






**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**



**MakSPH  
Annual  
REPORT  
2024**



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 @MakSPH  Makerere University School  
of Public Health  
 MakSPH

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With special thanks to faculties, departments, staff and students who contributed their time and their content to the MakSPH Annual Report 2024.

### CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Our publication is printed on environmentally friendly paper. To reduce our carbon footprint, we encourage sharing your copy or reading the MakSPH Annual Report 2024 online at <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/document-library/>

Further information about the MakSPH Annual Report, or the Makerere University School of Public Health in general, may be obtained from the **Communications and Partnerships Office** at [communications@musph.ac.ug](mailto:communications@musph.ac.ug)

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## **Vision**

To be a leader in public health training and knowledge generation for societal transformation.



## **Mission**

To promote better health for the people of Uganda and beyond through public health training, research and community service.



## **Core Values**

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Innovativeness
- Responsiveness
- Collaborations
- Equity & social justice

# Message

## *from the Dean*

“

**We successfully concluded our strategic plan and launched a bold new five-year roadmap (2025–2030), positioning us to respond swiftly to the evolving public health landscape.**

”

It is with great pride and gratitude that I present the 2024 Annual Report of the Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH). The past twelve months have been a time of remarkable achievements, significant progress, and renewed commitment to shaping the future of public health.

This report captures some of the highlights that reflect the resilience, innovation, and impact that define our community. 2024 was both an extraordinary and transformative year. We successfully concluded our strategic plan and launched a bold new five-year roadmap (2025–2030), positioning us to respond swiftly to the evolving public health landscape.

The year was especially productive—marked by impactful research, evidence generation, and strengthened partnerships across Uganda, the African region, and globally. Our work continued to demonstrate that we do not simply publish findings—we produce evidence that shapes national policy, informs practice, and addresses real-world public health challenges.

I am deeply privileged to lead this vibrant community of educators, researchers, students, and partners. I extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues for their exceptional commitment—whether delivering outstanding education, driving research and innovation, or creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. I also thank Makerere University Council, the University Management, our students, alumni, and partners for their unwavering support; each plays a vital role in advancing our mission.





*Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, signs the prop book for the new MakSPH Strategic Plan, alongside Hon. Margaret Muhanga, State Minister for Primary Health Care, and partners.*

Despite a challenging global context, we look ahead with great optimism. We have equipped our staff and students with the skills and resilience to thrive amidst uncertainty. In 2024, we celebrated 70 years of impact—seven decades of transformative contributions to public health in Uganda, the region, and beyond. Our legacy in HIV/AIDS research, family planning, maternal and child health, infectious disease control (including COVID-19, TB, and malaria), and health systems strengthening is profound.

MakSPH remains a powerhouse of research at Makerere University, consistently attracting nearly half of the University's research grants. In the past five years, we have worked in collaboration with universities and research institutions across 25 countries in Africa and established strong global partnerships, reinforcing our role as a leader in public health innovation and capacity building.

A landmark achievement was our transition into a stand-alone School in January 2025, following approval by the Makerere University Council. This new status heralds a transformative phase—enabling us to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and respond with agility to contemporary public health challenges.

In line with this growth, we launched our taught PhD program—designed for early-career and mid-career professionals, as well as strategic-level leaders, seeking to strengthen their skills in public health research and leadership.

The School is undertaking a major infrastructure project, the construction of our new home at Makerere Main Campus—which is steadily taking shape into

a premier centre for public health training, research, and community engagement. This investment will strengthen our capacity to deliver impact in Uganda, and beyond. We hope that the building will ease the critical space needs for our staff, students, and partners. We are grateful to all individuals, agencies, government bodies, and partners who have supported this transformative endeavor. We warmly welcome further support to help us complete this important project and advance public health for generations to come.

