

YOUTH VOICES 2024

Health services that respond to the needs of young people in the Americas

July 2024

Youth voices: a PAHO mechanism for youth engagement

Youth participation in all matters related to their own health, wellbeing, and development and that of their communities is not only a right, but also strategically beneficial. Young people have demonstrated that they can make important contributions to the development and implementation of innovative and effective solutions and approaches. Young people should be systematically included as partners in matters affecting their lives through consultation, knowledge-sharing, shared decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Youth engagement creates positive opportunities for peer interaction, social cohesion, and community responsibility that can have individual, local, and national benefits.

Throughout the years PAHO has developed various initiatives to meaningfully engage young people. The **Youth Voices** initiative is implemented as a competition with prizes as incentives and aims to provide an attractive platform for young people to express their opinions regarding a specific health issue through painting, drawing, illustrations, comics, poems, stories, videos, and songs. Participation can be as an individual or as a group.

Youth voices 2024

For the 2024 Youth Voices competition, the focus is health services that respond to the needs of young people in the Americas. Through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3.8, the world has committed to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a foundation for individuals to lead productive and fulfilling lives, and for countries to maximize their human capital, a critical asset for sustainable development. Universal health coverage means that everyone has access to and is covered by a well-organized and well-financed health system offering quality and comprehensive health services without discrimination of any kind and without suffering financial hardship. All the PAHO Member States have committed to this goal through adoption of the 2014 Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and other related policies, plans and strategies in recent years.

Historically, health services for adolescents and youth have been limited, fragmented and of poor quality. Where packages of services have been formulated, they tend to focus on problems and

risk factors (i.e., substance use, adolescent pregnancy, mental health problems), rather than comprehensive approaches that promote healthy development and the acquisition of abilities to make healthy lifestyle choices that will endure into adulthood. Due to the limited inclusion of adolescent health topics in curricula, health workers often lack the competencies to adequately interact with adolescent clients. Persisting legal, policy, societal and health systems barriers limit access for adolescents to confidential health services as stakeholders and systems struggle with a proper response to the emerging autonomy of adolescents, and adolescents tend to have little trust in health services.

In the 2024 Youth Voices competition we are seeking the opinions and suggestions of young people on what can be done to improve the quality of health services for young people and enhance utilization by this age group, with the ultimate goal to reduce preventable mortality and morbidity and improve the health and wellbeing of young people in LAC.

Contest terms:

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 years, from all countries and ethnic groups in the Region of the Americas. These adolescents may participate in individual or group projects, using their native language. Read the full terms and conditions for more details.

HOW TO ENTER THE CONTEST?

Step 1: Participants must consider a question from the following, a category of creative expression and whether they will use an AI Tool.

Step 2: Participants must choose one of the following questions:

Question 1 – How do you envision health services that respond to your needs?

Question 2 - What are the barriers to accessing health services for young people in your community, and what can be done to address these barriers?

Question 3 - What can be done to increase young people's trust in the health care providers and teams in your experience?

Question 4 - How can young people get involved in efforts to improve the quality and utilization of health services for this age group (10-24 years)?

Step 3: The selected question must be answered using the following guidelines. Contestants must choose a category, and a medium within that category:

Categories

1. **General Categories:** Submissions created without the use of AI tools.
2. **AI-Assisted Category:** Submissions created with the assistance of AI tools. Participants must appropriately credit the AI tool(s) used in their work.

AI-assisted submissions will be evaluated separately from those in the General Categories.

AI-Assisted Submissions

Any use of AI tools must be clearly disclosed at the time of submission.

Participants must credit the AI tool(s) used in their submission.

For the AI-Assisted Category, the integration and innovative use of AI tools will also be considered.

Medium of submissions:

Art proposals

- Painting: acrylics, watercolors, or any other material or technique.
- Drawing: crayons, pencils, markers, or any other materials.
- Digital illustration: contestants may use whatever techniques and programs they prefer.
- Comic: contestants may use whatever techniques they prefer.

Writing proposals

- Poem: maximum of 400 words.
- Story or essay: maximum of 800 words.

Audiovisual proposals

- Video for social networks: maximum duration, 1 minute; creativity and style are the main criteria, using live action, animation, or any other technique. No video may include copyrighted material, resources, or music without the author's permission.
- Song: maximum length, 4 minutes; unpublished lyrics and music written by the contestant. Must also include Word document of lyrics.

