

Newsletter



COMS-A

March 2026 | Email: secretariat@coms-africa.org | Website: coms-africa.org

Heures d'ouverture: 8 h 00 - 17 h 00 | Kigali Heights, KG 7 Ave, 5th Floor | PO Box 6955, Kigali

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

Message from Leadership



Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

As COMS-A marks its first year, we reflect on a period of rapid growth, strengthened collaboration, and increasing continental momentum. Over the past quarter alone, we have advanced governance, launched flagship leadership and faculty development programs, and expanded opportunities for research and partnership across our network. These developments signal a shared commitment among Africa's medical schools to advance health professions education and prepare future generations of health leaders.

We warmly invite our members and partners to remain actively engaged, contribute their expertise, and help shape the next phase of this African-led movement. Together, we can continue building a stronger and more connected community of medical education leaders across the continent.

With appreciation,

Dr. Salma Abdi Mahmoud
Deputy Secretary General, COMS-A

Year 1 Impact Snapshot



32

Countries
Represented



164

Member Institutions
(up from 115)



41

Deans enrolled in
Leadership Academy



20+

Faculty in
HPE training



10

Maternal, Newborn,
and Child Health
Female Faculty
Researchers



41

Continental programs
launched across 5
priority areas



Planning
underway for
MedEdAfrica
2026

Quarter 1 Highlights (Jan-March 2026)



- Convened the COMS-A Executive Committee to guide strategic priorities for 2026
- Successfully launched flagship programs:
 - Leadership Academy
 - Women in Leadership Program
 - Faculty Development Academy
 - Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Research Initiative
- Advanced continental coordination across member institutions
- Strengthened engagement with partners and stakeholders
- Initiated key planning milestones for MedEdAfrica 2026

Membership Growth & Engagement

Over the past year, COMS-A has grown from 115 to 164 member institutions, including 24 new institutions in this quarter alone—reflecting both the demand for a unified platform and the trust placed in COMS-A as a continental convening body.

Beyond growth in numbers, we have prioritized meaningful engagement—bringing institutions together through:

- Strategic consultations and committee participation
- Collaborative program design and implementation
- Opportunities for research, mentorship, and knowledge exchange

As we continue to expand, linguistic inclusion is a key priority for COMS-A's next phase of growth. With members across Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone contexts, we are committed to strengthening bilingual and multilingual engagement across our communications, programs, and convenings. This will ensure that COMS-A remains accessible, representative, and truly continental—enabling deeper collaboration and participation across all regions of Africa.

This growth reflects more than expansion—it represents a strengthening continental network actively shaping the future of medical education in Africa.

Program Spotlights

Leadership Academy & Women in Leadership Program

Fellowship includes:

- Interactive synchronous leadership sessions
- Intensive in-person convening in Addis Ababa (July 2026)
- Mentored quality improvement project aligned with institutional priorities
- Integrated leadership content on gender equity, sexual & reproductive health, and inclusion

Building Africa’s Leadership Pipeline

- 41 Deans selected from 15 countries, including 9 women Deans
- Officially launched on March 12, 2026
- Delivered in partnership with the American Association for Physician Leadership

The Women in Leadership Fellowship is a dedicated initiative to advance gender equity in academic leadership. The program combines:

- One-on-one mentorship with experienced women leaders
- Targeted sessions on gender-responsive leadership
- A platform to strengthen visibility and advancement of women in academic medicine

Looking Ahead: Emerging Women Leaders

In the next phase, COMS-A is developing an Emerging Leaders track for future cohorts—focused on supporting early- and mid-career women leaders across African medical schools. This next phase will further strengthen the leadership pipeline and expand opportunities for inclusive leadership development across the continent.

Mentor Spotlight: Women in Leadership Program

“The Women in Leadership initiative is important, as it will provide support and mentorship for women leaders in academia to help them to lead effectively as women who carry many responsibilities beyond academia.”

Dr. Fiona Makoni
Executive Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
University of Zimbabwe



Health Professions Education (HPE) & Faculty Development



Strengthening the quality of HPE is central to building a resilient and future-ready health workforce. COMS-A is supporting a coordinated, continent-wide approach to advancing teaching, learning, and academic leadership.