As we move forward, our resolve remains steadfast: to shape health outcomes, empower future generations, and strengthen the resilience of communities across Africa and beyond. We thank you for your continued support to Makerere University and the School of Public Health in particular. Together, we are shaping health, empowering the future, and building a brighter tomorrow.

**Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze,**  
Professor and Dean, School of Public Health, Makerere University

**A landmark achievement was our transition into a stand-alone School in January 2025, following approval by the Makerere University Council. This new status heralds a transformative phase—enabling us to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and respond with agility to contemporary public health challenges.**

# Leadership of the School



**DEAN**

**Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze**  
Professor



**Deputy Dean**

**Dr. Elizeus Rutebemberwa**  
Professor



**Dr. Christine Nalwadda**  
(Senior Lecturer)

**Head**, Department of Community Health and Behavioral Sciences



**Dr. Esther Buregyeya**  
(Associate Professor)

**Head**, Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health



**Ms. Gladys Khamili**  
(Principal Registrar)

Office of the Academic Registrar, Makerere University



**Dr. Suzanne Kiwanuka**  
(Senior Lecturer)

**Head**, Department of Health Policy Planning and Management



**Dr. Joan N. Mutyoba**  
(Senior Lecturer)

**Head**, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics



**CPA Elizabeth N. Nambi**  
(Finance Manager)

Finance Management Unit

# The School of Public Health

Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), is one of two stand-alone schools within Makerere and a premier institution for public health training, research, and policy engagement in Africa. In 2024, MakSPH marked 70 years of impactful service, tracing its origins to the Department of Preventive Medicine founded in 1954. This pioneering department evolved into the first Institute of Public Health in sub-Saharan Africa in 1974, and ultimately into the dynamic School it is today. MakSPH attracts nearly half of Makerere's research grants and maintains partnerships across over 25 African countries. Its elevation to stand-alone School status in January 2025 has catalysed

growth in teaching, innovation, and scientific inquiry. With transformative work in infectious diseases, maternal and child health, climate resilience, and health systems strengthening, and collaborations with top institutions, MakSPH remains a powerhouse of evidence-based solutions for Africa and beyond.

