

BLKHLTH Conversations: Climate Change and Environmental Health Challenges*Pre-Congress Side Event***Friday 5 September 2026 • 1:00–4:00 PM • Workshop17, 32 Kloof Street, Gardens, Cape Town****About**

BLKHLTH Conversations: Climate Change and Environmental Health Challenges is a youth-centred public health networking and workshop developed as a pre-conference engagement for the World Congress on Public Health under the theme Health Without Borders: Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability. The event brings together young people, public health practitioners, climate justice advocates, researchers, creatives, and community stakeholders to critically examine the intersection between climate change, environmental injustice, and youth wellbeing in South Africa. Drawing on a strengths-based and participatory approach, the event seeks to move beyond deficit-focused models of public health engagement by centering the lived expertise, resilience, and existing community care practices of Black youth.

The programme combines panel discussion, collaborative dialogue, and facilitated problem-solving activities to foster cross-sector learning and actionable public health thinking. A youth climate justice panel featuring organisers and advocates from organisations such as the African Climate Alliance will explore how environmental crises disproportionately affect historically marginalised communities while highlighting youth-led solutions and advocacy efforts. Participants will then engage in an interactive workshop activity focused on asset mapping, system thinking, and community-rooted responses to challenges relating to sexual and reproductive health, mental health, trauma, violence, and healthcare access.

By facilitating dialogue between young people, civil society, and public health stakeholders, the event aims to strengthen collaborative approaches to equitable health systems and encourage more culturally responsive, justice-oriented public health practice. The session ultimately positions youth not only as beneficiaries of health interventions, but as active knowledge producers, advocates, and co-creators of sustainable public health futures.

Registration

Link: <https://forms.gle/xPAHBqN6gyNQxrVw9>

Speakers

Please note that speakers are to be confirmed:

- Paulah Wheeler — Co-Founder, BLKHLTH
- Gabriel Klaasen — Communications Officer and Youth Coordinator, Africa Climate Alliance
- Ayakha Melithafa — Founder, Ayakha Melithafa Foundation
- Yola Mgogwana — Youth Climate Activist

Contact

Mbali Pfeiffer Shongwe • BLKHLTH South Africa • mbali@blkhlth.com