

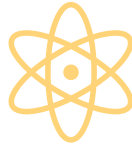


CommonHealth Awards CIC

Health Humanity Hope

Global Essay Competition

Handbook 2026–2028



CommonHealth Awards CIC

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About This Handbook

This reference handbook provides the complete framework, operational guidelines, and strategic rationale for the CommonHealth Awards Global Essay Competition (First Edition). It is intended for:

- Country Directors and National Coordinators
- Partner institutions (schools, colleges, universities, NGOs, health organisations)
- Regional and local organisers
- Judges and assessors
- Executive Board members and advisors
- Funders and strategic supporters

The handbook outlines governance, competition structure, academic integrity protocols, assessment frameworks, recognition systems, and operational guidelines for conducting a fair, inclusive, and educationally enriching global competition.

Part 1: Foundation and Purpose

1.1 About CommonHealth Awards CIC

CommonHealth Awards CIC (CHA) is a United Kingdom-based Community Interest Company established in 2021 as a social enterprise dedicated to strengthening the global health and social care sector. Operating under UK community interest company regulations, CHA is governed by an asset lock, ensuring that all surpluses are reinvested in its mission rather than distributed to private shareholders.

Our Mission:

To inspire, educate, and recognise students, volunteers, professionals, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, healthcare organisations, and civil society actors who demonstrate excellence, innovation, and leadership in advancing health and social care.

Our Vision:

A world where health and care are truly common concerns—understood, valued, and actively championed by individuals and communities across borders, cultures, and generations.

Core Values:

- Excellence and integrity in health and care practice
- Education as a force for social transformation
- Recognition of effort, compassion, and leadership
- Inclusivity and diversity in participation
- Collaboration across borders and sectors
- Evidence-based approaches to health challenges

1.2 Why a Global Essay Competition?

Health and social care challenges transcend national boundaries. From infectious diseases and mental health to ageing populations and health inequalities, the issues we face require thoughtful, informed, and compassionate responses rooted in critical thinking and research.

The CommonHealth Awards Global Essay Competition exists to:

1. Develop critical thinking: Encourage young people and early-career professionals to research, analyse, and articulate evidence-based perspectives on health and care issues
2. Amplify youth voices: Create a platform where students and young professionals can contribute meaningfully to global health discourse
3. Foster global dialogue: Connect participants across countries and continents around shared health challenges
4. Recognise intellectual excellence: Celebrate original thinking, rigorous research, and clear communication
5. Build pathways: Open doors to higher education, research opportunities, scholarships, and professional networks
6. Inspire leadership: Nurture the next generation of health professionals, policymakers, researchers, and social entrepreneurs

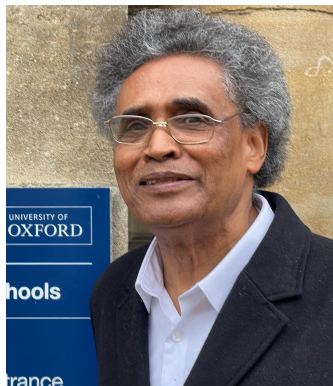
1.3 Governance Structure

Executive Board



Chaired by Chief Executive Harish Nair (UK-based Transnational Education (TNE) Consultant and Social Entrepreneur), the Executive Board holds overall responsibility for CommonHealth Awards' strategic direction, financial sustainability, partnerships, and competition integrity.

Scientific Advisory Board



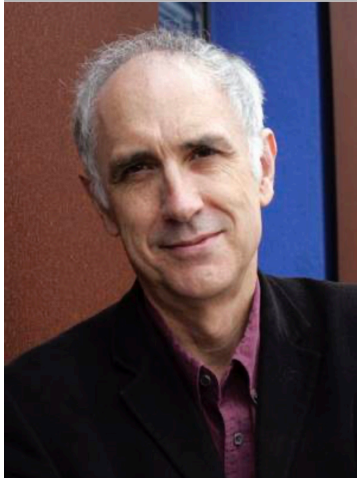
Chaired by Professor Mammo Muchie (Research Professor and internationally recognised scholar), the Scientific Advisory Board provides intellectual leadership, ensures academic rigour, and advises on essay themes, assessment frameworks, and research standards.

International Jury



Currently chaired by Prof Getachew Engida (Renowned academic, Deputy Director General, UNESCO), the International Jury oversees the final assessment of national-level essays and determines global competition winners. The jury comprises health professionals, academics, policymakers, and civil society leaders from diverse countries.