**The School comprises the following departments:**

**Health Policy, Planning and Management (HPPM)**

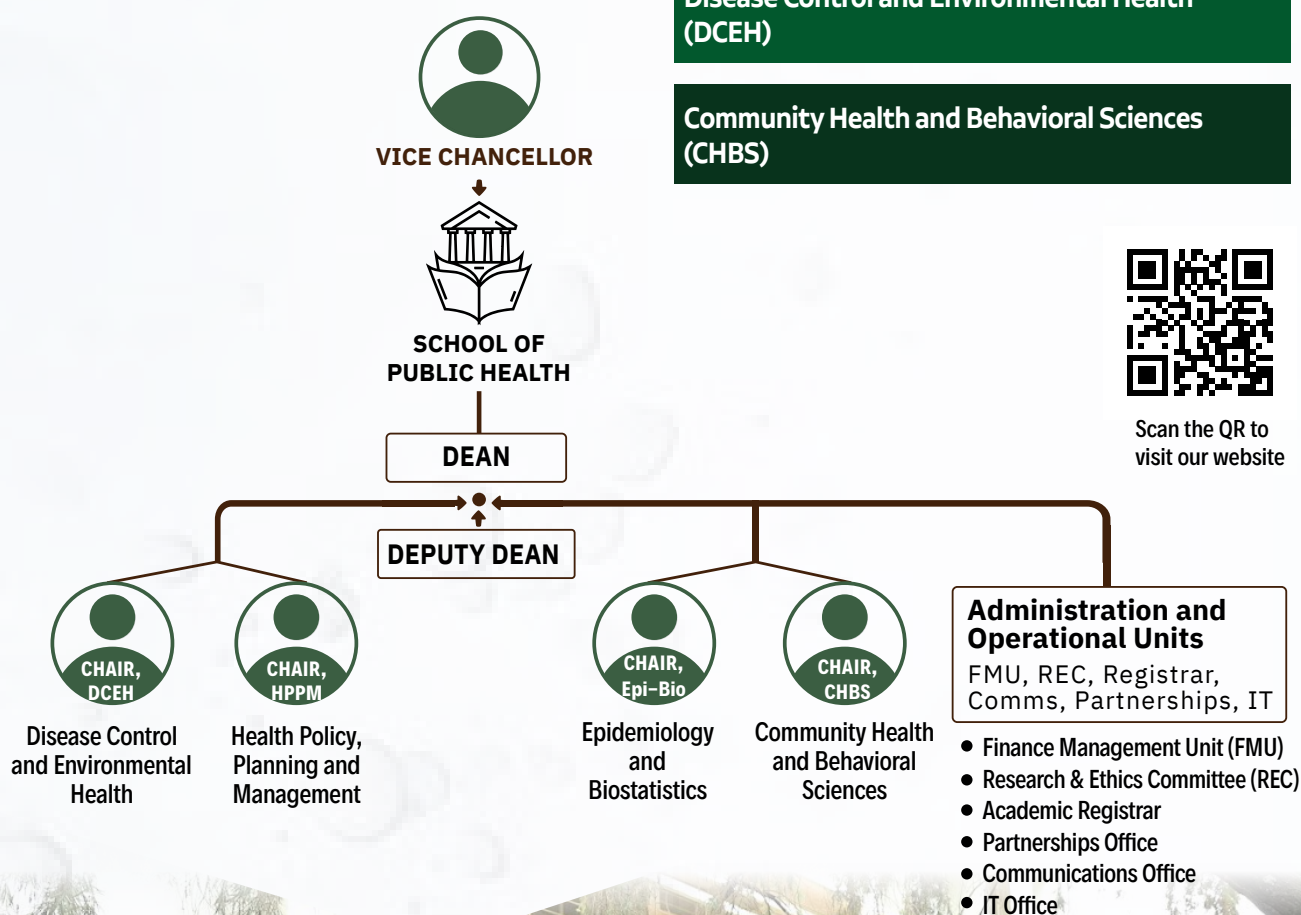
**Epidemiology and Biostatistics (Epi-Bio)**

**Disease Control and Environmental Health (DCEH)**

**Community Health and Behavioral Sciences (CHBS)**



Scan the QR to visit our website



*Environmental Health Science students at the MakSPH Mulago campus.*

# MakSPH 2024 in Numbers



25

## African countries

MakSPH has collaborated with universities across the continent in over 25 countries in the past five years



82

## PhD Students

Currently enrolled  
**22 taught PhD** of whom enrolled in August 2024



1000+

## Student population

with **80%** are graduate students



175

## Graduands presented, including 9 PhDs

at the 74th Graduation Ceremony



344

## Peer reviewed publications

from staff and students



50

## MakSPH-REC research protocols

reviewed and approved in 2024



70

## Years of excellence

celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in December 2024, marking seven decades of impactful public health education and research.



259

## Trained in Malaria Leadership Management

Cohort 3, African Leadership and Management Training for Malaria Eradication (ALAMIME)

# 2024 Major Highlights



Partners from the Ministry of Health, WHO, and Makerere University leadership, including Council Chairperson Ms. Lorna Magara, Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, and Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, join the Minister of Health in cutting the MakSPH@70 anniversary cake.

*Celebrating*

## 70 Years of Public Health Leadership & Impact

In 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) marked 70 years of leadership in public health education, research, and community service in Uganda and beyond. What began in 1954 as a humble Department of Preventive Medicine within the Faculty of Medicine has evolved into one of Africa's foremost public health institutions, thanks to the visionary leadership of the past and the continued stewardship driving its legacy forward.