A continental approach to training:

- 3 Centers of Excellence
- 8 Regional Centers
- 20+ faculty supported in HPE Master’s programs

Centers of Excellence:

- University of Global Health Equity
- University of Zambia
- Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

What this program enables:

- Building a critical mass of trained HPE leaders
- Strengthening teaching and curriculum design capacity
- Supporting the shift toward competency-based education frameworks

Towards Harmonized HPE Curriculum in Africa

A key strategic priority is the development of a harmonized and contextually relevant HPE framework across Africa. Efforts include:

- Existing postgraduate HPE programs across the continent are being mapped
- Opportunities for alignment and standardization are being identified
- Foundational elements of a shared curriculum framework are being explored

HPE Candidate Spotlight

“As a child neurologist in Cameroon, developing HPE skills is critical for an effective transmission of competences to upgrade health professionals’ abilities to respond to neurological emergencies and improve children’s outcomes.”

Dr. Dominique Enyama
 Child Neurologist, University of Dschang, Cameroon
 Candidate, Master of Science in Health Professions Education



Research & MNCH Mentored Program

Building a Pan-African Research Platform

The MNCH Mentored Research Program supports 10 early- and mid-career female faculty

Through structured mentorship and multi-institutional collaboration. In its launch, the program:

- Pairs participants with experienced mentors from across Africa and globally
- Supports the development of rigorous research protocols aligned with MNCH priorities
- Provides guidance through implementation, analysis, and dissemination
- Fosters cross-institutional collaboration and peer learning

Through its research strategy, COMS-A aims to:

- Supporting multi-country and multi-institutional studies
- Strengthening research design, methodology, and implementation capacity
- Promoting timely dissemination through publications, conferences, and policy engagement
- Aligning research outputs with continental health priorities and decision-making needs

Beyond MNCH, COMS-A is advancing research across:

- Medical school mapping and institutional capacity
- Leadership and governance pathways
- Gender equity and inclusion
- Health professions education systems
- Simulation and digital transformation
- Evaluation of COMS-A program impact

Research & Innovations Spotlight

“A true catalyst for our medical schools, by uniting our experiences and the rich diversity of our continent, COMS-A is an invaluable platform that pools our expertise. It transforms our daily challenges into drivers of collaborative research and is essential for building resilient health systems and training health-care professionals capable of innovating within the realities of Africa.”

Prof. Harissou Adamou
 Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, André Salifou University, Zinder, Niger
 Member, COMS-A Research & Innovations Committee



Transformative Technologies and Innovation

Simulation-Based Education

COMS-A is advancing simulation-based education as a critical pillar of health professions training across Africa. Through emerging programming and partnerships, we are supporting:

- Integration of simulation into medical curricula
- Capacity building for faculty in simulation-based teaching
- Development of regional communities of practice
- Alignment of simulation with competency-based education frameworks

This work is central to improving clinical training quality, patient safety, and workforce readiness across diverse training environments.



One Space Africa (OSA) - Digital Vision

One Space Africa (OSA) will serve as a **continental digital platform** connecting institutions, educators, and learners—enabling collaboration, knowledge exchange, and scalable innovation across Africa’s medical education ecosystem.

A full unveiling will take place at MedEdAfrica 2026.

Crosscutting: Gender, Sexual & Reproductive Health, Equity & Inclusion COMS-A is embedding Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health (GSRH), Equity, and Inclusion across all programs—ensuring that leadership development, education, and research are grounded in inclusive, equity-driven approaches. Rather than being addressed in isolation, GSRH is integrated across flagship initiatives, including the Leadership Academy and Health.

Professions Education (HPE) programs, through focused modules on:

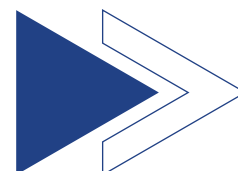
- Gender and health systems (social determinants, intersectionality, human rights)
- GSRH in education and service delivery (equity, access, and representation in academia and care)
- Leadership and gender in health (transformational leadership and addressing structural barriers)

Building Capacity in GSRH

COMS-A is currently supporting the selection of 15 COMS-A faculty for the Master of Science in Global Health Delivery (MGHD) at the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), within the GSRH track. By embedding GSRH and equity across all areas of work, COMS-A is ensuring that:

- Leadership pathways are inclusive and representative
- Training programs are contextually relevant and socially responsive
- Research and innovation reflect the realities and needs of diverse populations

Equity is not an add-on—it is foundational to how COMS-A designs, delivers, and scales impact across Africa.



