

2024 Annual Report

Uniting for Blood in Africa!





About CoBA

CoBA is Africa's first private-sector platform advocating for safe and sustainable blood. We unite stakeholders from all sectors to drive policy change and improve blood systems, shaping a future where no life is lost due to a lack of blood.

Vision

Zero deaths due to a lack of safe and sufficient blood

Mission

To champion partnerships that drive effective policy formulation and implementation, ensuring equitable access to quality blood for all..



“It is important not to forget blood while discussing health systems, for without blood, health systems remain very fragile.

Dr. Nathan Mulure
Head of Government Affairs & Public Policy
Terumo BCT,
Chair, CoBA Board

Members



StrategicPartners



Secretariat





A Year of Progress and Collaboration

2024 was a transformative year for CoBA as we advanced our mission to strengthen Africa's blood systems. With the support of the Africa Health Business (AHB) Secretariat, we expanded advocacy efforts, forged strategic partnerships, and implemented targeted initiatives to improve blood availability and safety.



This report highlights CoBA's impact in shaping policy, raising awareness, and enhancing blood collection efforts. It showcases how collaboration and investment are driving measurable improvements, bringing us closer to a future where safe and sufficient blood is accessible to all.

The milestones achieved this year go beyond progress—they signal a shift toward sustainable solutions for Africa's blood crisis. Through advocacy, innovation, and multi-sector partnerships, we are demonstrating that meaningful change is within reach. Sustaining this impact requires continued commitment, funding, and strong policy frameworks to ensure that no life is lost due to a lack of safe blood.

Collaboration: The Engine of Impact

CoBA's success in 2024 was driven by the power of collaboration. By engaging policymakers, mobilizing communities, and uniting key stakeholders, we have strengthened Africa's blood systems. These partnerships demonstrate that when expertise and resources are aligned, we can build a more resilient blood ecosystem and save lives across the continent.

Establishing CoBA's Governance Framework

Last year, CoBA reached a significant milestone in strengthening its governance and leadership. With the support of the secretariat, we established our inaugural Board of Directors, providing strategic oversight and reinforcing our commitment to advancing safe and sustainable blood systems in Africa.

Additionally, CoBA formalized its governance structure, ensuring clear roles, accountability, and a robust operational framework to guide decision-making and policy implementation. This structured approach enhances CoBA's ability to drive impactful initiatives, engage stakeholders effectively, and sustain long-term progress.



CoBA Board Members & AHB Secretariat: Driving leadership and collaboration to advance Africa's blood ecosystems.

CoBA Board Leadership (2024):



Dr. Nathan Mulure
Head of Government Affairs & Public Policy, Terumo BCT

Chair



Dr Erica Monfardini
Director of Global Pharma and Strategic Partnerships, B-Medical Systems

