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Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health Annual report 2024

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Introduction

The bonds between Makerere University (Mak) and Karolinska Institutet (KI) were strengthened during 2024, by the warm welcome and hosting by the leadership from Makerere University, College of Health Sciences and School of Public Health of the leadership from KI visiting in February and in November.

Vice president of KI, Martin Bergö visited in February and President Annika Östman Wernerson in November, when also an alumni event celebrated more than 20 years of collaboration between the universities. During the leadership meetings the evaluation of CESH was presented and discussed and the recommendations will be integrated in the next collaboration plan 2026–2030.

The work of the working group continued in line with the Theory of Change (Figure 1), with the aim to develop capacity and mobilise actions to drive the agenda for sustainable health. New initiatives include the Health Diplomacy Initiative and Equity in partnerships

Activities are in this report presented by the four core engagements:

1) Capacity development and education

The leadership programmes, MIDWIZE, and MISH started for another year 2024/2025. At KI, sustainable health was integrated in teaching and learning in a course launched 2024 for doctoral students. In collaboration with the Stockholm School of Economics, an initiative for health diplomacy, including executive education, networks and research, is being developed.

2) Tools and resources

The final and fifth *Tools for Action*, Multisectoral collaboration was developed and launched. A new website for the centre was launched. Policy lab, a forum for discussing research to action, continued and grew at KI.

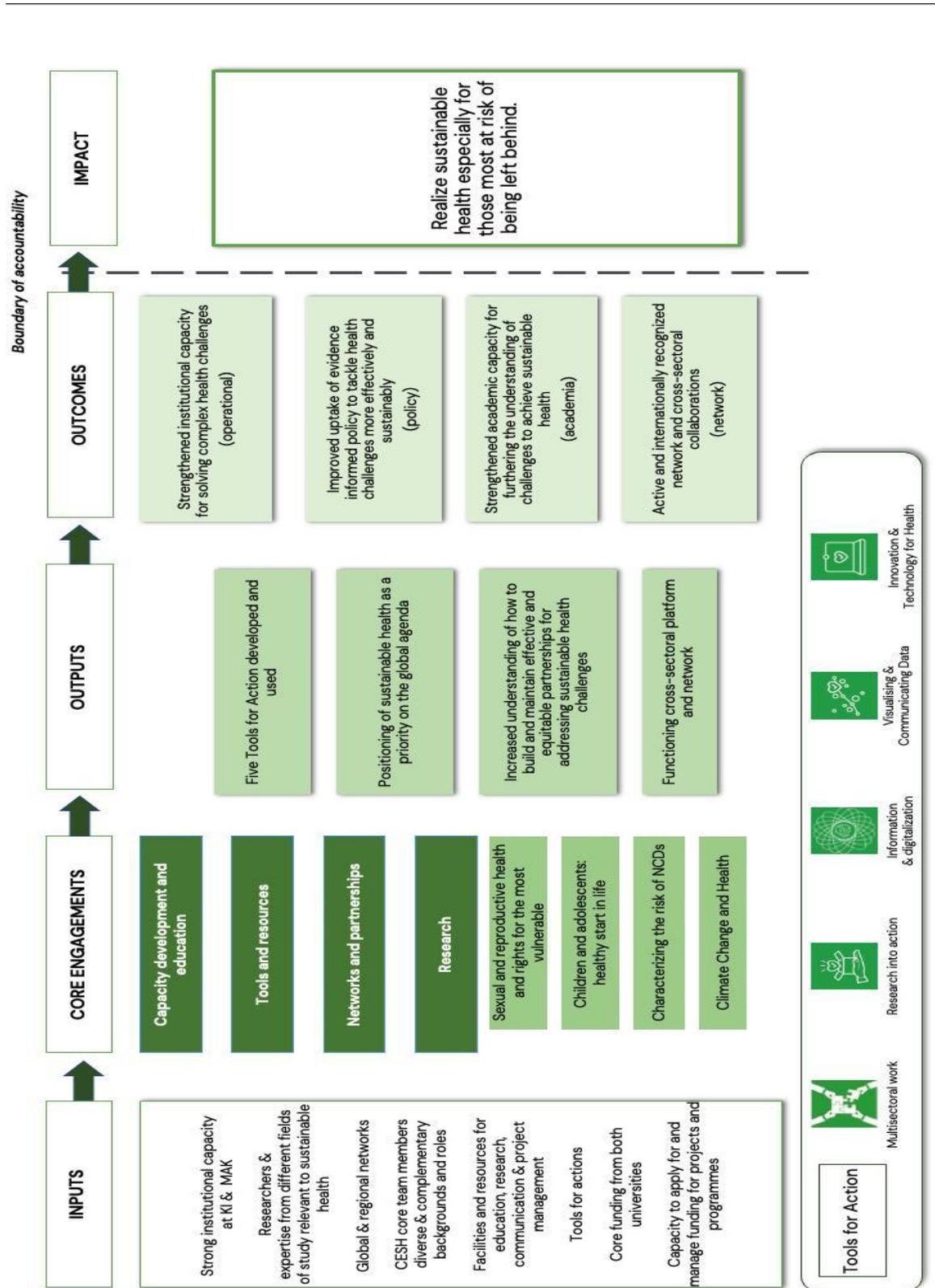
3) Networks and partnerships

Four Global Conversations took place during the year and were organised, and new partnerships were established such as the collaboration with the Stockholm School of Economics and with Charité Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, Germany.

4) Research

Work is ongoing in the four research areas, Sexual and reproductive health and rights, Children and adolescents, Non-communicable Diseases (NCD), and climate change and health.

Figure 1: The CESH Theory of Change.



1 Core engagements

To meet the aims and objectives of the Centre and to drive the agenda for sustainable health, the activities implemented are divided under four core engagements:

1. Capacity development and Education
2. Tools and resources
3. Networks and partnerships
4. Research

1.1 Capacity development and education

The Centre continued to deliver the leadership programmes to public sector officials and managers, MISH and MIDWIZE, and the online course on Innovation for Sustainable Health. The efforts of developing new courses at KI in sustainable health and development has continued and a new course was launched for doctoral students. The Centre also participated in the development of the Global Health Diplomacy initiative.

1.1.1 Leadership programmes for health sector managers

Both leadership programmes MISH and MIDWIZE 2024/2025 started in September, with funding from the Swedish Institute.

