

## Africa CDC AU Bingwa Initiative at the AFENET Conference 2023

### Concept Note on the

### Workshop on Youth and Digital Public Health Interventions

#### Background

Young people all over the world have eagerly embraced technology as a way to obtain information and communicate with others. Mobile phones are possibly the most popular technology in the world and use has increased dramatically in the past decade. Eight in 10 people in developing countries own a mobile phone (though this varies by region), with many of those phones connected to the internet. Youth are often the most avid users of technology – while twenty percent of youth own mobile phones, only 8 percent of those over 45 do<sup>1</sup>.

Many social media tools are available for health care professionals, including social networking platforms, blogs, microblogs, wikis, media-sharing sites, and virtual reality and gaming environments. These tools can be used to improve or enhance professional networking and education, organizational promotion, patient care, patient education, and public health programs.

International health organizations are considering ways to leverage new information and communication technologies (ICTs)—such as Web sites, SMS/text messaging, video games, and mass media (radio/television shows)—to improve reproductive health care and to broaden access to educational materials available to the young people who need them most. While the potential of technology to reach new and more diverse audiences with information is clear, evaluations of these programs have provided mixed evidence of impact. While there is some evidence of changes in attitudes and knowledge as a result of exposure to technology-based interventions, there is less evidence of how these translate into longer-term behavioral change.

Recognizing the power of technology in improving healthcare outcomes, especially in low and middle-income countries and the increasing penetration of mobile phones and other digital technologies in Africa, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) ceasds the unique opportunity to harness this potential and improve health outcomes for all Africans by launching its ***Digital Transformation Strategy to revolutionize and strengthen Public Health systems across the continent***. This strategy has two main strategic objectives: making Africa CDC an informatics-savvy institution and positioning Africa CDC to support African Union's Member States in strengthening their public health systems. To achieve these goals, Africa CDC has developed 10 flagship initiatives, ranging from connecting all Africa's health facilities, to promoting homegrown HealthTech innovation and including more women in the fast-growing digital health sector.

“Africa's growing digital native population combined with increased penetration of digital technologies and literacy present a historic opportunity to rethink how health interventions are designed and delivered.

#### Aim/Goal

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<sup>1</sup> Ref...

The workshop on "*Youth and Digital Public Health Interventions*" is a dynamic and interactive session that aims to engage young leaders in exploring the potential of digital technology and young people's contribution in advancing public health initiatives. Hosted at the margins of the AFENET (African Field Epidemiology Network) Public Health Conference, this workshop will create a platform for youth to learn, collaborate, and develop innovative approaches to address health challenges in their communities using digital tools and platforms leveraging on the success by the AU Bingwa initiative and other youth programs at Africa CDC.

### **Objectives**

1. To empower participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively leverage digital technology for public health interventions specifically those that target youth.
2. To encourage youth-led innovation and creativity in developing and implementing digital health solutions.
3. To promote networking and collaboration among young leaders in the field of digital public health.
4. Come up with a working paper on youth, technology, and health

### **Date and Venue**

- Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Time: Full day (08am – 06pm)
- Venue: Pride Inn Paradise Beach Resort Convention Centre & SPA, Mombasa, Kenya

### **Target Audience**

The workshop targets all public health leaders including young individuals aged 18 to 35 years, who have a keen interest in public health, digital technology, and community development. Participants will include students, young professionals, community leaders, Public health experts and aspiring public health innovators from diverse backgrounds.

We expect about 100 participants.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

1. Increased awareness and understanding of the potential of digital health interventions among youth participants.
2. Enhanced skills in designing, implementing, and evaluating digital health solutions for public health challenges; and draft of a working paper on youth, technology and health
3. Strengthened networking and collaboration among young leaders in the field of digital public health.

4. Encouraged youth-led innovation and initiatives to address public health issues using digital platforms.

### **Proposed Agenda:**

#### ***1. Welcome and Icebreaker Activities (30 minutes)***

- Introduction to the workshop objectives and expectations
- Icebreaker activities to foster networking and a welcoming environment

#### ***2. Exploring the Landscape of Digital Public Health Interventions (60 minutes)***

- Overview of digital health innovations and their impact on public health in Africa
- Showcasing successful digital health interventions led by youth across the continent
- Discussing challenges and opportunities in leveraging digital tools for public health at the community level

#### ***3. Interactive Sessions: Building Digital Health Skills (120 minutes)***

##### **a. Designing Effective Digital Health Interventions (60 minutes)**

- Identifying public health challenges and potential solutions using digital tools
- Group activity: Developing a mock digital health intervention for a specific health issue

##### **b. Communication and Engagement Strategies (60 minutes)**

- Effective communication through social media, websites, and mobile applications
- Hands-on exercise: Crafting engaging health messages for digital platforms

#### ***4. Ethical and Legal Considerations in Digital Public Health (45 minutes)***

- Introduction to ethical principles and guidelines for digital health interventions
- Addressing privacy, data security, and informed consent in the digital context

**5. Collaboration and Partnerships (45 minutes)**

- The importance of collaboration and networking in digital health initiatives
- Opportunities for youth to engage with organizations and stakeholders in the public health sector

**6. Showcasing Youth-Led Digital Health Innovations (60 minutes)**

- Selected youth innovators present their digital health projects and initiatives
- Q&A session and interactive feedback from the audience

**7. Wrap-up and Action Planning (30 minutes)**

- Participant reflections and key takeaways from the workshop
- Group activity: Creating an action plan for implementing digital health interventions in participants' communities

**Conclusion**

The workshop on "Youth and Digital Public Health Interventions" at the margins of the AFENET Public Health Conference seeks to empower young leaders to drive positive change in public health using digital innovations. By engaging youth in this transformative experience, we aim to foster a generation of public health innovators who can contribute significantly to improving health outcomes in Africa through digital solutions.