AMREF HEALTH AFRICA GLOBAL YOUTH AND ADOLESCENT STRATEGY 2021-2022

ABOVE BEYOND

WITH AFRICA’S GIANTS
AMREF HEALTH AFRICA YOUTH AND ADOLESCENT STRATEGY (2021-2022)

“Collaborative Youth Leadership for Lasting Health Change in Africa”
Without the full participation of half of the world population, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and world peace is going to be a dream rather than a reality.

Jayathma Wickramanayake,
UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth
The youth of Africa are our continent’s biggest resource. With the immense potential of over 420 million young people aged between 15 and 35 years (35% of Africa’s population), Africa can only be transformed by developing a healthy youth population, as the basis for human capital development.

Amref Health Africa is thus increasing its focus and investments in addressing the most pressing health needs of this audience.

As the largest indigenous non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Africa, Amref Health Africa is committed to improving the lives of the most marginalised people in Africa. Amref Health Africa’s programmes have a broad reach in 35 countries in the continent, with an annual reach of over 10 million people. Our work has been hinged on ensuring ‘Lasting Health Change in Africa’ through sustainable health access, increasing investments in service delivery and providing solutions in human resource development for health.
Amref Health Africa is embracing a transformation, where its overarching mandate, leadership, strategies, programmes and operations are youth-centric and happen with, for and by the youth.

The Youth and Adolescent Strategy, will be the basis of a paradigm shift in our work:

- To grow our niche in adolescent and youth programming and respond more effectively to the needs of adolescents and youth in Africa
- To drive agility in the organisation and spur innovation (social and technological)
- To initiate a culture shift that is youth-centric and acknowledges the value of youth in leadership and decision making processes, for adaptability to the changing global trends
- To harness growing opportunities for strategic partnerships on youth and adolescent programming globally.

The Youth and Adolescent Strategy is set for a 2-year period (2021 – 2022), in line with our corporate strategy. It’s implementation will further inform the next phase of Amref Health Africa’s corporate strategy, ensuring that we are youth-inclusive and youth-centric; working with the youth, for the youth!
According to the World Health Organisation, there is at least a 10 to 1 benefit to cost ratio with health, economic and social dividends for investments in young people. This includes the development of human capital and the reduction of disease incidence and preventable death.
Africa oh Africa, the world’s youngest continent!
With almost 60% of its people aged below 25 years, Africa is home to the world’s youngest population. This is an asset! It represents a huge workforce in waiting, one that must be nurtured and protected Above and Beyond. Now more than ever, youth are actively dismantling barriers to development and social justice through innovation and accountability in a way that only young people can.

The Amref Health Africa Youth and Adolescent Strategy will operationalise the dynamism that young people hold to help solve our most pressing issues in Africa and the world - making space for young people to have meaningful engagement and participation in the design and delivery of solutions that are relevant and will resonate on this dear continent we call Africa.

Amref Health Africa, by launching this strategy, is taking the major step to play its role in youth innovation, leadership and participation.

Africa will be transformed through a solid foundation for Human Capital development. This can only be achieved by creating an enabling environment which cultivates and equips its young population. As Kailash Satyarthi states, “No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm, and courage of the young people.”

The power and influence of young people goes far beyond the spaces we have created for their participation. This strategy will be a refreshing change in recognising that young people are drivers of change, they create solutions for our communities and leave imprints for others to follow.

Too many times young people ask themselves, “how can I execute my potential?” This strategy is an answer to that question, by the youth for the youth!
Amref Health Africa has worked with communities in Africa for over 6 decades. We have long believed in programme designs that speak to our Ubuntu spirit of shared humanity. In short – we listen and act.

We have listened and identified the need to increase our response to young people in Africa, our continent’s largest demographic. While we have worked with adolescents and youth over the past few years, indeed, this is an opportune time to elevate the youth agenda and work with young people in a way that has never been done before; with young people at the core of our work. A first of its kind, the Amref Health Africa Global Youth and Adolescent Strategy embodies the firm belief that adolescents and youth have what it takes to fundamentally shift the health and socio-economic landscape of the continent.