1.1.1.1 Managing Innovation for Sustainable Health (MISH)

The fourth iteration of the leadership programme *Managing Innovation for Sustainable Health (MISH)* started in September with 27 participants (11 women and 16 men), representing the health sector at large, mostly the public sector, a few from academia, the private sector and the civil society sector. A preliminary report on the project was submitted to the Swedish Institute in October 2024. MISH 4 will be completed in 2025.

It is a one-year-long, part-time, online training programme targeting managers in the health sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Uganda. No funding was granted for the year 2023–2024, but for MISH 4, 2024–2025.

Two online alumni events were organised in Nov–Dec 2024 with five alumni from all three countries presenting their work on achieving sustainable health since completing the training program.

The MISH programme brings together representatives of various sectors at local and national levels in the three countries positioning sustainable health as a priority on the global agenda (ToC, output 2). The organisation and delivery of the programme is through a representative Project Lead Team and Steering Committee and involves constant reflection of how to work well together and equitably (ToC, output 3). Most modules are delivered by two partners, Makerere and Kinshasa School of Public Health (DRC), or Tinkr (Norway) and Mak etc. The alumni network and the continued engagement across sectors including during frequent events contribute to a functioning cross-sectoral platform and network (ToC, output 4).

1.1.1.2 MIDWIZE

The leadership programme for public health officials in maternal and child health in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda (MIDWIZE), is a one-year-long, part-time, online/onsite programme. The programme aims to strengthen capacity in reproductive, maternal, and newborn health.

There were 28 participants in the fourth iteration of the training programme 2023–2024. The curriculum included onsite workshops in each country in November 2023 and a follow up in May 2024. A total of 26 participants attended the workshops and received their certificates. The workshops include one theoretical day when the participants deepen their knowledge of about four evidence-based practices provided by health care staff in labour and childbirth. During the second and third day, practical training hands-on in the labour ward is conducted. The training workshops are being followed by bi-weekly online sessions in which the performance is being studied using run-charts and PDSA cycles to evaluate the improvement.

The MIDWIZE 5, 2024–2025, program started in September 2024 with 28 participants from Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. One PhD student has been recruited to evaluate the MIDWIZE capacity building program and its effects on the capacity and uptake of evidence-based practices in the targeted countries.

The MIDWIZE program gives priority to female participants, which means that two thirds of the participants in each cohort are female.

1.1.1.3 Innovation for Sustainable Health course

The course Innovation for Sustainable Health aims to integrate principles and innovative tools and approaches in teaching and research, to build capacity to effectively work and promote an integrated cross-sectoral and innovative approach towards achieving sustainable health and Agenda 2030 or organizational development of the workplace. It is an online, self-paced course, for professional development, free of charge, free access for all and based on the MISH programme.

130 persons registered to take the course 2024, of which 19 completed the course. The course was also reviewed and changes made to ease navigation and update content in line with emerging sustainable health issues. <https://k12.instructure.com/courses/591110>

1.1.2 Education and training in Sustainable Health and Development

Course for undergraduate students

Students from three study programmes at KI (nursing, radiography and medicine) attended the elective course in Sustainable Health and Development, 7.5 credits 20 students, 4 men and 16 women. The course was given for the second time, and the number of students has doubled since 2023.

Course for doctoral students

The course in Sustainable Health and the 2030 Agenda, 2 credits, for doctoral students at KI, was developed during 2024 and offered for the first time in December. There were 16

students from different departments at KI and other universities in Ethiopia, Uganda, France, the US and Sweden participated, facilitated by a seamless hybrid format.

Course for masters' students

A course on sustainable health was developed in 2024 for the masters' programme in global health at KI, which will be delivered as a two-year programme starting in 2025. The course will be delivered for the first time in 2025 and include a module on health diplomacy.

Empowering Educators: Integrating Sustainable Health in Training for Healthcare Professionals at KI

The KI team was awarded a KI Pedagogical grant in 2023 worth 85 000 USD to research the use of transformative education for sustainable health among KI teaching staff. The project aimed to understand KI educators' use and preparedness to use transformative education and develop tools to support teaching staff in implementing transformative education. The project surveyed course leaders (62 participants) and ended with a focus group discussion (12 participants) held at KI. This work was presented at the KI Education Congress and at the European Association for Public Health Conference, in Lisbon. The report is due in 2025.

The project contributes to positioning Sustainable Health to the local agenda. Through funding from a committee at KI, the project reached out to over 300 survey respondents to promote the language of sustainable health, focusing on how to train future health professionals to develop competences related to this topic.

1.1.3 The Health Diplomacy Initiative

The aim of the project is to contribute to enhanced capacity in international politics, leadership and diplomacy for health worldwide, as well as to put Global Health Diplomacy higher up on the political and academic agendas by improving the knowledge and skills of professionals working in this area. The project benefits from high level interest and support from some of the world's foremost senior leaders and experts in global health as well as their respective networks. The work on Global Health Diplomacy has been done in close collaboration with the Stockholm School of Economics' (SSE), House of Governance and Public Policy, which is a multidisciplinary department at SSE with leading researchers and educators.

The initiative includes three main components,

- Executive programme. A cohort of 28 mid-career fellows from 21 countries were selected for the first executive education programme *Politics and Diplomacy for Health*, which started in April 2024. The program enrolled mid-career professionals from 21 countries and diverse geographical regions, representing the public and private sectors and civil society. An evaluation report has been prepared.
- Dialogues and research – a pilot study. Mapping of demand and existing opportunities for skills development was done 2023, leading to work for a Lancet series on Global Health Diplomacy. a high-level conference with practitioners, leaders, and key institutions, the International Politics, Leadership and Diplomacy for Health Conference 2023

- Health Diplomacy Community: A Global Health Diplomacy Institutional Network has been established. This network seeks to enhance the efforts of leading academic institutions worldwide, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, research and best practices in health diplomacy. Currently, 32 leading academic institutions from around the world participate in the network.

Based on the first global Politics and Diplomacy for Health fellows' programme, a workshop was organized together with Makerere School of Public Health and The Rwanda National University at Makerere University November 2024 to prepare and plan for an African Health Diplomacy programme.

1.1.4 Building capacity for sustainable development in fragile states

The project *Building capacity for sustainable development in fragile states*, SDGCap, was a collaborative project between KI, Mak, University of Kinshasa in the DRC and Benadir University in Somalia, funded by Sida, for two and a half years (2021–2023). The project was reported to the CESH Steering committee, the members of the reference group, and at a Global Conversation 2024. The final report was submitted to Sida during 2024. Contacts have been formed with potential funders to be able to continue the project.