MakSPH's influence is deeply embedded in the transformation of health systems across Uganda and the continent. From pioneering primary health care through the Kasangati model, to being the first in sub-Saharan Africa to offer postgraduate training in public health, the School has remained a powerhouse of innovation, policy influence, and transformative partnerships. Over the

decades, it has expanded from a single academic program to 12, producing thousands of professionals who now lead national and regional public health programmes.

At the heart of the School's seven-decade-legacy are landmark contributions to HIV and other infectious diseases, maternal and child health, nutrition, disease surveillance, climate resilience, and health systems strengthening. With

a vibrant faculty and robust collaborations, including the Ministry of Health, WHO, CDC, The Rockefeller Foundation, and leading global universities, MakSPH continues to advance impactful research and evidence-informed public health policy. Notably, the School now attracts nearly half of Makerere's research grants and maintains active collaborations in over 25 African countries, reinforcing its role as a continental leader in health innovation.

*Makerere University leadership and key dignitaries at MakSPH@70 celebrations at MakSPH New Auditorium, Makerere University in December 2024.*

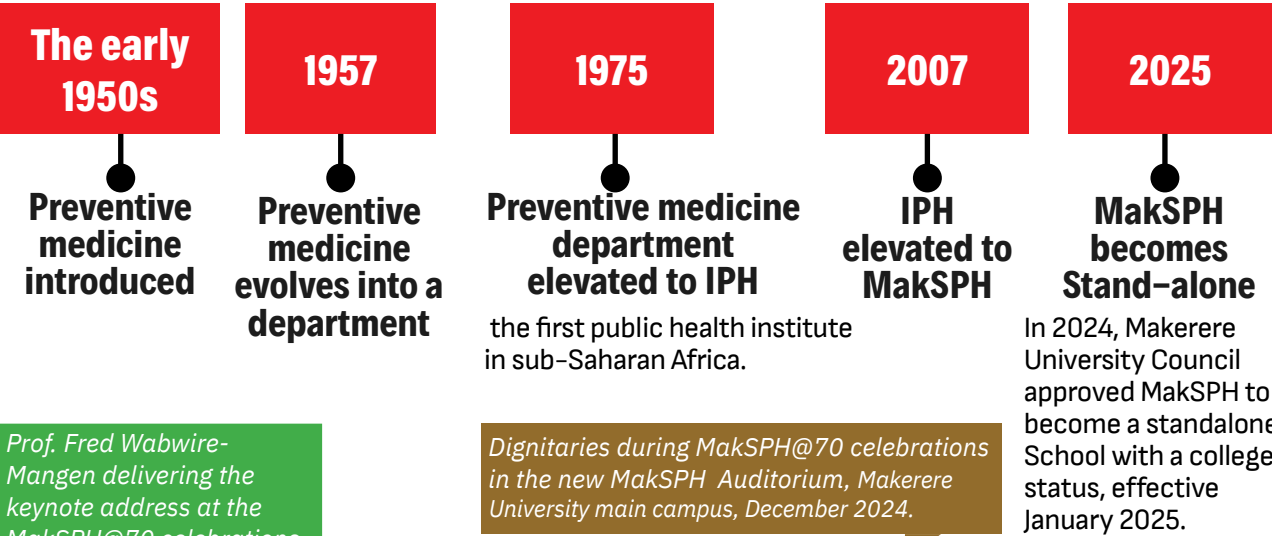


The School's 70th anniversary also coincided with a strategic institutional landmark, its elevation to stand-alone status within Makerere University. This regained autonomy strengthens its ability to respond swiftly to emerging health challenges and deepen global engagement. To further this ambition, MakSPH unveiled its 2025–2030 five-year Strategic Plan, a forward-looking blueprint grounded in five core pillars: cutting-edge and responsive research; transformative teaching and learning; impactful community and policy engagement; institutional capacity strengthening and resource mobilization; and strategic partnerships and global

engagement.