Vice Chair



Dr. Ida Mbuthia
Africa Lead Healthcare Access, Roche Diagnostics

Treasurer

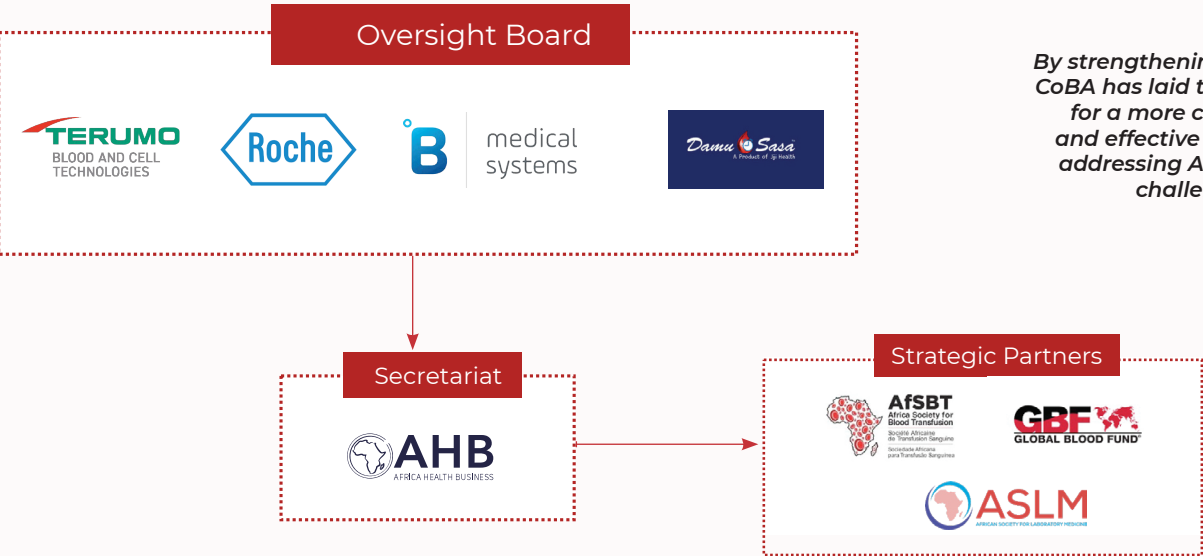


Mr. Aaron Ogunde
Co-founder, Jiji Health

Board Member



CoBA's Governance Structure

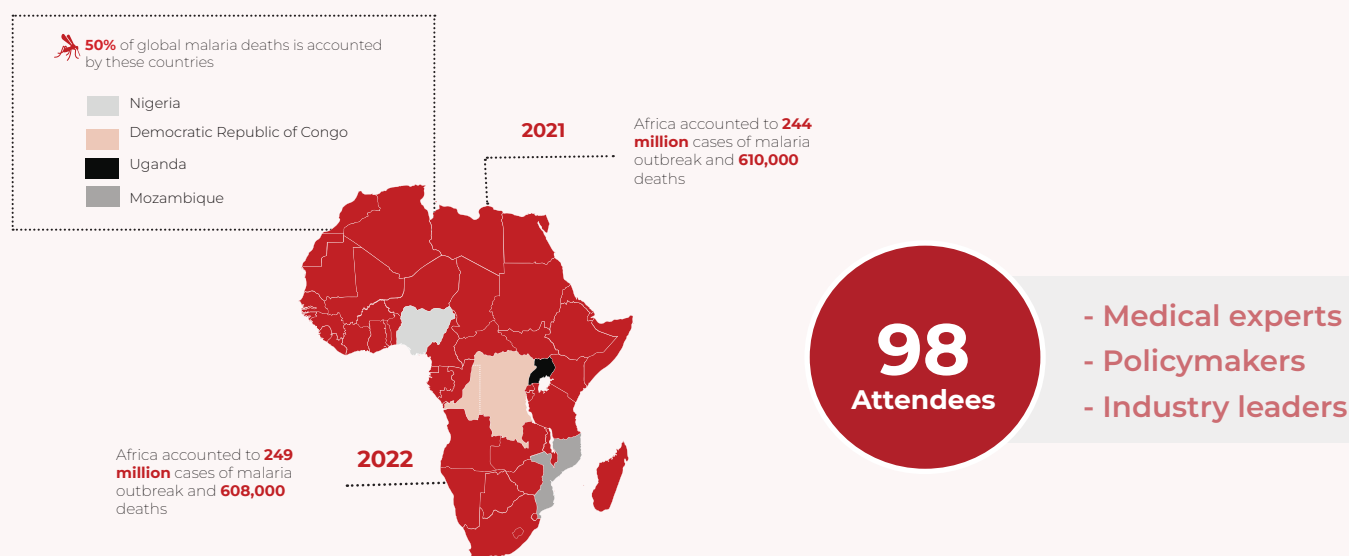


By strengthening governance CoBA has laid the foundation for a more coordinated and effective approach to addressing Africa's blood challenges.

Key Achievements of 2024

The Neglected Therapy in Malaria Management

Date: April 23, 2024



94% of all malaria cases and **95%** of deaths arise from the WHO Africa region, children under **5 years** account for **78%** of malaria deaths in the region.

Why the Need for Blood Transfusion in Malaria Management Is Critical

Severe malaria-induced anaemia is a major cause of mortality in Africa, yet access to safe blood remains inadequate.

CoBA hosted this webinar to:

- ✓ Bring attention to the overlooked role of blood transfusion in malaria management.
- ✓ Push for policy reforms that prioritize safe blood access.
- ✓ Foster collaboration between key stakeholders, including governments, private sector partners, and health institutions.
- ✓ Drive innovation by showcasing AI-driven diagnostics and rural blood supply solutions.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- ✓ **Shifted the narrative:** The webinar successfully placed blood transfusion on the agenda of malaria management discussions.
- ✓ **Engaged decision-makers:** Policymakers, healthcare professionals, and industry players participated, opening doors for policy changes.
- ✓ **Catalyzed action:** Discussions from the webinar have informed ongoing advocacy efforts and partnerships aimed at improving blood access.
- ✓ **Call to Action:** Inspired advocacy efforts and national campaigns to drive blood collection and accessibility.