Chief Academic Advisor



The Chief Academic Advisor is currently the renowned global academic and research Professor Stephen E Little (Professor Extraordinaire at SARChI, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa, University of Bolton, UK)

Country Directors and National Coordinators

Appointed by CommonHealth Awards CIC HQ, Country Directors lead national operations, mobilise institutional partners, coordinate logistics, ensure fairness and integrity, and report to the Executive Board.

Institutional Partners

Schools, colleges, universities, NGOs, health organisations, and civil society groups that host local competitions, nominate referees, support student participants, and uphold academic integrity standards.

Part 2: Competition Structure

2.1 Age Categories and Progression Pathways

The Global Essay Competition is structured into four age categories, each with specific progression rules designed to balance ambition with safeguarding, inclusivity, and educational appropriateness.

Age calculated as of 1 January of the competition year (e.g., 1 January 2026 for 2026–2027 competition cycle).

Age Category	Age Range	Education / Profile	Progression Path
Cate 1	13–15 years	Secondary School	School → District/Local → State/Regional (END)
Cate 2	16–18 years	Higher Secondary / A-Level	School → District/Local → State/Regional → National (END)
Cate 3	19–24 years	Undergraduate / Diploma / Masters	School/College/Institution → District/Local → State/Regional → National → Global Competition 2028
Cate 4	25–35 years	Research / Early Career Professionals	Institution/Organisation → District/Local → State/Regional → National → Global Competition 2028

Key Principles:

Categories 1 and 2 (13–18 years): Participation ends at state/regional or national level. This safeguards younger students while still offering meaningful recognition, experience, and certificates.

Categories 3 and 4 (19–35 years): Full progression to the Global Competition 2028 in London. These participants are typically university students, postgraduates, or early-career professionals capable of independent international engagement.

2.2 Multi-Tiered Progression Ladder

The competition operates through a progressive ladder system, ensuring quality control, fair assessment, and growing recognition as participants advance.

Tier 1: School/College/Institution Level

The first and widest level of participation. All registered participants write their essays at this stage.

Tier 2: District/Local Level

Selected essays from schools and colleges advance to district-level assessment.

Tier 3: State/Regional Level

Winners from district level compete at state or regional level.

Tier 4: National Level

State/regional winners (Categories 2, 3, 4) compete for national recognition.

Tier 5: Global Competition 2028 (Categories 3 and 4 only)

National winners from participating countries are invited to submit essays for the global competition, culminating in the London Global Awards Gala.

2.3 Competition Modality: Hybrid Supervised and Independent Model

To balance academic integrity, depth of research, scalability, and inclusivity, the CommonHealth Awards Global Essay Competition employs a ****hybrid model**** that varies by age category and competition level.

This approach combines the fairness and control of supervised examination-style writing (for younger students and early rounds) with the depth and research quality encouraged by independent, take-home essays with referee verification (for older students and higher rounds).

2.4 Writing Modality by Age Category and Level

Categories 1 and 2 (Ages 13–18): Supervised Writing

Rationale:

Younger students benefit from clear, fair, and exam-like conditions that reduce the risk of parental or tutor over-assistance and ensure equitable access. Supervised writing also reassures schools, ministries, and parents about integrity.

School/Institution Level (Tier 1):

- Essays must be written in supervised venues (school classrooms, examination halls, or recognised community centres).
- Clear time limits (2–3 hours depending on word count).
- No internet, books, or external materials permitted during writing.
- Students may be given the essay question in advance to allow thinking and mental preparation, but the actual writing must occur under supervision.
- A designated teacher or school official invigilates the session.

District/Local, State/Regional, National Levels (Tiers 2–4):

- Continue with supervised writing format for fairness and consistency.
- Venue may shift to district centres, regional hubs, or designated national venues.
- Invigilation by appointed officials or partner institution representatives.

Categories 3 and 4 (Ages 19–35): Hybrid Model (Supervised + Independent with Referee Verification)

Rationale:

Older students and early-career professionals benefit from research-intensive, take-home essay formats that mirror university coursework and academic scholarship. This approach encourages depth, originality, and intellectual independence while maintaining integrity through referee verification and spot checks.

School/College/Institution Level (Tier 1):

Partners may choose one of two modalities based on local capacity:

Option A: Supervised Writing

- Institution organises a supervised session (as with younger categories).
- Clear time limit (3–4 hours).
- Suitable for institutions with strong invigilation capacity.

