

Youth Manifesto

for the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, 2024



Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE



Background

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is associated with an estimated 4.95 million deaths annually, mainly in low- and middle-income countries.¹ AMR is a health concern that affects all ages. It also transcends borders, both territorial and scientific, affecting both human and animal health and the environment, weaving a complex net of global repercussions. AMR can significantly affect achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals and of the [2030 agenda](#). Without a stronger response, there will be an estimated average loss of 1.8 years of life expectancy globally by 2035. Financially, AMR would cost the world US\$ 412 billion a year in additional health-care costs and US\$ 443 billion per year in lost workforce productivity.² In addition to deaths, which are projected to increase to 10 million a year by 2050,³ other expected impacts of AMR include increased morbidity due to infectious diseases, longer hospital stays, escalation of health expenditure, a fall in agricultural productivity (when food security worldwide is already threatened by the dire consequences of the climate crisis)⁴ and decreased animal health and welfare, exacerbating animal suffering and loss.⁵

Preventing and mitigating AMR require a multisectoral response based on a One Health approach, involving the human health, food production, animal, plant and environmental health sectors, for collaborative design and implementation of evidence-based solutions. Alarming rates of resistance are being found among prevalent infectious pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi, and their resistance to existing antimicrobials is provoking a surge in the use of last-resort drugs. Now, their effectiveness is being threatened. A two-fold increase in resistance to last-resort antibiotics is projected by 2035, making AMR a threatening candidate for the next global health emergency.

AMR is a rising concern that looms over the 1.8 billion young people around the world, with progressively decreasing numbers of effective antimicrobials. Youth around the world have been fighting AMR through various initiatives at grassroots and global levels, such as campaigns, youth summits, innovative hackathons and outreach activities. Youth, as key stakeholders in combating AMR, are not only raising the awareness of the public about AMR but also promoting structural and behavioural change in prescription and consumption of antimicrobials. They also have a role in sensitizing national and

global actors and decision-makers to invest more in tackling AMR, including in actions led by youth.

The United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR in 2024 is an opportunity to drive global change, as its resolutions may be crucial in shaping the future of health and AMR. It is in the interests of that future that the voices of youth networks and organizations be included and amplified, as they can play a critical role in setting the global AMR agenda. In preparation for the High-level Meeting, the [Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR](#) organized an online global youth consultation in April 2024, in which participants were asked to relate their experiences and perceptions of AMR, their current initiatives on the topic and their expectations from the High-level Meeting. This youth manifesto was co-created with over 90 global youth leaders around the world, led by the Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR.

1 Antimicrobial resistance. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2024 (<https://www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance/news-and-events/news/news-details/en/c/1680317/#:~:text=The%20economic%20study%20shows%20that,year%20in%20lost%20workforce%20productivity>).

2 Antimicrobial resistance. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2024 (<https://www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance/news-and-events/news/news-details/en/c/1680317/#:~:text=The%20economic%20study%20shows%20that,year%20in%20lost%20workforce%20productivity>).

3 Tang KWK, Millar BC, Moore JE. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Br J Biomed Sci. 2023;80:11387. doi:10.3389/bjbs.2023.11387.

4 What you need to know about food security and climate change. Washington DC: World Bank; 2022 (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/10/17/what-you-need-to-know-about-food-security-and-climate-change>).

5 Antimicrobial resistance. Paris: World Organisation for Animal Health; 2024 (<https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/global-initiatives/antimicrobial-resistance/>).

6 Embracing a One Health framework to fight antimicrobial resistance (OECD Health Policy Studies). Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; 2024 (<https://www.oecd.org/health/Embracing-a-One-Health-Framework-to-Fight-Antimicrobial-Resistance-Brief.pdf>).



Preamble to the Manifesto

- Ensure meaningful youth engagement in policy, advocacy and programme implementation to achieve integration of the priorities stated below into local and national action plans.
- Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration to establish capacity-building initiatives and mentorship programmes to enable youth-led action against AMR at national, regional and global levels.
- Encourage countries and key stakeholders, such as civil society organizations and institutions, to address the priorities stated below and to include youth in co-creating their strategic plans on AMR.
- Enable youth networks to use the AMR-related information provided by the [Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR](#) and the Quadripartite organizations, which are the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#), the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and the [World Organisation for Animal Health \(WOAH\)](#), for producing educational materials and capacity-building for young people.