While developing this strategy, a key highlight was the consultative discussions with youth leaders from the Youth4UHC Movement Regional Council and the Y-ACT Youth Steering Committee. The youth leaders provided insights to the development of a future-flex and adaptable strategy, to enable us serve young people whilst addressing emerging global trends. Discussions with partners and stakeholders further highlighted the need for Amref Health Africa to focus on its internal culture. Ensuring that our programmes, leadership and operations are youth-centric will enable us serve adolescents and youth in our communities better.

Even more exciting about this strategy, is that it paves the way for us to elevate discussions on data driven action, innovation and harnessing digital technology to increase access to health care for the growing youth population.

Our vision is for young people to take up leadership and ownership of this strategy; where young people feel proud to work for Amref Health Africa, and that youth in the communities we serve identify with the organisation because of our belief in their capabilities. Thus, it goes without saying that despite the excitement in realising the implementation of this two-year global youth & adolescent strategy, we will endeavour to draw meaningful lessons that will inform our subsequent corporate strategy to be youth-inclusive and youth-centric!
YOUTH
AFRICA’S BIGGEST RESOURCE
Young people in Africa remain disproportionately left behind in health and social development, including having a higher risk of HIV infection, experiencing early and unwanted pregnancies, higher risk of maternal deaths among adolescents, increased incidences of mental health illness, and increased barriers to health care access.

Even more crucial is the lack of information and awareness about their rights, empowerment to exercise their rights, and inclusion to influence decisions that affect them. The youth are barely involved in policy formulation and program design, as their participation in decision-making is limited and often ad hoc.

Further, one-third of the 420 million youth aged 15-35 years in Africa are unemployed and discouraged, another third are vulnerably employed, and only one in six is in wage employment. Far too many young people struggle to access public resources and quality social services.
STRATEGY PILLARS AND FOCUS AREAS:

Vision

1. Advance youth agency in the health agenda.

2. Promote data driven action for youth-led programmes and policies.

3. Maximise youth potential and minimise vulnerabilities in health through programming, learning and strategic partnerships.

Collaborative youth leadership for lasting health change in Africa

- Youth at the center
- Internal structure and culture
- Knowledge management systems
- Strategic partnerships and value addition
What does success look like for our youth & adolescent strategy?

**Advance Youth Agency in the Health Agenda**

- Increased youth-staff ratio within Amref Health Africa and ratio of youth holding management/leadership positions; increased number of youth participating in decision making in the organisation.

- Institutional Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) framework to initiate a youth-centric culture in all organisational policy development and operational processes.

- Increased investments for youth-led initiatives and programmes in the organisation.

**Promote Data Driven Action for Youth-led Programmes and Policies**

- Global knowledge management platform for youth and adolescents’ models and resources by Amref Health Africa.

- An Adolescent and Youth Global Think Tank to generate and document evidence, to inform youth programming and policies in Africa.

- Partnerships established to advance knowledge management and research to establish trends and priorities for adolescent and youth policy and programming in Africa.
What does success look like for our youth & adolescent strategy?

Maximise Youth Potential and Minimise Youth Vulnerabilities

• Technology and digital platforms designed with and for the youth to break barriers and accelerate access to health information and health services.

• Increased meaningful collaboration between young people and policy makers in Africa, for robust investments and stronger accountability for youth and adolescent policies and to grow the human capital index in Africa.

• Improved health indicators among adolescents and youth, by addressing sexual and gender based violence, early and forced child marriage, teenage pregnancies, female genital mutilation, while investing in programmes that maximise adolescents’ and youth’ potential, including access to contraception use and agency, gender equality, nutrition, mental health support, prevention and management of HIV.

• Inclusion of youth and adolescents at community level in the design, implementation and monitoring of programs, ensuring representation of diverse youth and adolescents from the communities that we serve.