1.1.5 Leadership for Transformative Change

Representatives from the CESH team at KI have been involved in the development of the leadership course *Leadership for Transformative Change*, which started in August 2023 in Sweden, coordinated by Uppsala University. The programme was designed for leaders in organisations in any societal sector working for societal transformation towards sustainability. The programme was built on co-creation, where the participants' needs, ideas and challenges are important building blocks. The program ended in May 2024.

1.2 Tools and resources

1.2.1 Tools for Action

The five *Tools for Action* are developed to accelerate the progress to achieve sustainable health for all. The Tools provide concrete guidance for academics, policymakers, and others and are integrated into activities.

The five tools are:

- Innovation & Technology for Health
- Research to Action
- Visualising and Communicating Data
- Information and digitalization
- Multisectoral work

The fifth and final tool, *Multisectoral work* was developed in 2024. The development of the toolkits was led by two experts, one from each university, and were presented at the steering committee and at the reference group meetings. The tools have been

predominantly used in teaching in the courses at KI- PhD Sustainable Health, as well as in some CESH projects, including the MISH programme in 2024.

Most challenges faced throughout the year were connected to limited funding that stunted development and promotion efforts. This was in addition to poor or limited marketing strategies. Little engagement with the tools by users hence resulting in minimal feedback. A preliminary evaluation of the tools by CESH members and the Grants Officer revealed the need to describe what a tool is and what it can do for the users to spark interest and increase utilisation. Members also noted that the graphics were nice and appealing and that some were easy to navigate.

Much feedback was received on how the Tools for Action could be improved. This included making the web page easier to navigate, clarifying terminology (resource vs tool), and adding instructional videos or examples of how the tools have been used in teaching and professional activities. Importantly, it was important that the users were able to identify themselves as the target group of at least one tool for them to actively engage.

In response to this feedback, the information architecture of the web page is undergoing a gradual overhaul to improve accessibility and navigation. Additionally, CESH is collaborating with the Swedish national network, Sustainable Health in Partnership (SHIP) to actively promote and disseminate the Tools for Action.

1.2.1.1 Policy lab at KI

Policy lab, a forum for discussion and learning for staff at KI, developed in collaboration with the Centre for Health Crises at KI, as part of the Tools for Action, from Research to Action.

Examples of topics covered 2024

- The structure of Swedish national governance and decisions
- Antibiotic resistance – how research and evidence can influence policy at the highest level
- Global Health Policy, Politics and Political Economy – What’s the Difference and Does it Matter?
- Why don't they do what we tell them? – A policy lab on scientific advice

1.3 Networks and partnerships

1.3.1 Global Conversations on Sustainable Health

Global Conversations for Sustainable Health are webinars for sharing and exchanging creative solutions and aspirations towards achieving sustainable health.

Four *Global Conversations* were arranged 2024 with 80–200 participants, and up to 350 registrations each time, covering the following topics:

- ✓ **Global Conversation on Sustainable Health: Navigating the Nexus of Climate Change, Air Quality Resilience, and Future Health Solutions**

The conversation explored the intricate interplay between climate change, air quality, and their impact on sustainable health. Valuable insights were gained from Professor Frances Sprei's research on sustainable mobility choices, the Kampala Capital City Authority's initiatives for sustainable air pollution solutions in Uganda, and Associate Professor Petter Ljungman's expertise on the cardiovascular impacts of environmental exposures, particularly in low and middle-income countries. The discussion highlighted interdisciplinary challenges and stressed collaborative efforts for effective policy responses. The seminar was organised by the Centre and Wexus – West Sweden Nexus for Sustainable Development, a collaborative arena run jointly by Chalmers University of Technology, the University of Gothenburg and University West.

There were 196 participants (of 252 registered) from 21 countries.
- ✓ **Multisectoral collaboration to reach the sustainable development goals, what does it mean in practice?**

Multisectoral collaboration is seen as a prerequisite to reaching the 2030 Agenda, but how is it done in practice? Little guidance is available, although everybody talks about the importance of doing it. Members of the SDGCap program (see 1.1.5) shared their experiences and results of working together to enable multisectoral collaboration in Uganda, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

One of the key learnings from SDGCap highlighted, was the critical role Academia could play in creating a neutral platform for multi – stakeholder dialogue and action for sustainable growth.

There were 113 participants (of 264 registered).
- ✓ **The Role of Academia in Navigating the Health and Climate Crisis Nexus**

The event was organised in collaboration with Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, and focused on how academia is adapting to equip future professionals with the skills needed to address the health impacts of the climate crisis. With many decision-makers holding or pursuing academic degrees, the discussion explored how universities are innovating their teaching approaches, what works, what does not work, and the extent of reforms needed.

Speakers included:

 - KI: Karin Dahlman-Wright, Professor and Chair of KI's Council for Environment and Sustainable Development; Nikolaus Mezger, medical doctor, master's student in epidemiology, and co-author of the Planetary Health Report Card;

- Mak: Michael Z.N.S. Mbogga, PhD, Lecturer at the School of Forestry, Environmental and Geographical Sciences; and Lydia Namakula, a master's student in Environmental and Occupational Health.
- Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Dr Sabine Gehrke-Beck, MD and Teaching Coordinator at the Institute of General Practice, and Silvia Hartman, MD, MPH, doctoral student and co-founder of the German Alliance on Climate Change and Health.

There were 165 participants (of 374 registered) from 35 countries.

✓ **Advancing Quality Care During Labour and Childbirth**

The conversation focused on advancing quality care during labour and childbirth. The discussion addressed innovations, respectful maternity care, and collaborative implementation of maternal health interventions across diverse settings.

Dr. Richard Mugahi, Commissioner for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health at the Ministry of Health in Uganda, explored the role of policy and support in implementing maternal health interventions during birth throughout Uganda. Louise Nordström, Head of Midwives and Obstetric Care at Karolinska University Hospital, shared improvement efforts from a Swedish perspective, with a focus on promoting respectful maternity care. Professor Helena Lindgren, KI and the MIDWIZE project, presented research and practical approaches to respectful care, dynamic birth positions, and better birth outcomes in Uganda, East Africa, and Sweden. Christine Kajungu, project coordinator at UNFPA Uganda, provided insights from the implementation of maternal health projects in Uganda and beyond, offering a UN perspective.

