was selected as the Secretariat and institutional home of COMS-A

May

- Ongoing WHO AFRO curriculum review and feedback process.
- Design and planning of the COMS-A Leadership Academy and SHINE fellowship structure.
- Appointment of standing committee members

June

- Development of the Faculty Development Academy model under SHARP-Africa, including design of Regional HPE Training Centers and Africa Centers of Excellence.
- Formation of working groups for MNCH curriculum and simulation-based training.
- Membership expansion, with **22 new universities** joining COMS-A.

July

- Ongoing development of the Faculty Academy Development
- Design of the MedEd2026 Concept Note
- SHARP-Africa Funding Successfully Secured

August

- Ongoing collaboration discussions with partners, including Laerdal Global Health and other stakeholders.
- Launch of survey of Academic Leadership Programs Existence among member institutions

October

- Call for applications for the COMS-A Leadership Academy.
- Call for applications for Regional HPE Training Centers and Africa Centers of Excellence.
- Review of applications for HPE Regional Training Centers and Centers of Excellence.
- Early design of the MGHD GSRH scholarship partnership and MNCH Research Mentorship Program.

December

- COMS-A Secretariat fully operational with additional staffing.
- Consolidation of March-December progress and preparation of the 2025 online report.
- Roll-out planning for 2026 activities, including MNCH and GSRHR scholarship calls, MNCH research grants, and MedEdAfrica 2026 in Addis Ababa.
- Implementation planning for distribution of Laerdal birthing simulators to institutions across 13 countries.
- Membership expansion, with six new universities joining COMS-A.

September

- Successful securing of funding and launch of the SHINE Initiative Fellowship and Women in Leadership Initiative
- Start targeted outreach to expand COMS-A membership.
- Launch of COMS-A Website
- COMS-A First Newsletter Release

November

- Selection and announcement of three Africa Centers of Excellence in HPE for the 2025-2026 cycle and eight Regional HPE Training Centers.
- Continued recruitment for Leadership Academy and SHINE fellows.
- Membership expansion, with seven new universities joining COMS-A.
- Designation and onboarding of COMS-A Champions in multiple African countries.
- Detailed planning for MNCH research mentorship and MGHD GSRH scholarship recruitment

Building a Continental Network of Medical Schools

The Consortium of Medical Schools-Africa (COMS-A) was officially launched in March 2025 during the MedEdAfrica Conference in Kigali, bringing together 115 founding medical schools from over 30 African countries. The launch marked a significant milestone in African medical education, establishing a unified platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action to address long-standing challenges in training the continent's health workforce. Following its launch, COMS-A experienced steady membership growth between March to December 2025, when 37 additional medical schools joined the consortium. These new members further strengthened regional and linguistic representation and demonstrated growing confidence in COMS-A's vision and early implementation efforts.

New Member Institutions

Accra College of Medicine, Ghana

Adama Hospital Medical College, Ethiopia

Babcock University, Nigeria

Bayero University, Nigeria

Bowen University, Nigeria

College of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Ghana

Dire Dawa University, Ethiopia

Edo State University, Iyamho, Nigeria

Federal University, Birnin Kebbi, Nigeria

Federal University, Lokoja, Nigeria

Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria

Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria

Gombe State University, Nigeria

Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria

Jigjiga University, Ethiopia

Kaduna State University, Nigeria

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

Lagos State University, Nigeria

Madonna University Nigeria, Nigeria

Muhibili University, Tanzania

Myungsung Medical College, Ethiopia

Novena University, Nigeria

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Salale University, Ethiopia

Samara University, Ethiopia

Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina, Nigeria

University of Hargeisa, Somalia

University of Ghana Medical School Students Association, Ghana

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa

University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Université Abdou Moumouni de Niamey, Niger

Veritas University Abuja, Nigeria

Wollo University, Ethiopia

Wollega University, Ethiopia

By December 2025, COMS-A's membership had grown to more than 145 medical schools, representing one of the largest continent-wide academic networks dedicated to medical education in Africa. This expanding membership base provides a strong foundation for COMS-A's work in leadership development, faculty development, curriculum harmonization, research collaboration, and advocacy for high-quality, socially accountable medical education.

COMS-A Leadership Academy

Purpose and Rationale

The COMS-A Leadership Academy was developed in response to the critical need for strong, contextually grounded leadership in African medical schools. As institutions face increasing demands related to workforce shortages, curriculum reform, digital transformation, and health equity, the Academy aims to equip current and emerging deans of medical schools with the skills, networks, and strategic vision required to lead sustainable institutional change.