• Strategic partnerships fostered with organisations focusing on the intersection of health and social determinants of health, including economic empowerment for the youth to attain their full life potential.

• Augment our partnership model and activate engagements with the private sector, civil society, governments and media to leverage digital technology, innovation and increase demand for stronger health investments for adolescents and youth.
DRIVERS
OF THE STRATEGY
The Drivers of the Youth and Adolescent Strategy:

Futures’ scenario setting: Horizon 2030

What inherent influences would push the youth population from their current state into another? And what would shape Africa’s youth demographic in 2030?

To inform this, the strategy development process involved a futures’ scenario setting process, consultations with youth and thought leaders across the region and beyond, and a PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) analysis of young people’s environment.

The synthesis of this process produced more than two dozen possible drivers for the future of young people, later summarised into four drivers, with a horizon timeline of 2030.
STRATEGY PILLAR 1:
ADVANCE YOUTH AGENCY IN THE HEALTH AGENDA
Strategic Pillar 1: Advance Youth Agency in the Health Agenda

Youth agency enables young people to become the architects of their own lives. It includes both the desire and ability to make decisions and drive change. Societies have a responsibility to create an enabling environment for the full realisation of youth’s agency, both collectively and as individuals.

Meaningful engagement of youth goes beyond giving them a voice; it empowers them to tap into their agency to effect change.

It is two-fold:

- First, transforming systems and institutions to enable youth leadership and participation. This includes creating spaces where influence is grounded in young people’s agency and rights, which enables them to shape and implement needed policies and programs.
- Second, it includes inter-generational collaboration and support, to allow skills sharing and resource mobilisation for more sustainable efforts.

The participation of young people in decision-making is protected by international human rights law. The United Nations General Assembly “calls upon all States to promote and ensure the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for youth ... [empowering] them to contribute as active members of society to the political, civil, economic, social and cultural development of their countries’. This resolution not only advocates for the involvement of young people but insists on active and informed action for social and economic benefit.
KEY ACTIONS:

- Increase investments in capacity strengthening of youth in leadership, governance and advocacy, to advance their agency and influence youth policy and programming in the health agenda.

- Catalyse youth leadership and institutionalise meaningful youth engagement (MYE) and youth representation across all organisational levels. This will be done through MYE frameworks and providing platforms and safe spaces for youth inclusion and representation in organisational processes.

- Culture shift: initiate a culture that facilitates youth agency (desire and ability to make decisions) on matters affecting the youth, a culture that enables innovation, and takes into consideration work dynamics of different generations including millennials, for stronger outcomes.
STRATEGY PILLAR 2:
PROMOTE DATA DRIVEN ACTION FOR YOUTH-LED PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES
A data-driven approach for adolescents and youth programming will catalyse strategic decisions based on evidence, data analysis and interpretation, and contextualise policies and programmes to the priorities and needs of adolescents and youth.

A central knowledge management platform to aggregate the various efforts and initiatives centred around young people in Africa will inform interventions for adolescents and youth while correcting assumptions made based on geography, age, gender, et cetera.
• Establish a **knowledge management platform**: document evidence on youth and adolescent models from past and existing programmes; use data and evidence to inform and build robust programmes with and for the youth.

• Set up a **global adolescent and youth think-tank**: establish strategic partnerships, generate and harness evidence on adolescents’ and youth’ health priorities in Africa. This will include data-driven innovation platforms and social enterprises that respond to the health needs of adolescents and youth.

• Strengthen **documentation, monitoring, evaluation and learning** for adolescent and youth focused programmes, and deliberately **measure responsiveness** of interventions to their needs.

• **Strengthen thought leadership** on adolescents and youth work at a regional and global level. Through our convening power, become a unifying voice for stakeholders’ influence on adolescents and youth policies and programmes.
STRATEGY PILLAR 3: 
MAXIMISE YOUTH POTENTIAL AND MINIMISE VULNERABILITIES IN HEALTH THROUGH PROGRAMMES, LEARNING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
A safe, healthy passage from adolescence into adulthood is the right of every child. Families and societies have a responsibility to ensure that adolescents and youth acquire the knowledge and skills required to lead productive and fulfilling lives. However, a significant proportion of young people still grapple with inequality, poverty, and human rights violations. Consequently, this keeps them from attaining their personal and collective potential.