There were 176 participants from 16 countries of 342 registrations from 53 universities across 34 countries.

1.3.2 Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence

CESH is a partner in the Cluster of *Research Excellence on Preparedness and Response to Pandemics and Shocks*, led by Mak. The clusters are an initiative by the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (Guild) launched in mid-2023, to address societal and scientific challenges framed by the Africa Union - European Union Innovation Agenda.

The cluster was launched under the priority area public health. <https://www.the-guild.eu/africa-europe-core/Preparedness-and-Response-to-Pandemics-and-Shocks.html>

In 2024, the cluster implemented projects to document how lessons from COVID-19 and previous epidemics, informed Uganda's 2023 Ebola response, implemented interventions to improve mortality surveillance in island districts in Uganda and initiated an evaluation of the response to Mpox epidemic in Uganda. A summary of the cluster's 2024 activities can be found here: https://us9.campaign-archive.com/?e=__test_email__&u=8e25fcbf1464f47226fae9dae&id=8471eea25d

1.3.3 Alumni

In conjunction with both visits from the leadership of KI in February and November, the delegations met with alumni of the KI-Mak collaboration.

In February alumni were invited for lunch to meet with the delegation from KI led by vice president, Martin Bergö. In November, an alumni event was organised to celebrate the collaboration. The achievements of the nearly 25-year partnership was celebrated. The purpose of the event was to inspire and increase alumni activity, as well as mark the importance of the collaboration between KI and Mak through the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health, CESH. Among the speakers were Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dean of MakSPH, Annika Östman Wernersson, KI President, Maria Håkansson, Ambassador, Sarah Muwanguzi, Midwife, MIDWIZE alumna. There were about 70 participants. Most of them were alumni from the KI and Mak collaboration, but a fair number were also from the KI delegation at Mak. Other guests present were faculty and representatives from Mak. The event was organised by the KI Alumni relations coordinator Peter Bergman in collaboration with Susan Byekwaso, Coordinator, International Programmes at Mak and Kseniya Hartvigsson and Monika Berge-Thelander from the KI CESH team.

President Wernerson described the partnership as a "remarkable example of sustained collaboration," noting its accomplishments and the extensive participation of over 200 students and 150 educators in transformative academic exchanges.

[KI President visited Uganda and Rwanda to strengthen global collaborations | Karolinska Institutet](https://news.ki.se/alumni-event-in-uganda-celebrating-decades-of-collaboration-and-academic-exchange)

<https://news.ki.se/alumni-event-in-uganda-celebrating-decades-of-collaboration-and-academic-exchange>

1.3.4 Partners

1.3.4.1 Leadership meetings at Makerere University

KI's leadership visited Makerere University in 2024. Vice President Martin Bergö and Erika Dabhikar, Head of the Office of International Relations with co-chair for CESH Tobias Alfvén and other representatives from the CESH team in Sweden visited in February. In November, Vice-Chancellor Annika Östman Wernerson visited Makerere University.

In November, the delegation led by Annika Östman Wernerson met with Maria Håkansson, the ambassador of Sweden to Uganda; Lotta Segerström Tejpar, head of the Political Section; and Tomas Lundström, health counsellor, as introduction to Uganda. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about the Swedish government's work in the country through the embassy and discuss opportunities for continued engagement and collaboration. The delegation met with Professor Rhoda Wanyenze, dean of Makerere University's School of Public Health, to learn about the extensive collaboration between the two universities. At the leadership meeting at Makerere University's College of Health Sciences, President Wernerson met with Professor Damalie Nakanjako, principal of the College, alongside the deans, and members of the steering committee. President Wernerson met with Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, in the newly inaugurated main building. Discussions focused on

strengthening their collaboration, advancing pedagogical research, and preparing students to become leaders in public health.

During the visit to Makerere University, President Wernerson also visited the Nephrology Unit at the Mulago National Referral Hospital. They hosted President Wernerson with a comprehensive presentation, showcasing their innovative approaches to, among other things, nephrology care. The delegation also visited:

- The China-Uganda Friendship Hospital Naguru and observed the work of the MIDWIZE team.
- The Africa Medical and Behavioural Sciences Organization (AMBSO), one of the leading research and service-based organizations contributing to national and international knowledge on HIV, infectious diseases, and non-communicable diseases. AMBSO was established in 2016 by a group of Ugandan epidemiologists and has made significant contributions to HIV prevention science. AMBSO has fostered strong collaborations with researchers from Makerere University School of Public Health and Karolinska Institutet. The partnerships have been instrumental in advancing AMBSO's mission to contribute to the global fight against infectious and non-communicable diseases.

1.3.4.2 New collaborations

New contacts include:

- Charité, Berlin for co-organising a Global conversation 2024 and plan for continued work together on Sustainable Health.
- Stockholm School of Economics for the application to STINT for strategic internationalisation and as partner in delivering the global health diplomacy programme
- Sustainable Health in Partnership (SHIP) in Sweden, for promoting the sustainable health concept, disseminating the Tools for Action and testing the equitable partnership framework.
- Wexus – West Sweden Nexus for Sustainable Development, a collaborative arena run jointly by Chalmers University of Technology, the University of Gothenburg and University West – partner in organising a Global conversation.

1.3.4.3 Equitable partnerships- area of study

In partnership with Stockholm School of Economics, KI applied for the STINT application on Strategic internationalisation, on the topic of strategic and responsible internationalisation by promoting equitable partnerships. The STINT application was rejected, but the work continued.

A literature search was conducted to explore the concept of equitable partnerships in research and higher education institutions. The framework 'Africa Charter' was presented to the working group. CESH is in the early stages of understanding the concept. However, there is a common understanding to continue working on the theme. A decision was taken

to apply 2025 for the STINT grant for strategic internationalisation of higher education institutes, with the aim of developing a framework and a tool within the Tools for Action. This is in addition to possibly publishing (an) article(s). Discussions about equity and equitable partnerships will take place in CESH throughout 2025.

1.4 Research

The four research areas, capitalising on the collaboration between KI and MAK, aiming to improving health and wellbeing for all, are

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Research on children and adolescents
- Non-communicable Diseases (NCD)
- Climate change and health

1.4.1 Sexual and reproductive health and rights for the most vulnerable

MIDWIZE – Midwife-led quality improvements in Uganda

The MIDWIZE research project at Naguru Hospital in Kampala focuses on bridging the gap between evidence and practice in midwifery care. Midwives lead improvement initiatives to strengthen maternal care and enhance health outcomes for women and newborns.