This webinar reinforced CoBA's role as a thought leader in Africa's blood ecosystem, pushing for sustainable policy and system-level improvements.

Speakers Snap Shots: The Neglected Therapy in Malaria Management



“

Through collaborative partnerships, particularly with entities like the Coalition of Blood for Africa, Africa CDC is actively engaged in efforts to mitigate severe malaria anaemia and ensure the provision of safe blood transfusions, especially for vulnerable demographics such as children under five and pregnant women.

Hanna Amanuel Tesfahune
Technical Officer Endemic and Neglected Tropical Diseases
Africa CDC



“

We must advocate tirelessly to ensure that blood becomes a focal point in strengthening healthcare systems worldwide. It deserves the same level of attention and priority as access to essential medicines like anticancer drugs, antimalarials, and cardiovascular medications. Just as these areas receive significant focus, so too should blood supply and management.

Dr. Nathan Mulure
Head of Government Affairs & Public Policy
Terumo BCT



“

The challenges of managing blood systems, particularly in malaria-prone regions, are complex, especially regarding the necessity of malaria testing before transfusion. Prioritizing campaigns for malaria elimination is vital. Ensuring thorough pathogen inactivation is also crucial for preventing transmission. However, implementing widespread malaria testing protocols faces obstacles due to cost constraints. It's essential to weigh the benefits and risks carefully, directing resources toward elimination efforts and pathogen inactivation. While clinicians prioritize saving lives over addressing transfusion-related risks, effective systems for monitoring such risks are necessary.

Dr. Joseph Mulenga
Medical Director Zambia
National Blood Transfusion
services (ZNBTS)



“

At Webuye County Hospital, we see countless severe malaria cases daily, with nearly 80% requiring blood transfusions. The challenge? There's never enough blood. We've lost patients simply because we couldn't get them the blood they needed in time. In some cases, healthcare workers have had to donate blood themselves to save lives. The need for a better blood supply system is urgent lives depend on it.

Dr. Millicent Wanyama
Pediatrician and Sickle cell Program Lead
Webuye County Hospital



“

Education is key. As private entities like CoBA, let's prioritize educating the public about critical health topics like blood supply and malaria prevention. By reaching grassroots levels and engaging communities directly, we can make a significant impact on healthcare outcomes. Let's take proactive steps to empower individuals with knowledge for better health.

Dr. Angela Harrison
Medical & Scientific Affairs Manager
Sysmex Southern and East Africa



“

In order to bring diagnostics to rural areas, collaboration between the private sector and government policymakers is essential. By working together, we can develop partnerships that facilitate the delivery of diagnostic tools to underserved communities.

Dr. Herry Mapesi
Medical Lead, Pan Arica - Infectious Diseases Roche
Diagnostics

Empowering Youth to Champion Blood Access in Africa

Africa faces severe blood shortages with only 6 units collected per 1,000 people, compared to 33 per 1,000 in high-income countries (WHO). Limited policies, cultural misconceptions, and weak infrastructure restrict access. Despite 22.7% of Africa's population being youth, their potential in addressing this crisis remains untapped.

CoBA's Action

To mobilize youth in blood donation advocacy, CoBA hosted the Youth Symposium on June 19, 2024 at Strathmore University, Nairobi. The event brought together 88 youth leaders to discuss innovative solutions and policy engagement.

Developed key strategies, including:

- ✓ Expanding school-based education to normalize voluntary blood donation.
- ✓ Leveraging social media and public events like Damu Festival to dispel misconceptions.
- ✓ Advocating for mobile blood units to improve access in remote areas.
- ✓ Encouraging incentives such as health check-ups and awards to sustain donation efforts.

Impact

- Raised awareness on the role of youth in tackling blood shortages.
- Strengthened policy and advocacy, emphasizing transparent government funding for blood programs.



“

Having lost my brother to sickle cell and experienced the struggle myself, it warms my heart to see young people passionately fighting for awareness and change. As a warrior, I know the journey isn't easy.

I probably spent only 4 years in primary school and only 2 in high school, while the rest of my time I was in and out of hospitals.

I wouldn't have survived without the blood donations I received. Today, I am very happy to share my story and be associated with COBA, an organization that is creating real change by involving youth. Much more needs to be done, and I'm proud of COBA for acting and making a difference.

Isaac Okeno
SCD Warrior & SCD Advocate



By engaging young leaders, CoBA is driving momentum for long-term policy change and improved blood access in Africa.