Option B: Independent Writing with Referee Verification

- Participants receive the essay question and have 2–3 weeks to research and write.
- Essay must be accompanied by:
 - Originality Declaration: Participant signs a statement confirming the work is their own.
 - Referee Endorsement: A faculty member, supervisor, or organisational mentor (employer, NGO coordinator, etc.) signs a form confirming they know the participant and believe the essay is original work.
- Referee form submitted online via CommonHealth Awards portal.

District/Local and State/Regional Levels (Tiers 2–3):

- Shift to independent writing with referee verification as the default modality.
- Participants have 2–4 weeks to research and write.
- Mandatory originality declaration and referee endorsement.
- Random plagiarism checks using text-matching software (e.g., Turnitin or equivalent).
- Shortlisted candidates may be invited to a brief online viva (10–15 minutes) where they discuss their essay with a judge or assessor to confirm understanding and originality.

National Level (Tier 4):

- Fully independent research essay model.
- Participants have 4–6 weeks to write.
- Strong referee verification requirement (university professor, employer, registered professional).
- Random plagiarism checks.
- Top finalists undergo online viva interviews before final rankings.

Global Competition 2028 (Tier 5):

- Fully independent writing (John Locke style).
- National winners receive essay prompt and have 6–8 weeks to research and write.
- Strict word limits enforced.
- Detailed originality statement required.
- Referee must be a recognised academic, employer, or registered health/care professional.
- All finalists undergo online viva before global awards gala.
- Optional: In-person presentation or panel discussion at London Global Awards Gala.

2.5 Academic Integrity Safeguards

The hybrid model is supported by robust integrity measures:

For Supervised Writing:

- Invigilation by designated officials
- Secure venues (locked rooms, no electronic devices)
- Identity verification of participants
- Signed attendance and submission records

For Independent Writing:

- Mandatory originality declaration signed by participant
- Referee verification form completed by faculty/supervisor (online submission)
- Random plagiarism checks using text-matching software
- Spot interviews/vivas: Shortlisted candidates answer questions about their essay to confirm understanding
- Clear consequences for plagiarism: Immediate disqualification, potential ban from future competitions, notification to institution

Appeals Process:

- Participants may appeal disqualification decisions through a formal process managed by CHA HQ and reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Board.

2.6 Word Counts by Age Category

Age Category	School/Institution Level	District/Local Level	State/Regional Level	National Level	Global Competition 2028
1 (13–15)	800–1,000 words	800–1,000 words	1,000–1,200 words	N/A	N/A
2 (16–18)	1,000–1,500 words	1,000–1,500 words	1,200–1,500 words	1,500–2,000 words	N/A
3 (19–24)	1,500–2,000 words	1,500–2,000 words	2,000–2,500 words	2,500–3,000 words	3,000–3,500 words
4 (25–35)	2,000–2,500 words	2,000–2,500 words	2,500–3,000 words	3,000–3,500 words	3,500–4,000 words

All word counts exclude titles, headings, references, and footnotes

2.7 Essay Themes and Questions

Each competition cycle focuses on a broad health or care theme of global relevance. Within that theme, CHA provides multiple essay questions tailored to different age categories and educational levels.

Theme Selection Principles:

- Globally relevant and timely
- Allows interdisciplinary engagement (health, social sciences, policy, ethics, economics)
- Accessible to students across diverse educational systems
- Encourages research, critical thinking, and evidence-based argumentation

Sample Themes (Indicative):

- Mental Health in a Connected World
- Universal Health Coverage: Challenges and Opportunities
- Climate Change and Public Health
- Ageing Societies: Care, Dignity, and Innovation
- Infectious Disease Preparedness
- Health Inequalities: Local Solutions, Global Challenges

Question Design:

- Open-ended to allow creativity and diverse perspectives
- Requires both research and original argumentation
- Avoids questions that can be answered with simple factual recall
- Encourages use of evidence, case studies, and examples
- Questions differ by age category to match cognitive and research capacity

Announcement and Access:

- Essay questions announced on CommonHealth Awards CIC website and distributed to partner institutions at the start of each competition cycle
- Questions provided in English (and translated into local languages where partnerships allow)

Part 3: Assessment Framework

3.1 Judging Philosophy

CommonHealth Awards assessment values:

- Critical thinking and originality: Fresh perspectives, independent analysis
- Research and evidence: Use of credible sources, data, case studies
- Clarity and structure: Logical argumentation, clear writing, coherent organisation
- Relevance and insight: Understanding of real-world health and care challenges

- Ethical awareness: Sensitivity to social justice, equity, dignity, and human rights.