Results achieved

Results demonstrate that midwife-led quality improvement (QI) interventions can bridge the gap between evidence and practice in maternal and newborn care. By co-developing QI initiatives with multiple stakeholders and centring midwives and end-users, midwives can drive transformative improvements in care quality. Through structured QI approaches, they can enhance essential midwifery practices such as dynamic birth positions, perineal protection, and intrapartum support, leading to a significant reduction in low 5-minute Apgar scores and perineal injuries. These findings highlight that when provided with the mandate, time, and skills to improve care, midwives can drive sustainable change and promote high-quality care during labour and birth.

The research contributed to Output 2, *Positioning Sustainable Health as a priority on the global agenda*, by showing how midwife-led Quality Improvement can strengthen maternal and newborn care, highlighting its role in sustainable health systems. By engaging policymakers, researchers from KI and Mak, and healthcare providers, the study reinforced the importance of midwives in delivering high-quality, evidence-based care. The findings also add to sustainable health by demonstrating how locally driven interventions can be scaled and integrated into policy and practice.

The research contributed to Output 3, *Increased understanding of how to build and maintain effective and equitable partnerships for addressing sustainable health challenges*, by demonstrating how co-creation and collaboration can drive sustainable improvements in maternal and newborn health. By placing midwives at the centre of Quality Improvement (QI) initiatives, the study highlighted how equitable partnerships

between midwives, policymakers, and healthcare providers can bridge the gap between evidence and practice. It showed that training midwives in QI methods strengthens their ability to improve care quality and fosters ownership of sustainable change. Engaging academia, government, and healthcare ensured scalable solutions, while a locally driven approach made interventions more inclusive and effective. The study provided practical insights into building and maintaining partnerships that empower midwives and enhance maternal care in resource-limited settings. For research publications, see 2.4.5

1.4.2 Research on children and adolescents

The research objective is to enhance the progress towards achieving the child health targets of SDGs in selected low-income countries. The focus is on project; the Sustainable Preventive Integrated Child Health Care (SPICH).

The Sustainable Preventive Integrated Child Health (SPICH) Project

Despite decades of global efforts to reduce under five mortality, 5 million children die before their fifth birthday. Numerous landmark reports have called for integrated approaches to further accelerate reductions, yet interventions are often delivered in silo and, to our knowledge, no global synthesis of the evidence for integrated preventive systems exists. Therefore, the work on the Sustainable Preventive Integrated Child Health (SPICH).

Two major activities have been performed.

- 1) A scoping review to map the existing literature on systems of well-child visits from 2000 to 2023 has been done and the results are summarized and will be published during 2025.
- 2) A larger qualitative study has been performed in Kampala with diverse groups of stakeholders in child health, to inform the participatory research of a stakeholder-led intervention on well-care visits for young children in Kampala. The data has been collected and are now being analysed and will result in at least three different publications. and form the basis for a co-designed intervention. A co-design approach may be valuable, given the request from stakeholders at local level to be actively involved throughout the process.

The research contributed to Output 2, *Positioning Sustainable Health as a priority on the global agenda*, by showing the importance of working multisectoral and take other non-classic health partners into consideration when building preventive integrated child health programmes.

The research contributed to Output 3, *Increased understanding of how to build and maintain effective and equitable partnerships for addressing sustainable health*, by working closely together with different partners in building a sustainable preventive integrated child health system. In all the work, including data collection in our qualitative studies a lot of focus is put on how we work together and how we build and maintain equitable partnerships. For research publications, see 2.4.5

1.4.3 Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)

The working group for the theme Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) focused on bridging the gap between different research groups and projects at KI and MAK. The group strives for improvement in making the research within NCD visible and to strengthen the collaboration between different projects and research groups that are active at KI and MAK. The group has also undertaken initiatives to source for research funding and created new collaborations in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

Results achieved

The World Health Organization's iSUPPORT program is feasible and acceptable to dementia caregivers in Uganda. However, further studies are needed to examine such interventions' prolonged impacts. 2. Precision health advances offer great potential for LMICs. To realize this potential, the field needs to take a life-course, multisectoral approach using different types of data to prevent disease; the field should not restrict itself to using genetic information only to treat disease. Determining risk is not enough – precise actions with high coverage are required for health impact. 3. There is a heavy burden of psychological distress and depression among Ugandan caregivers of patients with ADRD, highlighting the need for structured support systems, including mental health services and gender-responsive interventions in low-resource settings.

The research contributed to Output 2, *Positioning Sustainable Health as a priority on the global agenda*, to a high extent, within the targeted groups ie, the elderly and people at high risk for NCDs; explanations:

- a) Our clinical trial provided stronger evidence that the WHO's iSUPPORT tool is a viable approach to empowering caregivers to improve home-based dementia care in low resource countries. In LMICs and indeed LICs, effective home based care is the mainstay of sustainable care for the elderly with chronic conditions
- b) Our research on the burden of psychological distress and dementia among caregivers of dementia patients highlights the need for a stronger supportive environment and empowerment programs for these care-givers, who are critical in the care chain. Local health actors should provide them with training on how to manage, cope and adapt to the caregiving role, for better outcomes both for the patients and themselves
- c) The research on precision health highlights the need for use of low-tech life-course data to facilitate targeted prevention plans for disease at the individual level

The research contributed to Output 3, *Increased understanding of how to build and maintain effective and equitable partnerships for addressing sustainable health challenges*, to a mild extent. The opinion paper on precision health highlights the need for a multi-sectoral approach to its implementation in LMICs.

The research contributed to Output 4, *Functioning cross-sectoral platform and network*, to a mild extent. The NCD focus has diversified to look at mental health issues of the elderly and their care environment

Challenges faced when implementing the research in 2024 was related to the lack of a core flagship grant to facilitate core research priorities.
For research publications, see 2.4.5

1.4.4 Climate Change and Health

The team continued working on two major themes, the impact of climate change on health and health systems. Ongoing work has focused on the impact of climate change on child health with a review manuscript submitted for publication and a scoping review on the impact of climate change on health with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa which will be submitted in 2025.

The World Health Organization Alliance for Health policy and Systems Research funded project to document the health systems impact and adaptation mechanisms was also concluded in 2024 and manuscripts finalised for publication.