Program Design and Delivery

The Academy is a **nine-month** hybrid program delivered in partnership with the American Association for Physician Leadership (AAPL). It integrates multiple learning modalities, including structured virtual coursework, a one week in person residency, sustained mentorship, and an applied institutional research or change project rooted in each participant's home institution.

Core Learning Domains

Participants engage in a comprehensive curriculum covering

- Foundations of academic and institutional leadership
- Strategic leadership and governance in medical schools
- Financial and resource management
- Change management and institutional transformation
- Research leadership, innovation, and knowledge translation
- Digital transformation and the use of artificial intelligence in education
- Health equity, including gender, sexual and reproductive health, and social medicine

The inaugural call for the COMS-A Leadership Academy generated strong interest, with **64 applications** received from across the continent. This response highlights both the relevance of the program and the demand for leadership development opportunities tailored to the realities of African medical education. The selection process is underway, with successful applicants to be notified as the program moves toward implementation.

The Leadership Academy is a cornerstone of COMS-A's broader leadership and professional development workstream. It complements other initiatives, including the Faculty Development Academy, women's leadership programs, and curriculum harmonization efforts, and contributes to building resilient, well-governed institutions capable of improving the quality and relevance of medical education across Africa.

Strengthening Health Professions Education Program (SHARP-Africa)

The Consortium of Medical Schools-Africa (COMS-A) was officially launched in March 2025 during the MedEdAfrica Conference in Kigali, bringing together 115 founding medical schools from over 30 African countries. The launch marked a significant milestone in African medical education, establishing a unified platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action to address long-standing challenges in training the continent's health workforce. Following its launch, COMS-A experienced steady membership growth between March to December 2025, when 37 additional medical schools joined the consortium. These new members further strengthened regional and linguistic representation and demonstrated growing confidence in COMS-A's vision and early implementation efforts.

Overview and Purpose

The Strengthening Health Professions Education Program (SHARP-Africa) supports a coordinated, pan-African approach to improving the quality and consistency of medical education. The program strengthens training systems so that graduates meet globally aligned competencies while remaining responsive to Africa's priorities, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Establishing the COMS-A Faculty Development Academy

A core component of SHARP-Africa is Work Package 3, which is establishing the COMS-A Faculty Development Academy (FDA) as a driver of educational excellence. The Academy responds to a critical gap across the continent: rapid expansion of training institutions has not been matched by systematic investment in educator preparation. Through the FDA, COMS-A is strengthening faculty capacity in teaching and learning practice, assessment, curriculum development, educational leadership, and quality improvement, enabling institutions to deliver more consistent, competency-based, and socially accountable training.

Implementation Model: Regional HPE Training Centers and Africa Centers of Excellence

To operationalize the Faculty Development Academy, COMS-A implemented a distributed model anchored by regional hubs and advanced training institutions.

Regional HPE Training Centers

COMS-A issued a competitive call for institutions to serve as Africa Regional Reference HPE Training Centers. From 22 applications, eight institutions were selected to lead faculty development across subregions:

- **East Africa:** Adigrat University (Ethiopia), Aga Khan University Nairobi (Kenya), Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (Tanzania)
- **Central Africa:** University of Dschang (Cameroon)
- **West Africa:** University of Abuja (Nigeria), Dan Dicko Dankoulodo University of Maradi (Niger)
- **Southern Africa:** University of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe), Copperbelt University (Zambia)

These centers form the operational backbone of the Faculty Development Academy, supporting faculty training, mentorship, and the spread of effective educational practice across COMS-A member schools.

Africa Centers of Excellence

COMS-A also invited applications for Africa Centers of Excellence, institutions positioned to lead advanced training, mentorship, and innovation in health professions education. Nine medical schools applied for the 2025-2027 cycle. For **2025-2026**, three institutions were selected: University of Global Health Equity (Rwanda), University of Zambia (Zambia), and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (Malawi). Kamuzu will offer a three-year, part-time, fully virtual MSc in Health Professions Education. For 2026-2027, the University of Development Studies (Ghana) will be eligible upon rollout of its blended MSc in HPE program.

Supporting Systems and Continental Alignment

Beyond program delivery, SHARP-Africa strengthens the enabling environment that allows COMS-A to implement at scale. This includes support for coordination mechanisms and shared learning platforms that connect member institutions, accelerate adoption of improved educational approaches, and reinforce quality standards across the network.

