



Research Fellowship Programme 2026

TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 2026



Terms of reference

DTH-Lab Fellowship Programme 2026

Introduction

The DTH-Lab is a global consortium of partners working to drive value-based and youth-centred digital transformations of health at global and country levels.

The DTH-Lab's fellowship programme offers students and early career professionals from low and middle-income countries opportunities to support a specific area of DTH-Lab's research or analysis. An important aim of the fellowship programme is to contribute to building the capacity of future health leaders to shape policy and governance issues related to the digital transformations of health.

About the fellowship

The duration of this fellowship programme will be six months from **1 May to 31 October 2026**. Fellowships will be in the form of a consultancy: each fellow will receive a stipend in the amount of **up to 1,800 USD** for an engagement of up to **30 days of work** and the completed milestones. This research will be exclusively desk-based.

Fellows will be supervised by the DTH-Lab's Policy and Research Coordinator with additional guidance from other team members as required. Fellows will work remotely according to their preferred schedule and location. Available support from DTH-Lab team includes:

- An induction and regular virtual meetings with the supervisor.
- Provision of background materials and contacts for interviews, etc.
- Regular input and feedback on their work.
- Opportunities for the fellow to discuss his/her research with experienced DTH-Lab partners and build their professional networks.
- Opportunities for the fellow to promote and present their work following publication.

Research projects

For our 2026 fellowship programme, we are looking for eight fellows to carry out research on the following topics:

1. National policies for young people's digital well-being
2. Mapping national digital health services for young people
3. Digital citizenship for health: What are the building blocks?
4. AI competencies and the health workforce
5. Emerging roles in an AI-enabled health workforce

Please see the Annex for further details of each project and expected outputs.

Indicative timeline and deliverables

Each fellowship project will be different but the following offers a rough indication of expected workflow and deliverables.

Work phase	Deliverable	Approx number of days
1. Refine terms of reference for the project With support from your supervisor and other DTH-Lab advisors you will have the opportunity to design your project.	Updated terms of reference for the project including methodology and timeline.	2
2. Background research Conduct a literature review/scoping exercise to gather relevant background information for your project.	Findings documented and shared with the supervisor.	8
3. Data collection, analysis phase Gather additional data and evidence through further desk-based research, virtual interviews, etc. Analyse your findings.	Findings documented and shared with the supervisor.	10
4. Draft paper Write up your research using a provided template for formatting and referencing. Develop recommendations based on your findings.	Draft paper submitted for review.	5
5. Finalize paper Incorporate feedback from reviewers and finalize your paper.	Final paper submitted by 31 October.	5
	<i>Total days</i>	<i>30</i>

Expressions of interest

Fellowship opportunities are available for students or early career researchers aged 30 or under and based in a low or middle-income country.

The ideal research fellow must possess the following:

1. Educational background: Fellows must be affiliated with an academic or research institution, either as a student or researcher. A degree in the field of study is an advantage.
2. Research skills: Fellows need to possess strong research skills, including the ability to design research assignments, collect and analyze data, and draw conclusions from their findings. They may have expertise in specific research methodologies, techniques, or tools relevant to their field.
3. Communication skills: Fellows must have effective communication skills, as they need to be able to communicate their research findings through written publications, presentations and discussions with colleagues. They should be able to convey complex ideas in a clear and accessible manner to diverse audiences.
4. Time management and organizational skills: Fellows need to be able to manage their time effectively and meet agreed deadlines. They must be self-motivated and able to work autonomously.

To apply

Interested candidates can request further background information on DTH-Lab and its existing work on this topic by writing to team@dthlab.org.

To apply for a position, [complete this Google Form](#) by 23:59 CET on Sunday 12th April 2026. Interviews will be held during the week beginning 20th April. Applications will only be considered if they include the following material:

- Curriculum Vitae / Resume including date of birth, nationality
- Details of two referees.

DTH-Lab welcomes applications from individuals of all backgrounds. Due to the expected volume of submissions, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Annex: 2026 Fellowship topics

1. National policies for young people's digital well-being

Governments are facing the dual challenge of ensuring that all people can benefit from the positive and health promoting aspects of digital technologies while protecting them from harms associated with digital transformations. While digital health falls within the remit of health ministries, the governance of digital technologies, data and AI is primarily the responsibility of other sectors. As a result, digital governance initiatives often fail to adequately consider all of the positive and negative impacts of digitalization on health and well-being, particularly for young people. Simultaneously, digital health initiatives seldom consider the broader health-related harms associated with digital transformations.