3.2 Assessment Criteria

Judges use the following weighted criteria:

Criterion	Weight	Description
Understanding and Knowledge	25%	Depth of understanding of the essay question; accurate use of concepts, terms, and evidence
Critical Analysis and Originality	30%	Quality of argumentation; original insights; ability to evaluate and synthesise perspectives
Research and Evidence	20%	Use of credible sources; appropriate referencing; integration of data and examples
Structure and Clarity	15%	Logical organisation; clear introduction and conclusion; coherent flow of ideas
Relevance and Engagement	10%	Addressing the question directly; awareness of real-world implications and challenges

Total: 100%

3.3 Judging Process by Level

School/Institution Level:

- Judged by nominated teachers or faculty members from the same institution
- Schools may appoint a panel of 2–3 judges per age category
- Scores submitted to district coordinators

District/Local Level:

- Judged by district-appointed panel (teachers, local health professionals, academics)
- At least two independent judges per essay

State/Regional Level:

- Judged by state-appointed panel with representation from universities, health departments, and civil society
- Minimum two judges per essay; third judge in case of score divergence

National Level:

- Judged by national jury appointed by Country Director in consultation with CHA HQ
- Panel includes university professors, health professionals, policymakers
- Each essay assessed by at least three judges
- Scores normalised and moderated

Global Competition 2028:

- Judged by International Jury chaired by CHA-appointed British public health expert
- Panel includes international academics, health leaders, and CHA Scientific Advisory Board members
- Blind assessment (names and countries removed)
- Each essay reviewed by minimum three jurors
- Final rankings determined by jury consensus and viva performance

3.4 Moderation and Quality Control

- Country Directors ensure consistency in judging across regions
- CHA HQ provides training materials and calibration exercises for judges
- Sample essays re-assessed by senior judges to check inter-rater reliability
- Appeals process available for participants who believe assessment was unfair

Part 4: Recognition and Awards**4.1 Certificates and Digital Verification****All participants receive:**

- Digital participation certificate issued via email
- Certificate includes participant name, age category, institution, competition year
- Unique verification code and QR link to CHA verification portal (www.commonhealthawards.org/verify)
- Certificates shareable on LinkedIn, CVs, and academic portfolios

Winners at each level receive:

- Winner/Runner-Up/Commendation certificates
- Enhanced certificate design with award level clearly indicated
- Digital badge for social media

4.2 Awards by Level**School/Institution Level:**

- Certificates for top 3 in each age category per school
- Recognition in school assemblies, newsletters, websites

District/Local Level:

- Certificates for top 5 in each age category per district
- Possible small book prizes or educational materials (subject to partner funding)

State/Regional Level:

- Certificates and medals for top 3 in each age category per state
- Public recognition events where possible
- Media coverage (press releases, local news)

National Level:

- Certificates, medals, and trophies for national winners
- Prize amounts (if funded): indicative £50–£100 per winner depending on country partnership agreements
- National awards ceremony (virtual or in-person)
- Feature on CHA website and social media
- Media press releases

Global Competition 2028 (Categories 3 and 4 only):

- Global Grand Prize: £2,000 (one winner across both categories)
- Category Winners: £500 each (one per category)
- Runners-Up: £300 each (one per category)
- Crystal trophies and certificates
- Invitation to London Global Awards Gala (all national winners invited; air travel support subject to availability and terms)
- Networking opportunities with UK universities, health organisations, and international agencies
- Feature in CHA annual report and global media outreach

4.3 Non-Monetary Recognition

- CommonHealth Awards Alumni Network: All national and global participants invited to join alumni network with access to webinars, mentorship, and career resources
- Letters of Commendation: Provided on request for scholarship and university applications

- LinkedIn Endorsements: CommonHealth Awards endorses winners on LinkedIn (with consent)
- Publication Opportunities: Selected essays published in CommonHealth Awards online journal or partner publications (with author permission)

Part 5: Operational Guidelines for Partners

5.1 Partnership Agreements

All institutional and country-level partnerships must be formalised through a Partnership Agreement signed between CommonHealth Awards CIC HQ and the partner organisation (school, university, NGO, ministry, civil society organisation).