Advancing Policy for Sickle Cell Disease Care and Blood Access

Africa's ongoing blood shortage continues to put millions of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) patients at risk. In 2024, CoBA actively engaged in policy advocacy to strengthen national blood systems and promote sustainable government investment in blood services.

Key Highlights

World Sickle Cell Day (June 19, 2024)

CoBA participated in advocacy efforts in Nairobi, engaging policymakers and stakeholders to push for sustainable blood policies.

SCD & Haemophilia Conference : (June 11-13, Kisumu)

CoBA highlighted the urgent need for regular blood donations and stronger policies, reaching decision-makers in healthcare.

Policy Engagement: CoBA contributed to national discussions on strengthening blood systems by emphasizing:

- ✓ Expanding voluntary blood donation to address shortages.
- ✓ Increasing government investment in blood services.
- ✓ Integrating blood advocacy into public health campaigns for long-term impact.



66% of 120M
global SCD cases
are in Africa



50-80%
of affected
children die
before age 5



50-90%
die undiagnosed
before age 5 in sub-
Saharan Africa



14,000
children born with
SCD annually in
Kenya



5,000
people in Kenya live
with haemophilia
and require
specialized care





Partnerships, Awareness & Collective Action

Africa's blood shortage remains a critical barrier to healthcare, with voluntary donation rates still too low to meet demand. Many countries collect less than 6 units per 1,000 people, far below the 10 per 1,000 needed. This gap puts women with childbirth complications, children with severe anemia, and trauma patients at severe risk.

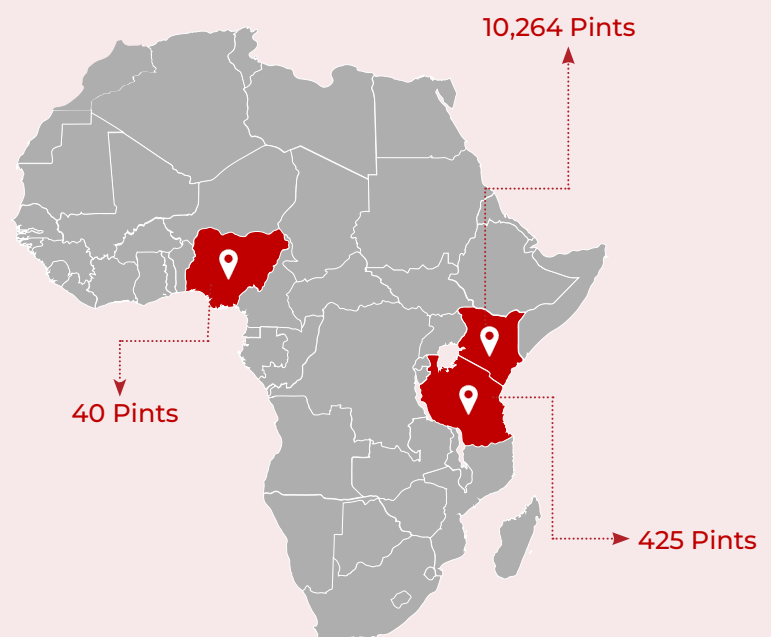
Through targeted advocacy, CoBA continues to push for:

- ✓ Stronger national blood donation strategies
- ✓ Increased government investment in blood services
- ✓ Integration of blood donation into public health priorities

With support from Tanzania Red Cross Society, The Blood Drive Network, Bone & Blood Foundation, and Kenya Blood Transfusion and Transplant Service (KBTTs), CoBA is fostering a sustainable blood system for Africa.

Impact

-  **10,000+** pints of blood collected in Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria & Uganda
-  **30,000+** patients received life-saving transfusions



CoBA Campaigns: Mobilizing Action for Blood Access



Paint the Profile Red – A Youth-Led Digital Movement (June 2024)

To mark World Blood Donor Day, CoBA launched Paint the Profile Red a campaign that encouraged young people to use their voices and social media presence to advocate for blood donation.

What We Did

- Mobilized youth to share messages of gratitude and encouragement, inspiring more people to donate blood.
- Amplified awareness by encouraging social media users to paint their profiles red with advocacy messages.
- Educated communities on the importance of voluntary blood donation through digital storytelling.

