



CLIMATE, HEALTH, AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP AT THE WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT

Reflections From GCHA's Youth Climate and Health Network (YCHN) Members



Photo: Cristina Arnés Sanz

In October 2025, delegates from GCHA's Youth Climate and Health Network (YCHN) joined over 40,000 participants at the World Health Summit, held in Berlin, Germany, to discuss the urgent health challenges and opportunities of our time. **Read insights and takeaways from delegates on the session they followed, and where youth leadership fits in the climate and health agenda.**



Nicole Vernot-Jonas | USA
MSc Graduate in Global Health,
Georgetown University

I followed discussions on how **climate change is increasingly linked to noncommunicable disease (NCD) risks, and why young professionals need stronger skills to shape climate-health policy.**

These insights helped me understand the practical challenges policymakers face when responding to climate-related health risks, and I applied what I learned during a heatwave simulation exercise where we explored practical ways cities can prepare for extreme heat, from alert systems and coordinated health services to cooling centers, sanitation measures, and preparedness plans in care facilities. Overall, these sessions showed me how youth engagement and cross-sector collaboration are essential for driving equitable, innovative responses to the health impacts of climate change.



Cristina Arnés Sanz | Spain
Blue Book Trainee | European Commission

I followed several sessions on One Health, which emphasized how closely human, animal, and environmental health are connected. The discussions underscored how climate change is shaping disease risks and why we need stronger interdisciplinary research to understand emerging threats. Policy-oriented sessions also highlighted the importance of integrating One Health into global health governance. **For me, these sessions underscored the importance of bridging science and policy and applying a One Health lens to address complex global health challenges, including climate change.**



Komla Kowu | Togo
Clinical Research Associate

I followed discussions on the future of eliminating neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). The sessions stressed that current tools remain limited and that we need more innovation in diagnostics, treatments, and vector control, especially with stronger local research and leadership. I also explored practical ways to strengthen program ownership, such as empowering community volunteers, integrating NTD work into national health systems, and linking interventions with primary healthcare. **The discussions highlighted how climate change is influencing disease patterns and why a One Health approach matters.** Overall, the sessions showed me that innovation, community engagement, and national leadership must come together to achieve the 2030 NTD elimination goals.



Radhia Abdirahman | USA

Wattle Fellow | University of Melbourne

One key theme that emerged across the sessions I attended was the importance of community engagement in developing climate and health solutions globally. This was particularly evident in sessions on research, youth engagement, and solution design. In the session on heat and health, researchers, policy specialists, and climate activists shared powerful examples of working hand-in-hand with communities to respond to rising heat risks, reinforcing that effective climate solutions are co-created with the people most affected, not imposed from the outside. **Youth advocates are especially well-positioned to champion models that place communities at the heart of climate and health action.**

As we look towards COP30, putting equity, resilience, and true community leadership at the center of decisions will be crucial for turning climate and health commitments into real action.



Mo Chang | Malaysia

Special Liaison for Health Strategy,
Doctors on Ground (DnG) Malaysia



Nicole Vernot-Jonas | USA

MSc Graduate in Global Health,
Georgetown University

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We followed discussions on Planetary Health and Food Security, where we saw how **environmental change, food systems, and health are deeply intertwined.**

Speakers discussed the vicious cycle between malnutrition and poverty, with poverty leading to poor nutrition and heightened vulnerability to diseases such as tuberculosis, which in turn reduces productivity and deepens poverty, perpetuating the cycle across generations.

The conversations reaffirmed why **planetary health must sit at the core of both the global climate and health agenda.**

Strengthening planetary health resilience means rethinking food policy through an integrated lens of adaptation, mitigation, and equity, ensuring that what nourishes us no longer depletes the Earth we depend on.



Rustam Shariq Mujtaba | Singapore
Data Analyst | Health Sciences
Authority

I was following sessions on health financing, digital innovation, and pandemic preparedness. While these topics seemed separate from climate and health, climate factors emerged as the underlying thread shaping every conversation. In health financing sessions, speakers discussed budget resilience without the climate-driven costs of heat emergencies, extreme-weather damage, and expanding vector-borne disease zones. Digital health panels highlighted AI diagnostics and telemedicine but rarely addressed what happens when technology fails in a climate-stressed world.

The sessions highlighted that whether it be discussing financing models, technological innovation, or emergency preparedness, climate resilience must move from optional consideration to foundational understandings. In a warming world, there is no health security without climate security.

WAY FORWARD



Photo:Steffen Kugler, World Health Summit 2025

As WHS 2025 came to a close, one truth became impossible to ignore: **health and climate are not separate conversations, but one shared reality.** Across panels and plenaries, from systems reform to financing dialogues, the message was consistent: the health of people depends on the health of the planet, and every delay in action deepens the cost of inaction.

Walking away from Berlin, the work ahead calls for courage, clarity, and collaboration to ensure that every policy, every reform, and every act of care reflects a shared commitment to a more sustainable world for all, and strong youth leadership is vital to achieving this.

The climate crisis is a health crisis. The Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) unites and mobilises the health community worldwide and accelerates climate action to protect and improve health for all.

GCHA's Youth Climate and Health Network (YCHN) empowers young people to connect, collaborate, and act collectively for climate and health justice, and facilitates youth participation in high level discussions on health and climate. The YCHN was established in 2023 and currently has 200+ members aged 18-35. Learn more about the network and how to join [here](#).

By

Cristina Arnés Sanz| Komla Kowu| Radhia Abdirahman| Rustam Shariq Mujtaba| Mo Chang| Nicole Vernot-Jonas

**In Collaboration
with**

Sharmila Dhungana | Member and Youth Coordinator, GCHA