Health concerns for young people are primarily geared towards ensuring their survival, proper transition to adulthood, and thriving livelihoods.

There is a need to focus on:

- Individual interventions (self-care and health literacy) to break barriers and accelerate access to health services and information.

- Health system strengthening including improvements in quality of health care and provider capacity, balanced with institutional improvements such as advocacy for quality, accessible and affordable care. For health care to be effectively beneficial to young people, system inefficiencies, including those that have been exposed to the COVID-19 pandemic, must be addressed.

- Community strengthening interventions to mitigate and end retrogressive social norms and practices that inhibit young people from attaining their full potential.
Increase investments and foster strategic partnerships for the use of technology, digital platforms and innovation (including self-care platforms) to break barriers to and accelerate youth access to health information and services.

Strengthen youth and adolescent programmes to address sexual and gender based violence, early and forced child marriage, teenage pregnancies, and female genital mutilation. Invest in programmes that maximise adolescents’ and youth’ potential, including access to contraception use and agency, gender equality, nutrition, mental health support, prevention and management of HIV.

Increase meaningful collaboration between young people and policy makers in Africa, for robust investments and stronger accountability for youth and adolescent policies and to grow the human capital index in Africa.

Provide platforms for the inclusion of young people from communities that we work with, to participate as partners in health programming and programme accountability mechanisms, acknowledging the diversity of young people.

Establish strategic partnerships to address the intersection of health and social determinants of health, including economic empowerment of youth and adolescents, for them to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Grow and accelerate capacity building of grassroots youth organisations and youth in organisational development, advocacy, participation in decision making, and skill development for sustainability of youth programmes.

Continue to uphold organisational Child Protection Policies to ensure the rights of adolescents are prioritised in programming.

Augment our partnership model and activate engagements with the private sector, civil society, governments and media to leverage digital technology, innovation and increase demand for stronger health investments for adolescents and youth.
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION: 3 HORIZONS

HORIZON 1
MAINTAIN CORE BUSINESS

- Increase capacity strengthening of youth in leadership, governance, advocacy to inform policy and programming.
- Knowledge management: harness data and evidence to inform the design and implementation of robust youth-centric initiatives.
- Increase investments in programming to address vulnerabilities of adolescents and youth and maximise their potential.

HORIZON 2
HARNESS EMERGING BUSINESS

- Catalyse youth leadership in decision making to influence policy and programming.
- Institutionalise meaningful youth engagement: youth inclusion/representation in all organisational processes and leadership.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation for adolescent and youth focused programmes – deliberately measure responsiveness to their needs.
- Establish platforms for youth to leverage digital technology and artificial intelligence to inform/design policies and programmes.

HORIZON 3
CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

- Culture shift: facilitate youth-centric culture and 'out of the box' organisational processes to spur innovation.
- Youth and Adolescents Think Tank: establish strategic partnerships, generate and harness evidence on adolescents' and youth' priorities to inform policies and programmes.
- Establish strategic partnerships to address the intersection of health, digital literacy and economic empowerment of the youth.
FRAMEWORKS THAT UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTMENTS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

GLOBAL

• Youth 2030: United Nations Youth Strategy (2018)

• The Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September 2015, which demonstrates a focus on youth as part of the new global development agenda.

• Youth Sector-Wide Action Plan in 2013, which builds on the World Programme of Action for Youth and is led by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

REGIONAL

• Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2015)
• The African Youth Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2012)
• The African Youth Charter (entered into force in 2009)
• African Youth Decade (2009-2018) – Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development
• African Union Year of the African Youth – 2008
The following overarching implementation framework is proposed for the Amref Health Africa Youth and Adolescent Strategy (2021-2022). Targets will be developed during the implementation phase, by respective country and national offices, the youth, and our partners, based on the context of each region and acknowledging the diversity of youth and adolescents in the communities that we work with.