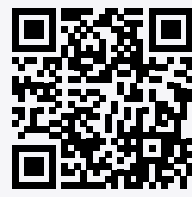
Spotlight:
MedEdAfrica 2026 - Addis Ababa

Africa's premier convening for medical education leaders.

📍 Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

📅 July 6-8, 2026

📅 COMS-A Deans Annual General Meeting: July 5, 2026



Register and submit your abstracts here!

Abstract deadline: April 30, 2026
800+ expected participants

MedEdAfrica 2026 will convene leaders, educators, policymakers, and partners from across the continent and beyond under the theme:

“Preparing Africa’s Health Workforce for an Uncertain Future: Harnessing Partnerships, Technology, Innovation, and Leadership.”

This landmark convening will:

- Showcase African-led innovations in medical education
- Strengthen regional and global partnerships
- Advance dialogue on workforce development and health systems transformation

Participation, abstract submissions, and partnership opportunities are now open. Abstracts are welcomed until April 30, 2026 under the following sub-topics:

- Leadership, governance, African ownership, and partnerships for health workforce and systems transformation
- Transformative Technologies, AI, Innovation, and Simulation-based Education in Medical Education
- Towards a Healthier Africa: Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (MNCH), Gender, Sexual & Reproductive Health, and Health Systems Strengthening
- Learner-Centered Systems: Assessment and Accreditation





Governance & Secretariat Update

Executive Committee Meeting | February 27-28, 2026 | Mombasa, Kenya



The COMS-A Executive Committee convened in Mombasa, Kenya, bringing together leadership from across the consortium to set strategic priorities and strengthen governance for the year ahead.

Key Resolutions & Strategic Directions

The meeting resulted in several major resolutions that will shape COMS-A's next phase of growth:

- Digital Transformation adopted as a strategic pillar
- Linguistic Inclusion Framework approved
- Simulation Technical Working Group established
- Transformative Technology Technical Working Group established
- Strategic partnership approved for OSA
- Continued strengthening of the Secretariat

These resolutions reflect COMS-A's transition into a more structured, strategic, and systems-driven organization—positioned to scale impact across Africa.

Looking Ahead

COMS-A is transitioning from foundation-building to scale. Key priorities in the coming months include:

- Advancing digital transformation, including the development of One Space Africa (OSA) as a continental platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Strengthening linguistic inclusion, with the rollout of a framework to support equitable engagement across all regions
- Launching the COMS-A Student Engagement Platform, creating a more structured and institution-linked approach to student participation
- Expanding faculty development and HPE harmonization efforts, including convening leaders at MedEdAfrica 2026
- Scaling research and MNCH initiatives, with a focus on multi-country studies and program impact evaluation
- Advancing simulation-based education, including centers of excellence, curriculum alignment, and regional capacity building

As COMS-A continues to grow, the focus remains on building a connected, inclusive, and Africa-led ecosystem—one that strengthens institutions, empowers leaders, and advances health outcomes across the continent.

Year 2 marks a shift from foundation-building to acceleration—driven by partnership, innovation, and shared purpose.

Get Involved

As COMS-A enters its second year, we invite members, partners, and stakeholders to engage with us:

- Join multi-country research collaborations
- Partner with COMS-A to scale continental programs
- Engage in MedEdAfrica 2026 (submit, speak, or sponsor)

Be part of shaping the future of health professions education in Africa.

Thanks to our partners!

As we celebrate the milestones of COMS-A's first year, we extend our deepest gratitude to the partners, funders, and collaborators who have fueled this African-led movement to transform medical education, helping us grow from 115 to 164 member institutions across 32 countries. Your unwavering support and commitment enabled the successful launch of flagship programs. As COMS-A transitions from foundation-building to acceleration in Year 2, we look forward to deepening our collaboration on scaling research and MNCH initiatives, advancing digital transformation, and convening leaders at MedEdAfrica 2026 in Addis Ababa, and we invite you to continue partnering with us to shape the future of health professions education in Africa.



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Stay Connected

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Together, we are uniting Africa's medical schools for a healthier future.