Impact

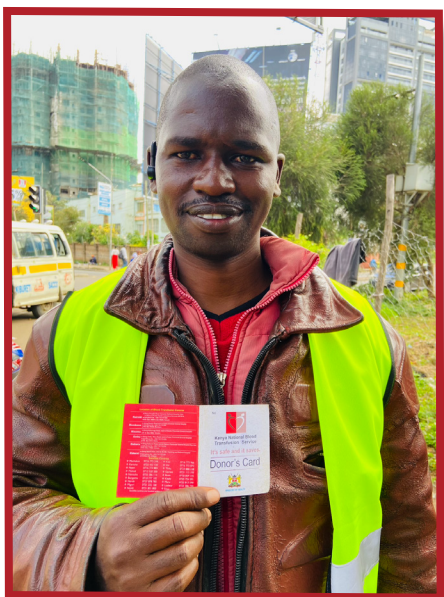
- Increased youth participation in blood donation drives across multiple countries.
- Reached 1000+ people through digital advocacy, driving engagement.
- Strengthened public awareness, fostering a culture of regular blood donation.

Bridging the Holiday Blood Shortage: CoBA's December 2024 Digital Campaign

The holiday season sees a surge in trauma-related emergencies, yet blood donation rates remain dangerously low. With Africa accounting for 16% of global road traffic fatalities, the need for a stable blood supply is more urgent than ever

What We Did

-  Mobilized Boda Boda riders and local communities to donate blood.
-  Used QR-coded flyers to help donors locate nearby blood banks easily.
-  Raised awareness about the importance of regular voluntary blood donation through digital advocacy.



“Before this campaign, I never thought much about donating blood. But after learning how many lives especially accident victims depend on it, I knew I had to step up. Now, I encourage my fellow riders to donate because tomorrow, it could be one of us who needs it.

Paul
Motorcycle Taxi Rider



Key Insights & Next Steps



Many potential donors lack information on where to donate.



Blood donation is still viewed as an emergency response rather than a consistent practice.



Digital tools effectively reach new donor groups, expanding access.

Building on these insights, CoBA continues to push for:

-  Stronger policies prioritizing voluntary blood donation.
-  Integration of digital tools into national blood strategies.
-  This campaign reinforced the power of community-driven solutions in tackling Africa's blood shortage.

100,000+



Audience engaged through digital awareness campaigns

CoBA Participation in Events 2024



On October 28-29, 2024, CoBA participated in the East Africa Blood Disorders Leadership Forum hosted by Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Kenya Haemophilia Association, Sickle Cell Federation of Kenya, and Fondation Pierre Fabre advocating for improved care and policies.



On July 23, 2024, CoBA joined Africa Health Business in launching its inaugural Impact Report, alongside key health leaders from WHO and Africa CDC, celebrating 9 years of advancing healthcare in Africa.



On May 14, 2024, CoBA Lead Caroline Wangamati spoke at the Roche EMEA-LATAM Regional Conference in Nairobi highlighting the power of partnerships in improving patient access.



March 4-7, 2024, CoBA participated in the 11th AfsBT Congress in Kampala, engaging with experts and industry leaders to advance innovations and partnerships for improving blood transfusion services in Africa.



PS Harry Kimtai leads the distribution of 150,000 blood bags in Kenya and unveils four Kenya Blood Ambassadors, including CoBA Lead Caroline Wangamati.

Impact of CoBA’s Participation in 2024 Events



Advocacy & Policy Influence

Engaged policymakers and partners to push for stronger blood donation policies and improved patient access.



Strategic Partnerships

Strengthened collaborations with WHO, Africa CDC, and industry leaders to drive sustainable solutions.



Visibility & Leadership

Elevated CoBA’s presence including the recognition of its Lead as a Kenya Blood Ambassador.



System Strengthening

Contributed to discussions on improving blood collection and aligning national targets with global standards.



Public Awareness

Highlighted the importance of voluntary blood donation and sustainable funding.



Looking Ahead: 2025 Goals & Strategy to Close the Gap

As we look to 2025, CoBA envisions a future where sustainable blood systems are a priority across Africa. Our goal is to drive measurable progress by strengthening partnerships, fostering collaboration, and influencing policies that address blood-related challenges. We aim to expand our engagement with key stakeholders, including Ministries of Health and other health institutions and organisations to ensure that safe and accessible blood becomes a cornerstone of healthcare delivery.

Through strategic initiatives, impactful advocacy and collaborative action, CoBA is committed to creating a lasting legacy of improved blood systems that support healthier communities across the continent.

Contacts:

Phone: +254 704 838 150

Email: secretariat@cobaafrika.org

Website: <https://www.cobaafrika.org/>