Contribution to COMS-A's Continental Agenda

Through the Faculty Development Academy, Regional HPE Training Centers, and Africa Centers of Excellence, SHARP-Africa is strengthening institutional capacity to improve teaching quality, assessment, curriculum implementation, and educational leadership across Africa. These investments lay the groundwork for sustained improvement in health professions education and better preparation of the continent's future health workforce.

SHINE: Supporting Her in Nurturing Excellence

COMS-A advanced the SHINE Initiative, Supporting Her in Nurturing Excellence, a strategic effort designed to expand women's leadership in African medical education while strengthening gender-responsive education and research in **Maternal, Newborn, Child Nutrition and Health (MNCH) and Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (GSRHR)**. SHINE focuses on two interconnected areas of investment: **Women in Leadership (WIL)** and **MNCH and GSRH**.

Strategic Goals

SHINE is designed to:

- Increase the number of women leading African medical schools and health systems
- Create a continental data set on women in leadership and academia
- Expand access to high-quality, locally led leadership development and peer networks
- Build a cohort of African experts in gender, SRHR, and MNCH research and education
- Integrate MNCH, SRHR, and simulation-based training into pre-service medical curricula

Rationale

SHINE is grounded in evidence that women's leadership strengthens institutional performance and equity, and that stronger, gender-responsive medical education is essential for resilient health systems.

The initiative also responds to the disproportionate burden of maternal and child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa, strengthening the case for more consistent, high-quality MNCH and GSRHR education across medical schools.

Women in Leadership Initiative

Targeting women deans and emerging leaders, SHINE provides mentorship, leadership training, and opportunities to implement gender-equity initiatives across COMS-A member institutions. The initiative is structured to combine leadership development with practical institutional change and continent-wide peer connection.

Strategic Goals

- A **pilot fellowship for eight women leaders**, providing leadership training and guidance from senior mentors
- Long-term mentor-mentee relationships supported through structured coaching and monitoring
- A baseline continental study mapping leadership pathways and gaps across member schools
- Development of a **continental database tracking at least 200 emerging women leaders**

- Implementation of **gender equity projects** by fellows, supported by a peer-learning community that enables networking, shared learning, and dissemination of effective practices across the continent
- **Expected Impact:** The Women in Leadership Initiative is expected to strengthen leadership capacity, improve gender equity in medical education leadership, build sustainable mentorship networks, and establish a structured pipeline of emerging women leaders across Africa.

Maternal and Child Health Through Medical Education

COMS-A is strengthening Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (GSRHR) education across Africa through a coordinated set of education, leadership, and research investments designed to build institutional capacity and develop champions within member schools.

Key elements include

- **15 scholarships** for the Master of Global Health Delivery (MGHD) program with a focus on **Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health (GSRH) and MNCH**, delivered in collaboration with the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), preparing faculty and health professionals to lead gender-responsive education and health systems improvements
- Establishment of the **COMS-A MNCH Research Mentorship Program**, identifying **10 early-career women researchers** and providing structured mentorship, foundational research training, and **research funding** to conduct locally relevant, equity-driven MNCH and GSRHR research projects
- A continental approach to strengthening MNCH education through standardized competencies, shared teaching resources, and faculty development support
- Expanded use of skills labs and simulation-based training to build practical competency in high-impact MNCH scenarios, strengthening emergency response skills and team-based learning in pre-service education

Together, these investments strengthen the quality and relevance of MNCH and GSRHR education while building a pipeline of researchers and educators equipped to improve maternal and child health outcomes across the continent.

Appreciation

We sincerely thank our partners for their continued and significant support and collaboration in advancing COMS-A's mission across Africa. Your engagement has been instrumental to our progress, and we look forward to achieving even greater milestones together.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to COMS-A members for your ongoing collaboration and support. Your contributions across COMS-A programs have been essential to advancing our shared mission. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and look forward to delivering even greater impact together.

Call to Action

COMS-A will prioritize outreach to strengthen representation of medical schools across Africa, expanding collaboration and ensuring broader participation in COMS-A initiatives. Medical schools and partners can join COMS-A or engage in its programs by contacting secretariat@coms-africa.org or submitting a membership application through the [COMS-A Membership Form](#).



Scan to register as a new COMS-A member



The University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) hosts the COMS-A Secretariat and serves as the consortium's institutional home.