Top priorities identified by youth:

Advocacy and engagement

- Establish and strengthen youth-led and youth-serving platforms, similar to the Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR, regionally and nationally, ensuring inclusiveness and diversity.
- Increase active and equal participation of young people from various geographical locations and of different socioeconomic status, and harness the energy of youth networks to co-create, enhance and/or implement national action plans and policies.
- Ensure youth representation on global decision-making platforms such as the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR and ministerial and other high-level meetings on AMR.
- Ensure the participation of youth-led and youth-facing organizations on the [AMR multistakeholder partnership platform](#) and FAO's [Reduce the Need for Antimicrobials on Farms for Sustainable Agrifood Systems Transformation \(RENOFARM\) Initiative](#)
- Integrate youth leaders into national, regional and global initiatives for raising awareness about AMR to contribute an integral, youthful, nurtured perspective.
- Foster experience-sharing and networking among youth advocates, youth networks and senior experts in AMR in countries and regions through dedicated platforms that facilitate access to empowerment resources and intergenerational cooperation.
- Organize hackathons and innovation challenges to mobilize young people to tackle the diverse challenges of AMR and to empower current and emerging youth leaders through professional support and funding.
- Co-create advocacy and communication toolkits and resources on AMR with youth.

Education and capacity-building

- Ensure inclusion of AMR awareness and appropriate use of antimicrobials in the health curricula of primary and secondary schools, and strengthen interventions to prevent AMR in school settings, including food safety, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and promotion of vaccination.
- Strengthen the curricula of health-related studies in higher education (such as medical, nursing, pharmacy, public health, medical laboratory, environment and veterinary education) to ensure proper knowledge and skills for tackling AMR.
- Co-create training with youth for youth to enable them to understand the problems and solutions to AMR in terms that are accessible, and nurture them to become ambassadors and champions in the fight against AMR.

- Collaborate with youth in targeted resource mobilization nationally and globally to support youth-led and youth-serving organizations to contribute actively to the AMR response and to engage with critical constituencies on AMR awareness, advocacy, behavioural change and antimicrobial stewardship.
- Encourage youth to use social media, art and culture strategically to raise awareness, disseminate up-to-date information about AMR and combat misinformation in a user-friendly way through an educational approach.
- Invest in the creation and/or strengthening of programmes on emotional intelligence at various levels of education to foster societies that are more receptive to and proactive in addressing community issues such as AMR.

Patient care

- Ensure equity, so that young people across the world have access to effective, high-quality diagnosis and treatment for infectious diseases and so that the benefits of research and development are available to everyone.
- Encourage countries to prioritize strengthening of health systems and universal health coverage and to systematically increase investment in novel therapeutics, diagnostics, vaccines to address AMR and high-quality, youth-friendly health services.
- Encourage countries to strengthen surveillance systems for making informed decisions and to guide equitable development of local policy development in various sectors.
- Increase investment in the prevention of AMR by promoting access to equitable vaccination campaigns, WASH measures and high-quality infectious disease prevention and control in homes, schools, health-care facilities and farms.
- Create a research and development ecosystem that is sufficient to attract and retain emerging and existing talent in the discovery and development of antimicrobials, reversing the “brain drain” in some countries, such that researchers leave work on antibiotics.

Addressing AMR with a One-Health approach

- Constitute relevant legislation on AMR with a One Health approach, including multidisciplinary collaboration between the human health, animal health, plant and environmental health sectors.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration among youth movements to address the key drivers and sources of AMR, whether misuse or overuse of antimicrobials in human, animal and plant health, including supporting the progressive transformation of agrifood systems to reduce the need for antimicrobials by adopting a One Health approach or environmental factors such as pollution during manufacture and disposal.
- Promote and invest in youth initiatives and evidence-based interventions that contribute to the [One Health priority research agenda for AMR](#).



Conclusion

An effective, sustainable response to AMR requires a “whole-of-society” approach, in which young people can play a crucial role now and in the future. Youth can help to increase awareness and change behaviour in society and to advocate for action on AMR in political and policy fora. Young people should have a seat at the table in shaping responses to global threats such as AMR. The ideas, perspectives and skills of youth must be harnessed to advance global, regional, national and subnational AMR plans and interventions. Meaningful engagement of youth should be a priority for the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR in 2024 and beyond.

The input to this manifesto was facilitated by Audrey Wong, Augusto Baron Cruz, Boama Ezechiell Noali, Francesca Zanni, Jessica Mitchell, Karina Khatic, Kristina Almazidou, Marina Ungurenci, Michael Mosha, Nahashon Gicheru, Pablo Estrella Porter, Randa Bazzi, Salman Khan and Vipat Kuruchittham, all members of the Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Quadripartite Working Group on Youth Engagement for AMR