



Team at Karolinska Institutet in 2023

Annual Report 2023

Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health

Developing capacity and mobilising actions
to drive the agenda for sustainable health



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



**Karolinska
Institutet**



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Introduction

In the realm of health, the pursuit of sustainability is not merely an aspiration, it is an imperative. As we confront unprecedented challenges, sustainability should be our guiding principle. It will steer us towards a future where a healthy society can flourish within the bounds of ecological balance and social justice.

At the heart of our endeavour lies our commitment to excellence. Through capacity building and education, development of tools and resources, continued networking and partnerships and cutting-edge research the Centre endeavours to catalyse positive change, create societies and health systems that are not only effective and equitable but also resilient and sustainable. By harnessing the power of interdisciplinary collaboration, we strive to break down silos, bridging the chasm between traditional healthcare and environmental stewardship, between scientific inquiry and societal impact.

We draw strength from our collective determination, knowing that every breakthrough, every innovation, brings us one step closer to a world where health is a birthright.

Your CESH co-chairs,
Rhoda Wanyenze and
Tobias Alfvén

Let's begin



Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze and Prof. Tobias Alfvén



Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, and Prof. Martin Bergö, Vice President of Karolinska Institutet during the visit to Makerere University in Feb 2024



Makerere University

"Makerere is a very collaborative university. Most of our external collaborations are in Europe and the United States. For the first time the government committed about \$8 million every year for research at Makerere University. 39% of all the received grants are going to the health projects".

Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe
Vice Chancellor



Karolinska Institutet

"The Centre is working on very important issues. All current crises have an impact on both physical and mental health, which increases the importance of collaboration. Partnerships are foremost between people. Building equitable personal relationships is thus the most important objective of this visit".

Prof. Martin Bergö
Vice President



Rawlance Ndejjo and Carita Rehn at Karolinska Institutet in 2023

About the Centre

The Centre builds on the long-standing collaboration between Makerere University and Karolinska Institutet. The Centre brings together diverse expertise and perspectives to address the complex interplay between health, environment, and society.

Aim	Develop capacity and mobilise actions to drive the agenda for sustainable health.
Mission	Realise sustainable gains in health and well-being and transform how research and policies are formulated and conducted.
Vision	A world in which every child, adult and elderly person can live a healthy, fulfilled life in a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable way.



Meeting at the School of Public Health, Makerere University in February 2024

Core engagements

The Centres' activities are carried out in collaboration with other partners, and span across different areas through core funding from both universities.

The Centre's activities are divided into four core engagements:

- 1 Capacity development and education
- 2 Tools and resources
- 3 Networks and partnerships
- 4 Research



THE GLOBAL GOALS

The activities of the Centre are aligned with the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1. Capacity development and education

The Centre continues to deliver MISH and MIDWIZE training programs to public sector officials and managers in DRC, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Ethiopia.

During 2023 the Centre provided:

- Training programs:
 - Building capacity for sustainable development in fragile states (SDGCap)
 - Managing innovation for sustainable health (MISH)
 - Capacity building training program for public health officials in maternal and child health (MIDWIZE)
- Online course: Managing Innovation for Sustainable Health
- Course in Sustainable Health and Development at Karolinska Institutet



◆ Synergies between programs

Program participants met in Kampala in May 2023 during a regional study trip. Together they attended:

- Workshop on the *Research to Action* tool
- Workshop on the *Visualisation and Communication* tool

2. Tools and resources

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

Tools for Action:

1. Innovation & Technology for Health
2. Research to Action
3. Visualising and Communicating Data
4. Information and digitalisation (2023)
5. Multisectoral work (finalised in 2024)



Policy lab

A Policy lab was developed in collaboration with the Centre for Health Crises at KI as a forum for discussion and learning on how to influence policy, using the tool *Research to Action*.



◆ The Tools are being used at:

- KI course on Sustainable Health and Development, 7,5 credits
- Capacity building training sessions in Kampala with focus on *Research to Action* and *Visualising and Communicating Data*
- Introduction day for new Global Public Health master students at KI with focus on *Innovation for Health*
- Global conversations, with respective leads as panellist

3. Networks and partnerships

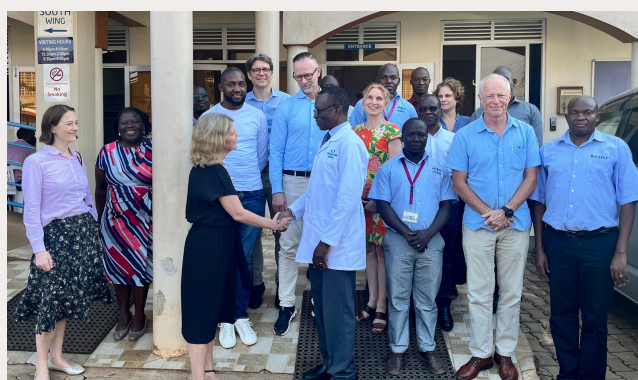
An integral aspect of the Centre's work involves facilitating and promoting networks and partnerships for sustainable health.

Strategic partners

- University of Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Benadir University, Somalia
- University of Nairobi, Kenya
- University of Malawi, Malawi
- University of Gondar, Ethiopia
- Tinkr, a company specialising in innovation, Norway

New partners during 2023:

- Kampala Capital City Authority
- Charité – Berlin University Medicine
- Global Sustainable Futures platform at Chalmers University of Technology and University of Gothenburg in Sweden



4. Research

The Centre has four research areas which capitalise on the collaboration between Karolinska Institutet and Makerere University, and aim to improve health and well-being for all.