### 1. ADVANCE YOUTH AGENCY IN THE HEALTH AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar 1</th>
<th>Advance youth agency in the health agenda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Amref Health Africa, its stakeholders and partners adopt and implement youth-centric approaches in the health agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td>➔ Increased youth staff ratio within Amref Health Africa and ratio of youth holding management/leadership positions in the organization. ➔ Increased number of youth participating in decision making in the organisation’s operations, programming and policy development processes. ➔ Increased investments for youth and adolescent led initiatives and programmes in Africa by Amref Health Africa. ➔ Institutional Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) framework to initiate a youth-centric culture in all Amref Health Africa’s policy development and operational processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>➔ Invest in capacity strengthening of youth in leadership, management and governance (self, teams, business) within Amref Health Africa. ➔ Provide platforms and safe spaces at Amref Health Africa for youth to participate in programming and decision making processes within the organization and to have their voice heard on organisational processes and policies. ➔ Adopt platforms to work with the youth in our communities (ensuring adequate representation of youth in all their diversity) to design youth-focused and youth led programmes that address priorities of young people in Africa. ➔ Accelerate strategic partnerships for resource mobilization and sustainability of youth and adolescent initiatives and programmes by Amref Health Africa. ➔ Adopt a framework to track Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) in the organisation’s operations, processes and policy development through an institutional MYE framework. ➔ Initiate a culture shift/work environment that facilitates innovation, harnesses technology and fosters ‘out of the box’ thinking to respond to health needs of the youth and adolescents in Africa.</td>
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### 2. PROMOTE DATA-DRIVEN ACTION FOR YOUTH-LED PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

**Pillar 2**

<table>
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<th>Promote data driven action for youth led programmes and policies</th>
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**Outcome**

Amref Health Africa, its stakeholders and partners implement effective interventions for adolescents and youth, based on data, evidence, and learnings from research and programmes.

**Outputs**

- ➔ A global knowledge management platform for youth and adolescents’ programming models and resources developed by Amref Health Africa.
- ➔ Evidence on adolescents and youth priorities generated, curated, and translated into actionable insights for youth programming and policies in Africa.

**Strategies**

- ➔ Set up a global knowledge management platform: document evidence on youth and adolescents programming models by Amref Health Africa and establish channels for dissemination to stakeholders and partners, to inform youth policies and programmes.
- ➔ Set up an Adolescent and Youth Think Tank: institute a robust evidence base through research, data driven innovation and learning on adolescents and youth health priorities.
- ➔ Establish strategic partnerships to enhance knowledge management, research data management for Amref Health Africa.
- ➔ Develop and integrate indicators to guide country alignment with the overall youth and adolescent strategy focus: youth agency, data driven action for youth programmes, and responding to needs of adolescents and youth in Africa.
3. MAXIMISE YOUTH POTENTIAL AND MINIMISE YOUTH VULNERABILITIES IN HEALTH THROUGH PROGRAMMES, LEARNING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