Key Terms:

- Roles and responsibilities of each party
- Competition modality and integrity requirements
- Data protection and GDPR compliance
- Use of CommonHealth branding and materials
- Reporting and communication protocols
- Financial arrangements (if any)
- Duration and renewal terms

5.2 Partner Responsibilities

Schools, Colleges, Universities:

- Register students and collect consent forms (including parental consent for under-18s)
- Organise supervised writing sessions (where applicable)
- Nominate referees and ensure referee verification (where applicable)
- Submit essays and scores to district/state coordinators by deadlines
- Uphold academic integrity and investigate suspected plagiarism
- Publicise the competition internally and celebrate participants

District and State Coordinators:

- Recruit and train judges
- Organise district and state-level competitions
- Maintain fair and transparent judging processes
- Submit results and winning essays to national coordinators
- Support local recognition events

Country Directors:

- Lead national strategy and partnerships
- Coordinate all tiers of competition within the country

- Ensure compliance with CHA guidelines and integrity standards
- Report regularly to CHA HQ
- Manage national awards ceremony and media outreach
- Submit national winners' essays to CHA HQ for global competition

5.3 CommonHealth Awards CIC Head Quarters Responsibilities

- Provide competition framework, essay questions, and assessment criteria
- Supply digital certificates and verification infrastructure
- Offer training and support materials for judges and coordinators
- Manage global competition and International Jury
- Organise London Global Awards Gala
- Maintain website, communications, and alumni network
- Ensure fairness, transparency, and safeguarding across all levels

5.4 Flexibility and Local Adaptation

CHA recognises the diversity of educational systems, languages, and resource contexts across participating countries. While the core framework (age categories, progression rules, integrity standards) must be consistent, ****local adaptations**** are permitted in:

- Competition timelines (to align with academic calendars)
- Language of essay submission (English encouraged; local languages permitted at school and district levels; national and global levels require English or certified translation)
- Prize structures (subject to local funding and partnership agreements)
- Venue and logistical arrangements

All major adaptations require prior approval from CHA HQ.

Part 6: Safeguarding, Ethics, and Data Protection

6.1 Safeguarding Principles

CommonHealth Awards is committed to the safety and well-being of all participants, particularly those under 18 years of age.

Key Policies:

- No individual contact between CommonHealth Awards staff and under-18 participants without parental consent and institutional supervision
- All partner organisations must have safeguarding policies in place

- Travel and international participation (Global Competition 2028) require parental consent and are limited to participants aged 19 and above in most cases
- Younger category winners (13–18) do not travel internationally; recognition delivered locally and digitally

6.2 Data Protection and GDPR Compliance

CHA complies with UK data protection law (GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018).

Personal Data Collected:

- Name, age, email, institution, country
- Essays (intellectual content)
- Consent forms (including parental consent for under-18s)
- Referee contact details

Data Use:

- Competition administration and assessment
- Certificate issuance and verification
- Communication about results and recognition
- Alumni network (opt-in only)

Data Retention:

- Participant data retained for 5 years post-competition
- Essays retained indefinitely for archival and research purposes (with anonymisation option available on request)

Rights:

- Participants may request access, correction, or deletion of personal data
- Requests handled via contact@commonhealthawards.org

6.3 Ethical Essay Content

While intellectual freedom is encouraged, essays must:

- Respect human dignity and avoid hate speech
- Not promote violence, discrimination, or illegal activity
- Acknowledge diverse perspectives and evidence

CommonHealth Awards reserves the right to disqualify essays containing content that violates ethical standards or local laws.

Part 7: Competition Timeline (Indicative 2026–2028 Cycle)

Phase	Dates (Indicative)	Key Activities
Launch and Registration	September–October 2026	Essay questions announced; partner recruitment; student registration opens
School/Institution Level	November–December 2026	Supervised writing sessions or independent writing (with referee verification)
District/Local Level	January 2027	District judging and selection
State/Regional Level	February–March 2027	State judging and selection
National Level	April–May 2027	National judging; national awards ceremonies
Global Competition 2028 (Categories 3 & 4)	June 2027–March 2028	National winners submit essays; International Jury assessment; vivas
London Global Awards Gala	April 2028	Global winners announced; awards ceremony; networking events

Note: Timelines may vary by country to align with academic calendars. Country Directors submit proposed timelines to CHA HQ for approval.

Part 8: Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Can students participate individually if their school is not a partner?
 At school and district levels, participation typically requires institutional partnership. However, Categories 3 and 4 participants (university students and early-career

professionals) may register individually if they can provide a suitable referee (faculty member, employer, or professional mentor).

