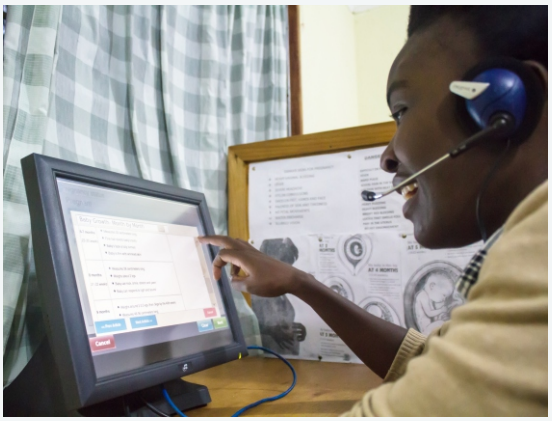
GTCOP
Global Telehealth Community of Practice

From Pilots to Scale: Practical Pathways for Telehealth in Africa

Insights and recommendations from the Telehealth Solution Lab convened at the 2025 Global Digital Health Forum in Nairobi

During the 2025 Global Digital Health Forum in Nairobi, the Global Telehealth Community of Practice (GTCoP), Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR), and partners convened a Telehealth Solution Lab bringing together policymakers, implementers, digital health experts and funders to identify practical pathways for scaling telehealth across Africa

Participants explored solutions related to policy, financing, interoperability, equity, and workforce integration, generating actionable recommendations for governments, funders, and implementers.



Scaling telehealth requires stronger systems, not just stronger technology.

5 Pathways to Scale Telehealth

At the 2025 Global Digital Health Forum in Nairobi, VillageReach and SCIDaR convened a Telehealth Solution Lab to explore practical approaches for scaling telehealth across Africa. Participants identified five recurring systems challenges affecting sustainability, integration, equity, and long-term impact.

1 Policy and Regulation

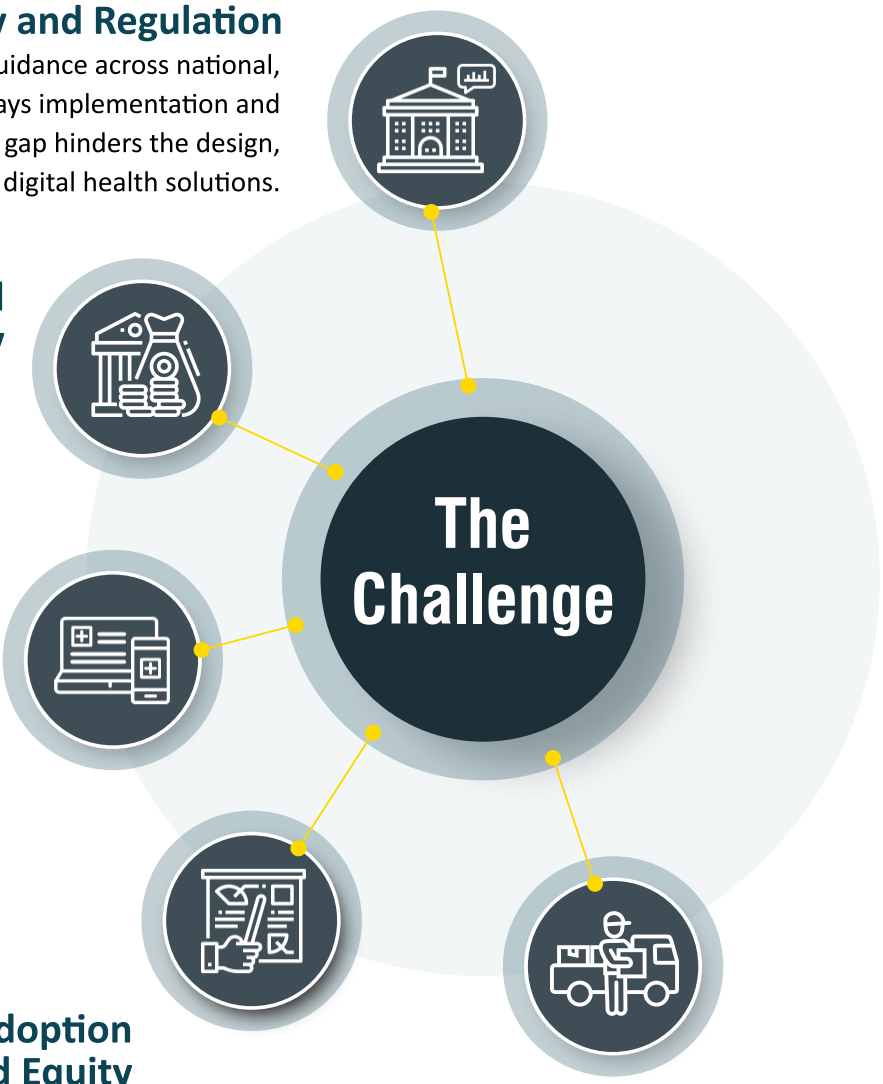
Lack of harmonized, adaptable guidance across national, regional, and continental levels delays implementation and limits cross-border interoperability.This gap hinders the design, deployment, and scaling of effective digital health solutions.