Contestants cannot participate in more than one category. They can only submit one creative proposal that complies with the specifications detailed for each option. Group submissions are allowed but are only considered as one submission and should be sent by one representative of the group with the names of all group members and authorization forms for all group members.

HOW TO SEND THE SUBMISSION?

All works must be original, not previously disseminated, and not have previously won a prize.

Artwork must be submitted in high-resolution JPG files. Written works must be submitted in Microsoft Word files. Alternatively, handwritten works may be submitted as a clearly legible photographic image. Works in the digital category must be submitted in their original format.

Works in indigenous languages must include a Word file with a translation into English or Spanish.

All works, participant information and authorization forms must be uploaded to the [PAHO web form](#).

Underage participants must upload (2) authorization forms:

- [Authorization for reproduction of a photographic image, audio and/or video of a minor](#)
- [Authorization for use and reproduction of material](#).

Participants of legal age must submit (1) form of the [Authorization for reproduction of a photographic image](#).

DEADLINE FOR PARTICIPATION:

Wednesday, 12 noon (Washington, D.C., time) on 31 July 2024.

The winners will be announced in August 2024 via email.

CONTEST GUIDELINES AND PARTICIPATION TERMS:

1. Deadline for entries is 12 noon (Washington, D.C., time) on 31 July 2024.
2. This contest is open to all participants, including those who have submitted work in previous years, provided they did not win.
3. Works that have already received a prize from another contest, or that have been published previously by any other organization, will not be considered.
4. Works may be submitted in local and indigenous languages of the countries of the Region of the Americas. These entries must include an English or Spanish translation, in a Word file.
5. By submitting their material, contestants accept that this material, regardless of whether it wins, may be used by PAHO for educational and/or promotional purposes. Likewise, they grant PAHO a perpetual license for non-exclusive use, free of charge, for which it will be necessary to complete the corresponding authorization.
6. PAHO may include its logo, and credit the author of the material if it is used.
7. Any person or persons clearly identifiable in the materials must give their consent for the use of their image, signing the authorization for reproduction of their image.
8. When submitting materials, contestants must expressly declare being their original authors. They must also declare that they undertake to hold PAHO/WHO free from any liability that may arise from the infringement of the rights of third parties who have or claim to have rights of any nature over the materials submitted to the contest.
9. When submitting materials, contestants who are minors must fill out a form signed by a parent or legal guardian.
10. The jury will announce the winners and inform them by email. The list of winners will also be published on the PAHO website.
11. The winners will be announced in August 2024. Prizes will be awarded through PAHO's Country Offices in the Region of the Americas.
12. The words and images contained in the materials must be respectful of cultures and persons and may not include language that is offensive or that is or could be interpreted as discriminatory and stigmatizing. Likewise, language must not be used that violates public order, morals, or good manners.
13. The submission of materials implies the express granting of authorization to the organizers to use these materials, in any public activity or dissemination related to the

contest, without resulting in any obligation with regard to compensation, payment, or remuneration of any kind.

14. Prizes awarded to minors will be given to their parents or guardians. It is recommended that the prize money be used to cover the winners' educational expenses.
15. Winners who are minors must indicate, together with their parents or guardians, whether their works are to be published under the minors' legal names or under pseudonyms.
16. PAHO staff or consultants hired by PAHO in any country in the Region of the Americas may not enter the contest, nor may their immediate family members.
17. For any further information or if you have any questions about the contest rules, please write to the following email: adolescent_health@paho.org

SELECTION CRITERIA AND JURY:

For judging, entries will be distributed into three age groups:

- Contestants from 10 to 14 years old
- Contestants from 15 to 19 years old
- Contestants from 20 to 24 years old

The winner will have the highest score, judged as follows:

- 40% creativity
- 40% originality, clarity and coherence of content
- 20% adherence to the approach chosen and requirements of the contest.

The jury will be comprised of adolescents and professionals in communications, adolescent health, graphic design and the topic of this year's contest.

The winners will be announced in August 2024.

PRIZES:

FIRST PLACE

- Winner of the 10-14 group: US\$ 250
- Winner of the 15-19 group: US\$ 250
- Winner of the 20-24 group: US\$ 250

SECOND PLACE

- Winner of the 10-14 group: US\$ 150
- Winner of the 15-19 group: US\$ 150
- Winner of the 20-24 group: US\$ 150

THIRD PLACE

- Winner of the 10-14 group: US\$ 100
- Winner of the 15-19 group: US\$ 100
- Winner of the 20-24 group: US\$ 100