In this project, Research Fellows will explore how countries with large populations of young people aged under 25 are working across sectors to scale up effective digital health solutions, address digital harms, and create safe and health promoting digital environments. Fellows will map relevant policies, strategies and laws and explore whether national approaches to improving young people's digital well-being are holistic or siloed. Fellows will identify good practices and make recommendations for future policy directions. Please note that we will select **four fellows** to work on this project. Each fellow will focus on a different set of countries.

Expected outputs:

- Country briefs summarising findings from policy mapping and analysis.
- Contribution to a policy brief with a multi-country analysis.

2. Mapping national digital health services for young people: Case examples and best practices

DTH-Lab is currently developing a framework for digitally enabled health systems that embeds young people's health needs and priorities. The framework is based on findings from a four-year consultation process with young people to understand their priorities for digitally enabled health systems. The target audience for the framework are national health leaders (e.g., ministries of health) that are responsible for national digital health strategies and policies, and the objective is to provide them with a pragmatic framework, checklist and case examples to better embed young people's needs and priorities into national digital health strategies and policies. To support this high-level framework, DTH-Lab wishes to compile case examples and best practices from around the world of digital health services or programmes designed with young people's distinct needs, risks and patterns of technology use in mind. These case examples will be used alongside the framework to showcase positive efforts to build digitally enabled health systems that support young people's health and well-being.

For this project, the Research Fellow will start by conducting a systematic search of scientific literature and official government documents to identify examples of digital health services or programmes designed for young people. In collaboration with DTH-Lab, the Fellow will develop a set of criteria for assessing these services and will select 3-5 examples to develop into short case studies.

Expected output:

- Report summarizing findings from the mapping of digital health services designed to meet the needs of young people.
- 3-5 case studies describing what digital health solutions countries have designed to support young people's health and well-being, and considerations for replicating and scaling such approaches in other contexts.
- Overview of best-practices how countries have included young people in design, testing and governance of digital health solutions.

3. Digital citizenship for health: What are the building blocks?

Digital citizenship for health (DC4H) extends the notions of citizenship and digital citizenship to the health domain. The health benefits of digitalization can only be realized when people are able to critically engage with digital ecosystems; have access to safe spaces and protect themselves and others from misinformation and abuse; and make informed choices in respect to their data. Through its ongoing work with young people around the world, DTH-Lab has heard that young people do not feel adequately equipped to fulfill their potential as digital citizens for health.

In this project, the Research Fellow will help us get a clearer picture of exactly what skills, information and tools young people, including young health professionals, need to become empowered digital citizens for health. The Research Fellow will draw on existing theories and literature on digital/health/civic literacy and digital citizenship education to identify a potential typology of building blocks for DC4H. The Fellow can also design and employ participatory research methods to test and refine the typology, in collaboration with DTH-Lab's Regional Youth Champions, MyHealthFutures network and partner organizations.

Expected output:

- Short report summarising findings from literature review and presenting typology of DC4H building blocks.

4. AI competencies and the health workforce

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming health systems and everyday settings for health. AI has the potential to alleviate some of the pressures on health systems, including the global health workforce shortage. AI could help to expand the reach and impact of the

current health workforce whilst also driving changes in future workforce composition and tasks. The benefits of AI can only be realized if health professionals, patients and communities are ready and well-supported to deploy AI and digital tools that are designed to advance health equity and other health goals.

For this project, the Research Fellow will map and critically review the current field of research on competencies required for the health workforce to take full advantage of the evolving nature of AI. As part of a literature review, the Fellow will identify emerging themes and research gaps. This work will be used to inform the future direction of DTH-Lab's research and policy work.

Expected outputs:

- Literature review
- Annotated bibliography

5. Emerging roles in an AI-enabled health workforce

As artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly integrated into health systems, its impact on the health workforce is not limited to task substitution or augmentation within existing roles. Early evidence suggests the emergence of new roles and hybrid occupations that do not fit neatly within traditional clinical, administrative, or managerial categories. Understanding these roles is essential for health workforce planning, education, regulation, and professional governance.

In this project, the Research Fellow will identify new and emerging roles associated with the adoption of AI in health systems that are not currently recognised within established health workforce classifications. They will examine how these roles intersect with, support, or reshape existing professions, including points of overlap, tension, and role ambiguity. The research will assess the implications of these roles for training pathways, professional accountability, regulation and workforce sustainability.

Expected output:

- Short report on a typology of emerging AI-related roles in health systems and analysis of their relationship to existing professions and scopes of practice



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