2 Financing and Sustainability

Strong governance and centralized billing exist, but telehealth solutions remain too costly for government sustainability.

3 Interoperability and Data Use

Existing tools like call centers, IVR, WhatsApp chatbots, and hospital systems remain disconnected. A fully integrated, interoperable ecosystem is lacking, especially for emergency medical services.



4 User Adoption and Equity

Low awareness, limited digital literacy, and unreliable infrastructure reduce telehealth uptake. Affordability gaps mean those most in need are least likely to benefit.

5 Service Delivery and Workforce

Telehealth is poorly integrated into routine health systems and workflows.
Weak workforce alignment limits effective service delivery and long-term scale.

Telehealth solutions often fail not because of technology but because systems are not designed to support them.

Building on the Solution Lab discussions, participants identified practical actions that governments, implementers, funders, and technical partners can take to strengthen sustainable telehealth scale.

Policy and Regulation 1

Co-develop adaptable guidance
Enable regular policy updates
Strengthen regulatory capacity

Financing and Sustainability 2

Integrate into national budgets
Develop value-for-money frameworks
Pilot blended financing models

Interoperability and Data Use 3

Define minimum datasets
Establish data governance frameworks
Invest in system integration

User Adoption and Equity 4

Apply user-centered design
Expand low-barrier access (SMS, voice, IVR)
Track and adapt based on equity data

Service Delivery and Workforce 5

Integrate into routine systems
Provide standardized training
Clarify roles and accountability

Sustainable telehealth scale depends on integration into routine health systems.

Moving from Pilots to Integrated Systems

What This Means

- Telehealth must be embedded in health systems—not layered on top
- Sustainable scale requires policy, financing, and workforce alignment
- Integration—not innovation alone—is the path to impact

The Way Forward

VillageReach, SCIDaR, and partners will continue engaging governments, implementers, funders, and technical stakeholders to advance practical approaches for telehealth scale across Africa. Next steps include:

- Supporting country-level operationalization of the recommendations through practical implementation use cases.
- Facilitating continued stakeholder dialogue and cross-country learning on telehealth integration and scale.
- Documenting implementation lessons and emerging best practices to strengthen future approaches.
- Monitoring progress across policy, financing, interoperability, equity, and workforce integration to support ongoing adaptation and accountability.

Closing Statement

The Telehealth Solution Lab demonstrated that sustainable telehealth scale is achievable when policy, financing, interoperability, equity, and workforce integration are addressed together. The opportunity now is to translate collaboration into coordinated action.

A Collaborative Effort

This guidance is the product of a collaborative effort between Geneva Digital Health Hub, Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR), Muhimbili University, MSI Reproductive Choices Kenya, GDHF, EthiXPERT NPC, Malawi Ministry of Health, inSupply Health, Neopenda, The Pan African Health Informatics Association (HELINA), Last Mile Health, Abi Global Health, DOTOH Health, WCAHealth Options Ltd/Gte, Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria, Intelehealth, VillageReach, Touch Health, Call off Cancer Initiative, Nigeria, Jhpiego and Africa Hub for Innovation and Development.

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Integration—not innovation alone—is the path to impact