

Why better healthcare supply chains are in the hands of the youth

It is estimated that half of the world's population of more than seven billion people is under the age of 30. They are today and tomorrow's entrepreneurs, innovators, workers and leaders.

According to Sapics (The Professional Body for Supply Chain Management), young people have the power to improve the health outcomes of their communities and countries, and cultivating a pipeline of young talent in public and private healthcare supply chains is a global imperative.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

A panel discussion, which is on the agenda at the upcoming Sapics Conference for supply chain professionals, which takes place on 23 and 24 November, will examine the importance of youth capacity building to enhance the performance of healthcare supply chains to improve the availability of health supplies and life-saving medicines.

The panel will be facilitated by Chemonics International, an international development company that works with organisations like the U.S. and a coalition member of People that Deliver (PtD), a global initiative that aims to improve health outcomes by promoting sustainable workforce excellence in health supply chain management.

"Although they constitute some of the more vulnerable population groups in some settings, youth of all genders have incredible potential and ingenuity which can generate a measurable impact on public health," comments Rachel Hampshire, task order director, Global Health Supply Chain – technical assistance Francophone task order, at Chemonics.

"Supply chain management in both the private and public sector needs to cultivate young talent, who can serve as the next generation of health logisticians."

Enhancing supply chain performance

Sapics delegates will have the opportunity to learn more about the inclusion of youth-centred programming across global health supply chains and how to best leverage their unique skills and experience.

"This panel discussion will showcase best practices, youth-focused workforce training programmes that combine technical and employability skills development with on-the-job training and support," explains Hampshire.

The panellists include representatives from Chemonics, Kuehne Foundation, Pamela Steele Associates, USAID, and Young Logistician Professional Program Benin. They will share their experiences from various global health supply chain projects to highlight the benefits of youth capacity building on enhancing supply chain performance and improving health outcomes, and how gender and socio-economic considerations are taken into account in cultivating the youth workforce of both the present and future.

A recurring challenge in human resources for supply chain management, notes Hampshire, is the high level of staff turnover at warehouses and health facilities. "This further highlights the need to invest in and cultivate young professionals through pre-service training," she says.

Now in its 42nd year, the annual SAPICS Conference will be a virtual event because of the Covid-19 pandemic. For further information or to register for Sapics 2020, call 011 023 6701 or email info@sapics.org.za.

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