Through funding from the Makerere University Research & Innovations Fund, support is being provided to graduate students to conduct dissertation research in climate change and health. A total of ten multidisciplinary students are currently being supported working on several themes including sexual and reproductive health, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and neglected tropical diseases among others. The research findings were also widely disseminated at conferences and meetings expanding the cross-sectoral platform and networks (ToC, output 4). The climate change and health theme contribute to positioning sustainable health as a priority on the global agenda with a focus on children, pregnant women, and vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa (ToC, output 2).

1.4.5 Research publications

The following studies have been published in 2024.

Adem R, Nor HW, Fuje MM, Mohamed AH, Alfvén T, Wanyenze RK, Guled AY, Biday MM, Viberg N, Helldén D. Linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and health in Somalia. *BMC Public Health*. 2024 Mar 27;24(1):904. doi: 10.1186/s12889-024-18319-x. PMID: 38539168; PMCID: PMC10967222

Johanna Blomgren, Helena Lindgren, Dinah Amongin, Kerstin Erlandsson, Christina Lundberg, Annette E. Kanyunyuzi, Sarah Muwanguzi, Victoria M. Babyrie, Ketty Ogwang, Dinnah Aineomugasho, Namutosi Catherine, Michael B. Wells – Midwife-led quality improvement: Increasing the use of evidence-based birth practices in Uganda: *ScienceDirect, Midwifery*, Volume 139, December 2024, 104188

John Macharia Kiragu, Ingrid Osika Friberg, Kerstin Erlandsson, M.B. Wells, Miriam Carole Atieno Wagoro, Johanna Blomgren, Helena Lindgren, Costs and intermediate outcomes for the implementation of evidence-based practices of midwifery under a MIDWIZE framework in an urban health facility in Nairobi, Kenya, *Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*, Volume 37, 2023100893, ISSN 1877-5756, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.srhc.2023.100893>.



Irene Wanyana, Daniel Helldén, Rawlance Ndejjo, Marat Murzabekov, Tobias Alfven, Rhoda K Wanyenze, Nina Viberg – Finding linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals in Uganda: a key to attain health and well-being for all: *BMJ Public Health* 2024;2:e000529

Muxamuud X, Mohamed F, Khalif A, Saleiman A, Viberg N, Nor H, Adem R, Erlandsson K, Lindgren H A collaborative development initiative to strengthen Midwifery Education in Somalia. *SHAJ Somali Health Action Journal*. Vol 4 No.1 (2024)

Gumikiriza-Onoria, J.L., Nakigudde, J., Mayega, R.W. et al. Psychological distress among family caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias in Uganda. *BMC Geriatr* 24, 602 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-05190-z>

Gumikiriza-Onoria JL, Mayega RW, Nakigudde J, Giordani B, Sajatovic M, Mukasa MK, Buwembo D, Lwera K, Nakasujja N (2024): Feasibility and acceptability of the World Health Organization’s iSUPPORT program for dementia caregivers in Uganda. *Academia Mental Health and Well-Being* August 2024;1. <https://doi.org/10.20935/MHealthWellB7292>

Stefan Swartling Peterson, Olive Kobusingye, Roy Mayega, Jackson Orem & Peter Waiswa (2024): A life-course multisectoral approach to precision health in LMICs: Precision health in low- and middle-income countries should focus on disease prevention and implementation in order to be cost-effective and impactful. *Commentary; Nature Medicine*; July 2024; <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03108-1>

2 Evaluation of CESH and recommendations

The internal evaluation of Centre 2023, based on two years of its establishment (January 2021–Nov 2023), had the aim to:

- Learn the extent outputs were achieved.
- Understand what has worked well and not, to improve the way the Centre works.
- Articulate and demonstrate the value of the Centre to core and potential funders and collaborators.
- Disseminate best or inspiring practices to other institutions.
- Foster knowledge exchange by sharing insights with collaborators.

The report of findings was presented to the members of the steering committee and discussed during the visit of the KI vice president, Martin Bergö, to Makerere University in February 2024. How to proceed in integrating the recommendations into the collaboration plan for the next phase 2026–2030 was discussed during the year in workshops of the working group and presented to the members of the reference group.

Recommendations from the evaluation

The following seven recommendations were made from the evaluation of the Centre:

1. Create a strategy to enhance access and use of the innovations, tools, and competencies of CESH, such as Tools for Action, courses, training, publications, etc.
2. Elaborate stakeholder engagement through leveraging traditional and social media, a vibrant alumni network, and other partnerships to expand the reach and influence of CESH.
3. Leverage the global respect academia has as an (unpolitical or uncontroversial) partner in different projects to expand the CESH network in places experiencing fragility.
4. Develop a framework with guidelines and definitions for equitable partnerships to ensure shared understanding and functionality. It should include indicators or criteria of equitable partnerships to enhance objective evaluation, relevance, and use in and by other partnerships.
5. Encourage CESH to continue to be responsive to emerging issues or discourses, such as equitable collaborations or the decolonization of global health and develop appropriate research and programme areas to enhance the relevance and added value of CESH.
6. Streamline the monitoring and evaluation function by creating a comprehensive M&E plan for CESH. This plan would articulate data needs and support systems for effectively monitoring CESH and its operations, including indicators and methodology to monitor the outcomes.
7. Beyond evaluating the extent to which CESH has reached its outcomes, as defined in the Theory of Change, the next evaluation should focus on:



- a. Utility of the Theory of Change and whether it may need to be reviewed and revised.
- b. If CESH is currently missing any key emerging issues that should be integrated into its research and capacity–strengthening activities.
- c. How well are the current CESH structures working, and do they need any adjustments?

3 Funding

The total amount of funding granted 2024 was 784 955 USD, of which 488 955 USD was external funding and 296 000 USD was from KI.

Funding was granted from the Einhorn Foundation in Sweden, Swedish Institute Public Sector Innovation Programme in partnership with Benadir University (Somalia), University of Kinshasa School of Public Health (DRC), Tinkr (Norway) and KI collaborative grants for cooperation with Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany).