Research areas

1. Sexual and reproductive health and rights
2. Research on children and adolescents
3. Non-communicable Diseases (NCD)
4. Climate change and health



◆ The Centre's research:

- Exemplifies how midwife-led quality improvement can bridge the gap between evidence and practice
- Highlights the effectiveness of midwife-led initiatives in achieving positive and sustainable health outcomes
- Accelerates progress towards achieving the child health targets of SDGs in selected low-income countries
- Focuses on adolescent mental health and well-being through political economy analyses in selected countries
- Mobilises resources to fund the NCD research agenda
- Increases participation in international conferences
- Indicates how different vulnerable populations are affected by climate change
- Focuses on how to build resilience and adaptation mechanisms to support vulnerable communities

Global Conversations

Four times per year the Centre provides a space to share and discuss new ideas, innovative solutions and visions for sustainable health.

The webinars feature prominent speakers for critical conversations about the global challenges and the importance of multisectoral collaboration, linking climate, environment and healthcare solutions.



Topics covered during 2023:

- Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Health
- Climate Change and Health: Mitigating the Effects of Extreme Weather
- Turning Research into Action: Strategies for Effective Implementation
- The new EU Global Health Strategy

Impact of the Centre



Photo: MIDWIZE

- MIDWIZE program has improved maternal and child health, and contributed to higher satisfaction with care among women, and better medical outcomes.
- SDGCap capacity-building program has united local and national stakeholders to focus on sustainable development and health. The program has contributed to positive changes through implementing cost-effective and innovative solutions, increasing gender equality, and promoting multisectoral collaboration.
- 66 managers in the health sector of DR Congo, Somalia and Uganda have completed the leadership program in innovation for sustainable health (MISH).
- 4 tools for action have been developed and are increasingly being used across countries and settings. Users rate them as relevant and friendly to use.
- The Centre has contributed to important research results in children's health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, non-communicable diseases, climate change and health.

First evaluation

The first evaluation was conducted internally to assess to what extent the Centre has achieved its outputs, to demonstrate the value of the Centre to partners and funders, and to foster knowledge exchange by sharing insights with the Centre's collaborators.



Findings

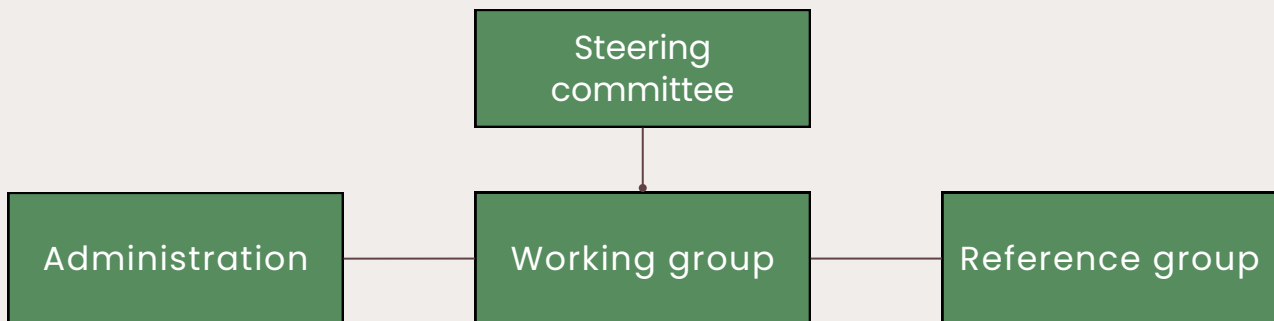
The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health:

- works with relevant organizations in both low and high-income settings, and productively advocates for sustainable health
- has developed four Tools for Action which are increasingly being used through dissemination efforts both online and in workshops with various stakeholders
- targets current policymakers through projects and future public officials through higher education activities
- established structures to enable the building and maintenance of equitable and effective partnerships
- collaborates with a broad range of sectors and disciplines

Recommendations

- continue to develop, implement, and expand its operations towards achieving sustainable health
- create a strategy to enhance access and use of the innovations, tools and competencies
- develop a framework with guidelines and definitions for equitable partnerships to ensure shared understanding
- develop appropriate research and program areas to enhance the relevance and added value of the Centre

Organisation



Meeting at the School of Public Health, Makerere University in February 2024

- **Steering committee** assures that the development and work of the Centre is conducted in accordance with its mission and contributes with advice and support for operations
- **Working group** is responsible for planning and implementation of the Centre's activities, with administrative and communications support at both universities
- **Reference group** is a consultative and advisory body to the steering committee and the working group and is composed of experts in relevant fields
- Both universities are represented in each group

Funding

USD 336 000 was approved in 2023 as external funding. In addition, USD 161 430 was granted from Makerere Research Innovation fund and USD 290 000 was received from Karolinska Institutet as core funding.

In total 11 grant applications were submitted of which **45% were successful**, 18% were suspended (i.e., Swedish Research Council grants related to development research), and 36% were rejected.



Communication and dissemination



The Centre's representatives proactively **advocate for sustainable health** by leading workshops, presenting posters and participating in panel discussion at local, regional and global network meetings and conferences.

Showcasing continuous development, the Centre has **developed a new website** with a more user-friendly design, improved accessibility, search optimisation, social media integration, and simple navigation to allow target audience to find exactly what they need.

News and activities are continuously shared on the Centre's website, in newsletters and on social media.



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