Q2: What if a country does not have district or state structures?

Countries may adapt the tiered structure to fit local administrative divisions (e.g., provinces, regions, counties). The key principle is progressive selection from local to national level.

Q3: Can essays be submitted in languages other than English?

School and district levels may accept local languages. State and national levels strongly encourage English. Global Competition 2028 requires English or a certified English translation submitted alongside the original.

Q4: What happens if plagiarism is detected?

Immediate disqualification, notification to institution, potential ban from future CHA competitions. Appeals may be lodged if participant believes the decision was incorrect.

Q5: Are there entry fees?

CHA does not charge student participants. Institutional partnership fees may apply in some countries to cover administrative and logistical costs; these are negotiated in partnership agreements.

Q6: Can winners from previous years compete again?

Yes, provided they remain within the eligible age range and category. However, previous global winners are ineligible for the Global Competition 2028.

Q7: How are judges trained?

CHA provides judge training materials, sample essays, and scoring rubrics. Country Directors organise judge training sessions (in-person or online) before each competition phase.

Q8: What support is available for students preparing essays?

Partner institutions may offer workshops, writing clinics, and library/research support. CHA provides online resources (sample essays, writing tips, referencing guides) accessible via the website.

Part 9: Strategic Rationale and Educational Philosophy

9.1 Why a Hybrid Supervised and Independent Model?

The hybrid model balances three imperatives:

1. **Academic Integrity and Fairness:** Supervised writing for younger students ensures equitable conditions and reduces external influence. Referee verification and vivas for older students maintain integrity in research-intensive formats.

2. **Depth of Learning:** Independent, research-based essays encourage critical thinking, evidence synthesis, and intellectual independence—skills essential for higher education and professional success.

3. **Scalability and Inclusivity:** Supervised sessions at early levels are manageable for school partners. Independent writing at higher levels reduces logistical burden while maintaining global reach.

This model is informed by best practices from prestigious global competitions (Eg: John Locke Institute, Academic Olympiads, university essay prizes) and adapted to the diverse contexts and resource levels of CHA's partner countries.

9.2 Alignment with Higher Education and Career Pathways

The competition structure mirrors academic progression:

- Younger students (13–18): Build foundational research and writing skills in controlled, supportive environments
- University students and early-career professionals (19–35): Develop independence, research rigour, and intellectual confidence expected in higher education and professional life

Success in the Global Competition 2028 signals to universities, employers, and scholarship bodies that participants possess:

- Advanced research and analytical skills
- Ability to synthesise complex evidence
- Clear written communication
- Intellectual curiosity and ethical awareness
- Commitment to health and social care

9.3 Contribution to Global Health and Care Sector

By engaging thousands of young people annually in researching and writing about health and care challenges, the CommonHealth Awards Global Essay Competition:

- Raises awareness of critical health issues among future leaders
- Encourages evidence-based thinking about health policy and practice
- Builds a global community of health-literate young people
- Identifies and nurtures emerging talent for the health and care workforce
- Strengthens the intellectual and cultural foundations for universal health coverage, health equity, and compassionate care

Part 10: Contact and Support

All Enquiries:

Email: contact@commonhealthawards.org

Tel: +44 (0)1372 879617; (0)7760 659917

Website: www.commonhealthawards.org

LinkedIn: CommonHealth Awards CIC

Conclusion

The CommonHealth Awards Global Essay Competition represents an ambitious, inclusive, and educationally rigorous platform for young people worldwide to engage with the health and care challenges that define our time. By combining academic excellence with fairness, scalability with depth, and local relevance with global connection, CHA aims to inspire a generation of thoughtful, compassionate, and informed leaders.

This handbook provides the foundation for a sustainable, transparent, and impactful competition. As CHA grows, we remain committed to listening to our partners, learning from our participants, and adapting to serve the mission of strengthening health and care for the common good.

We look forward to reading the essays, celebrating the winners, and welcoming participants into the CommonHealth Awards global community.

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Next Review: July 2026

CommonHealth Awards CIC reserves the right to amend competition rules, timelines, modalities, and partnership terms as necessary. All changes will be communicated to partners and participants with reasonable notice.

For a healthier, more caring world.



With gratitude from CommonHealth Awards

Thank you for sharing your voice, your
vision, and your courage to imagine
a fairer, healthier world.

CHA Global Essay Competition | 2026–2028