Organisation	Title	Project output	Budget (USD)	Start	End
Einhorn Foundation	Find it, try it, buy it! Could interventions that were successful for women's and children's health be sustained and scaled up by midwife-led quality improvements?	The project aims to scale up midwife-led quality improvement projects that have proven to be successful in reducing adverse outcomes for women and newborns in least developed countries in East African countries.	9000	1-9 2024	
Swedish Institute	MIDWIZE SI Public Sector Innovation programme 2024-2025/	See 1.1.2.3 in Annual report	240 000	1-8 2024	1-8 2025
Swedish Institute	MISH SI Public Sector Innovation programme 2024-2025/	See 1.1.2.1 in Annual report	239 955	1-8 2024	1-8 2025
KI	KI, strategic funding 2023-2024	Funding for admin such as homepage, travels, project leads at KI	290 000	2-1 2024	31-12 2024
KI	KI- collaborative grants for cooperation with Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin	Initiate collaboration with Charité Centre for Global Health, to visit Charité, write a larger grant proposal, focusing on two intertwined projects, "Midwize" and "Sustainable and Integrated Preventive Child Health" (SPICH), which strive to implement practical approaches for improved healthcare for women and children.	6000	01-12-2024	30-06-2025

In total ten grant applications were submitted of which 3 (30 %) were successful, ranging from capacity building of public health professionals to midwives/nurses. Multiple funding sources were targeted including private/foundation, public, EU, government. Seven applications were (70 %) were rejected (Science for Africa Foundation, SFA

2 STINT, Wellcome, Laerdal Foundation, Erling Persson foundation).

Active projects 2024

Projects that received funding prior to 2024:

Organisation	Title	Start	End
Carl Bennet AB	Research about mental, physical health and well-being among young people	1-1 2021	18-7 2026
Swedish Institute	MIDWIZE SI Public Sector Innovation programme 2023-2024, See 1.1.2.3 in Annual report	1-8 2023	1-8 2024
Vinnova	Healthy Living Together: Empowering Communities for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention applying for international call HORIZON-HLTH-2024-DISEASE-03-08 call, entitled "Comparative effectiveness research for healthcare interventions in areas of high public health need" which was rejected	1-7 2023	11-4 2024
WHO Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research	Health systems resilience in the face of extreme weather events: what is the policy, mitigation and adaptation measures in heavily hit Bududa and Kasese districts in Uganda? See 1.4.4 in Annual report	1-7 2023	30-10 2024
Swedish Research council	HALT STROKE- prevention and rehabilitation of stroke in Uganda. A network grant KI and AMBSO	2022-01-01	31-12 2025
Makerere University Research & Innovations Fund (RIF)	Ambulatory Blood Pressure among a general population cohort in Rakai See 1.4.4 in Annual report	1-1 2024	31-12 2024
RIF	Harnessing Digital Health Platforms in preventive and promotive health services for Adolescents and young Adults in Uganda. See 1.4.4 in Annual report	1-1 2024	31-12 2024
RIF	To conduct research on characterising hypertension among people living with HIV See 1.4.4 in Annual report	2-1 2024	31-12 2024
RIF	Climate and health in Uganda: Building capacity and Bridging knowledge gaps. See 1.4.4 in Annual report	2-1 2024	31-12 2024

4 Organisation

Working group

The working group has met regularly, online every three weeks with a two month pause in June–July. Two workshops for the working group took place, one during the visit with vice president, Martin Bergö, on communication, prior to launching the updated homepage for the centre, and one hybrid workshop in June, discussing the recommendations from the evaluation of CESH and how to move forward. The KI team had two workshops as well, one in January on communication and one in September on education on sustainable health, how to make CESH relevant to the whole KI, and on what calls for funding to prioritise.

Steering committee

The steering committee welcomed the new members Prof. Richard Idro (new deputy principal, Makerere University College of Health Sciences), replacing Prof. Isaac Kajja and Giulia Dallagiacom, new doctoral student representative at KI replacing Daniel Hellden. Meetings were held in March and October. At the meeting in March, focus was on presenting the results of the evaluation of CESH and recommendations and on how to move forward. The new homepage for CESH was presented. At the meeting in October, the report of the SDGCap was presented and discussed and what applications for funding to submit was discussed. There was also a report from the World Health Summit.

Reference group

There were two meetings for the Reference group, in May and in October. The meeting in May focused on the evaluation of the Centre and the framework for Multisectoral and Equitable Partnerships. Questions discussed were: *What are the attributes of equitable partnerships? Are we all talking about the same thing? How can Equitable partnerships be developed and strengthened?* The Tool for Action, Multisectoral collaboration, was presented.

To the meeting in October, student representatives were invited and the meeting focused on education. During 2024, the working group started discussing education for sustainable health. The KI-team dedicated part of their workshop to brainstorm what education for sustainable health looks like. This was then brought to the reference group meeting where one of the meetings was dedicated to brainstorming and discussing this topic. The concept of sustainable health and key competencies for sustainable health were presented (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). It was concluded that education in sustainable health requires a blend of competencies that empower individuals to enhance health outcomes while considering environmental sustainability. Integrating sustainable health into courses across various disciplines involves a holistic and systems-thinking approach. The reference group highlighted the need to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for teaching sustainable health, identifying the competencies and skills lecturers must possess to provide relevant education.

Establishing concept-specific benchmarks tailored to different contexts is crucial to support educators and students from multiple perspectives. Direct engagement with

students, alongside expert guidelines on key content, assessment methods, and overall direction, is essential to ensure the effective integration of sustainable health education.

[What are the key competencies for teaching and learning Sustainable Health? | CESH](#)

5 Dissemination and communication

Dissemination at conferences

Representatives from the Centre proactively advocate for sustainable health by leading workshops, presenting posters and participating in panel discussion at local, regional and global network meetings and conferences.