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<th>Pillar 3</th>
<th>Maximise youth potential and minimize youth vulnerabilities in health through programmes, learning and strategic partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Interventions by Amref Health Africa, its stakeholders and partners converge at creating an enabling environment for young people to thrive and achieve their full potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>➔ Technology and digital platforms designed with and for the youth to break barriers in and accelerate access to health services and information.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➔ Increased meaningful collaboration between young people and policy makers in Africa, for robust investments and stronger accountability for youth and adolescent policies and to grow the human capital index in Africa.</td>
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<td>➔ Improved health indicators among adolescents and youth in the communities that work with Amref Health Africa.</td>
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<td>➔ Improved indicators on social determinants of health that affect the youth, including economic empowerment of youth in the communities that work with Amref Health Africa.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Increased representation and inclusion of young people in our communities (ensuring adequate representation of youth in all their diversity) in the design and implementation of Amref Health Africa programmes.</td>
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| Strategies | ➔ Increase investments and foster strategic partnerships for the use of technology (including self-care platforms) and digital platforms to break barriers in and accelerate youth access to health services and information. |
|           | ➔ Strengthen existing platforms for youth engagement with policy makers in Africa for advocacy and resource allocation for youth and adolescent policies and priorities in Africa. |
|           | ➔ Strengthen existing youth-led social accountability platforms for meaningful engagement of youth in accountability processes for youth and adolescent policies in Africa. |
|           | ➔ Strengthen youth and adolescent programming in line with Amref Health Africa priorities: invest in programmes and partnerships that address vulnerabilities of adolescents and youth, including addressing sexual and gender based violence, early and forced child marriage, teenage pregnancies, female genital mutilation, and invest in programmes that maximise adolescents’ and youth’s potential, including access to contraception use and agency, gender equality, nutrition, mental health support, prevention and management of HIV. |
|           | ➔ Provide platforms for the inclusion of young people from communities that we work with, to participate as partners in health programming and programme accountability mechanisms. |
|           | ➔ Grow and accelerate capacity building of grassroots youth organizations and youth in organisational development, advocacy, participation in decision making, and skill development for sustainability of youth programmes. |
|           | ➔ Foster strategic partnerships focusing on the intersection of health and social determinants of health including economic empowerment for the youth. |
|           | ➔ Augment our partnership model and activate engagements with the private sector, civil society, governments and media to leverage digital technology, innovation and increase demand for stronger health investments for adolescents and youth. |
The development of the Amref Health Africa Youth and Adolescent Strategy (2021-2022) was coordinated by Development Dynamics, a registered Pan-African Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) catalysing systemic change in global development.

The strategy was informed by the contribution of thought leaders across Africa and beyond, as below:

### YOUTH EXPERTS

- Representatives of the Youth4UHC Regional Council, Y-ACT Youth in Action team and Youth Steering Committee.

### COUNTRY

- Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Cameroon, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ethiopia

### YOUTH EXPERTS

- Youth Community of Practice; Heads of Programmes; Technical Leads, Technical Director.

### COUNTRY

- Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Senegal, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Italy, USA, Spain, Canada, Headquarters

### FIELD EXPERTS

- Asphalt & Ink: Ory Okolloh (Dr)
- Catalysts 4 Change: Rachel Wilson
- Dalberg Advisors: Grace Njunge
- Long View Consult: Kalindi Sivi-Njorjo (Dr)
- Scope Impact: Andy Awiti
- Amref Enterprises Ltd: Caroline Mbindyo (Dr)
- Amref ICD: George Kimathi (Dr)

### GOVERNMENTS, INTER-GOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND MULTI-LATERAL ORGANISATIONS

- African Union Youth Advisory Council: Petrida Paul
- World Bank: Abla Safir
- UNFPA Eastern and Southern Africa Region: Maja Hansen
- UNICEF: Alwar (Dr)

### PARTNERS, DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, PRIVATE SECTOR

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Bahati Prince Ngongo
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- Foundation Botnar/Tech4Health Global Youth Council: Ursula Jasper
- HCD Exchange: Vicky Aridi
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ANNEX 3: CONTACT DETAILS OF YOUTH COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AT AMREF HEALTH AFRICA COUNTRY AND NATIONAL OFFICES

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- Amref Institute of Capacity Development: Alex.Omari@Amref.org
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- Amref Health Africa, Y-ACT Youth in Action: Sylvia.Wamugi@amref.org
- Amref Health Africa Zambia: Alice.Kampengele@amref.org
Operational Definition of Adolescents and Youth for this Strategy

Adolescents: aged 10-19 years as per the United Nations definition of adolescents 1
Youth: aged 15-35 years as per the African Youth Charter provisions 2

The term ‘Young people’ has been used interchangeably in this strategy to refer to both categories of adolescents and youth.