- May 16, presenting a poster showcasing the Centre at the SASUF Research and Innovation Week in Lund, Sweden
Nina Viberg
The South Africa–Sweden University Forum, SASUF, a transformative project uniting 40 universities from across Sweden and South Africa.
- May 22, Sustainability Day at KI, Sweden
Presenting a poster showcasing the Centre which also was mentioned by the keynote speaker, with a reminder to the Global Conversation for sustainable health
May 29th
Monika Berge–Thelander, Kseniya Hartvigsson and Nina Viberg
- September 30, Africa – Europe Clusters of Research Excellence Conference 2024, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Presentation title: *Africa–Europe research collaboration*
Representing the Preparedness and Response to Pandemics and Shocks cluster: an update.
Rawlance Ndejjo
- October 2, KI Educational Congress, Sweden
Two sessions at the KI Educational Conference
Presentation title: *Empowering Educators: Integrating Sustainable Health in Healthcare Professionals'*
Karin Båge, Fina Hossain

Presentation title: *Innovative Teaching on how to Find Solutions for the Wicked Problems of Sustainable Health –*
Karin Båge, Nina Viberg
- October 9, Charité Center for Global Health Community Day 2024
Presentation title: *Women's Health: Sustainable health: integrating evidence-based midwifery and child health practices through the MIDWIZE and SPICH Project in Uganda.*
Johanna Blomgren & Anna–Theresia Ekman

- October 15, 2nd Climate and Health Pre-COP Symposium, Kampala, Uganda.
Presentation title: *Building climate resilient systems in Uganda: lessons from Bududa, Moroto, and Kasese district*
Rawlance Ndejjo
- October 21, The Development Research Conference, DevRes 2024), Lund, Sweden
Theme *Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in a polarized world.*
 - Presentation title: *Promoting Collaborative Engagement and SDGs Localization in Uganda*
Irene Wanyana
 - Midwize: Presentation title: *Empowering Midwives for Improved Maternity Care in Uganda*
Johanna Blomgren
 - Presentation title: *Five years with the MIDWIZE Leadership Program – Impact and Experiences from Uganda and Ethiopia*
Helena Lindgren
- October 23, Stockholm Trio seminar, KI, Sweden
Presentation title: *Interdisciplinary research and education for sustainable development*
- October 29, 1st Climate and Health Africa Conference 2024, Harare, Zimbabwe
Presentation title: *Building climate resilient health systems in Uganda: lessons from districts that experience extreme weather events*
Rawlance Ndejjo
- November 6, 4th Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN) Climate and Health virtual Conference, Nairobi, Kenya.
Presentation title: *Building climate resilient health systems in Uganda: lessons from districts that experience extreme weather events*
Rawlance Ndejjo
- November 11, the European Public Health Conference
Empowering educators: Integrating Sustainable Health in Healthcare Professionals' Training
Karin Båge
- November 12, COP 29 UNICEF and World Health Organization co-hosted "The Health Argument for Climate Action" with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General and Yalchin Rafiyev the Lead Negotiator for COP29 Azerbaijan, Kitty van der Heijden, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director and Youth envoys from Mongolia and Madagascar and Senior Advisor at UNICEF, Abheet Solomon. During the event, findings from the report "A Threat to Progress: Confronting the Effect of Climate Change on Child Health and Well-being", co-written by UNICEF and KI were presented, highlighting

the urgent need for action. Professor Tobias Alfvén, KI highlighted the severe health impacts of climate hazards such as extreme heat, floods and air pollution and called for urgent action to protect children, urging the inclusion of young people in climate-related decisions.

Tobias Alfvén

- November 18, The 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research, Nagasaki, Japan. Presentation title: *Building climate resilient low carbon health systems in Uganda*
Rawlance Ndejjo

News

News on activities have been continuously shared on the centre's homepage, or the homepages of KI or Mak, in the CESH newsletter and on social media platforms such as the LinkedIn and X.

News Articles

KI web

- 2024-12-06 [KI President visited Uganda and Rwanda to strengthen global collaborations](#)
- 2024-11-22 Alumni event in Uganda: celebrating decades of collaboration and academic exchanges <https://news.ki.se/alumni-event-in-uganda-celebrating-decades-of-collaboration-and-academic-exchange>
- 2024-03-18 An educational policy lab about the journey of a Swedish Government Official Report <https://news.ki.se/an-educational-policy-lab-about-the-journey-of-a-swedish-government-official-report>
- 2024-03-15 [CESH and GPH colleagues visited Uganda with Vice President Martin Bergö,](#)
- Antibiotic resistance – an engaging topic at the first policy lab of the autumn <https://news.ki.se/antibiotic-resistance-an-engaging-topic-at-the-first-policy-lab-of-the-autumn>
- 2024-02-08 [Vice President Martin Bergö visited Makerere University in Uganda](#)
- 2024-02-08 [Renewed funding for Midwize and MISH training programs](#)

Cesh.health

- 2024-10-07 What are the key competencies for teaching and learning sustainable health? <https://cesh.health/what-are-key-competencies-teaching-and-learning-sustainable-health>
- 2024-04-19 Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health has launched a new website <https://cesh.health/centre-excellence-sustainable-health-has-launched-new-website>

- 2024-02-15 A delegation from Karolinska Institutet visited Makerere University in Uganda <https://cesh.health/delegation-karolinska-institutet-visited-makerere-university-uganda>
- 2024-06-25 MIDWIZE graduation ceremony on May 1st 2024 <https://cesh.health/midwize-graduation-ceremony-may-1st-2024>
- 2024-06-26 The power of collaboration at the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health <https://cesh.health/power-collaboration-centre-excellence-sustainable-health>

MAKWEB

- 2024-02-07 [Mak and Karolinska to Continue Prioritising Sustainable Health](#)

Social media

Social media platform LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/cesh-centre>

During 2024 the number of followers increased with 517 (70 followers in 2023, 670 followers in the beginning of 2025).

The followers

- are located geographically in:
 - Europe: 194
Germany: Berlin 7,
Sweden: Stockholm 145, Malmö 16, Uppsala 12, Gothenburg 7,
UK: London 7
 - Africa: 102
Uganda: Kampala 61
Ethiopia: Addis 19
Democratic Republic of Congo: Kinshasa 9,
Kenya: Nairobi 7
Somalia 6,
 - US: 7
Boston 4, New York 3
 - India 3
- have the following professional position/connection:
 - Education 138, Healthcare 73, Research 70, Business development 58,
Society and social services 29, Project management 24, Communication 19,
IT 18, Administration 17, Finance 10, Sales 8, Military 6, Law 6
- have the following professional level:



- Superior 257, Subordinate 170, Chef 81, Trainee 44

- represent the following professional branches:
 - Professional education 214, Healthcare 59, Non-profit organizations 41, Research 37, Public administration 26, Public health 25, International questions 16

Social media platform X CESH @CeshCentre

Number of followers 464.

Newsletters

Four newsletters, March, June, October, December were produced and sent to 1600 recipients. [Newsletters](#)

- **Films**

A film, introducing the Centre, was made as a result of the visit to Makerere University in February 2024 and published on the updated homepage at launch in the beginning of March. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmgFDpRsKLE>

Please visit cesh.health for more information