Our new strategy is a product of wide consultation and is designed to address a shifting health landscape shaped by climate change, pandemics, demographic transitions, and widening health inequalities. It prioritizes digital transformation, South-South collaboration, and health equity as cross-cutting enablers. Aligned with Makerere University's vision of becoming a research-led institution and Uganda's Vision 2040, the plan positions MakSPH to drive health innovations, build resilient systems, and sustain impact through the next generation of public health leaders.

**MakSPH's influence is deeply embedded in the transformation of health systems across Uganda and the continent...**



Prof. Fred Wabwire-Mangen delivering the keynote address at the MakSPH@70 celebrations.

Dignitaries during MakSPH@70 celebrations in the new MakSPH Auditorium, Makerere University main campus, December 2024.



# Inside the New MakSPH Strategic Plan

Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) officially launched its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, in December 2024 signalling a bold commitment to advancing public health leadership, research excellence, and innovation in Uganda, across Africa, and globally. The new strategy builds upon a strong foundation laid during the 2020–2030 period and is designed to respond proactively to the evolving health landscape shaped by climate change, pandemics, demographic shifts, and widening health disparities. Through this forward-looking blueprint, MakSPH aims to reinforce its role as a thought leader and center of excellence in public health education, policy engagement, and transformative research, anchored in the values of equity, resilience, and global collaboration.

The new strategy, developed through an inclusive and consultative process involving faculty, partners, alumni, and students, responds to a rapidly evolving health landscape, characterized by climate change, pandemics, demographic shifts, and widening health disparities. It aims to position the School as a leading hub for thought leadership, innovation, and evidence-driven practice, fully aligned with Makerere University's strategic priorities and key development frameworks, including Uganda Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The strategy is anchored on five core pillars: (1) Transformative Education; (2) Knowledge Generation and Translation; (3)

Community Engagement; (4) Partnerships and Collaborations; and (5) Institutional Capacity Enhancement. Through these priorities, MakSPH seeks to elevate the quality and relevance of its academic offerings, enhance research visibility and uptake, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and cultivate the next generation of public health leaders.

The plan also underscores the integration of digital technologies, climate resilience, health equity, and South-South collaboration as critical enablers in addressing complex public health challenges. This forward-looking strategy outlines a clear

path for the next five years, reinforcing the School's strategic role in building resilient and responsive health systems for the future.

**The new strategy builds upon a strong foundation laid during the 2020–2030 period and is designed to respond proactively to the evolving health landscape...**



# MakSPH Becomes Stand-alone School

“  
As Chairperson of the Makerere University Council, I assure you of our unwavering support for this vision. The leadership required to fulfil this mission must be intentional, committed and driven by purpose,” Ms. Magara.

The Makerere University Governing Council granted MakSPH the status of a stand-alone School, effective January 2025. This marks a significant transformation, that provides the space for MakSPH to innovate and expand its impact on public health research, training, and services.

Over the last seven decades, the School has grown substantially in student enrolment, research output, partnerships, and strategic initiatives. This new chapter strengthens the School's capacity to deliver more impactful solutions, to advance public health within Uganda and the African region.

Over the years, the School has built confidence among its stakeholders deeply rooted in its remarkable evolution and enduring legacy of excellence. From humble beginnings as a small department, and grown into a continental beacon of public health

innovation, research, and training.

Ms. Lorna Magara, Chairperson of the Makerere University Council, aptly affirms this trajectory, stating; *“If history has taught us anything, it is that no challenge is insurmountable when purpose is met with action.”* With unwavering support from the University Council, Management, dedicated faculty, partners, and alumni, the School continues to shape responsive health systems and nurture leaders who are transforming communities across the world.

*“As Chairperson of the Makerere University Council, I assure you of our unwavering support for this vision. The leadership required to fulfil this mission must be intentional, committed and driven by purpose,”* Ms. Magara.

Ms. Lorna Magara, Chairperson of the Makerere University Council, signs the new MakSPH Strategic Plan, during the 70 year commemoration at the new MakSPH Auditorium, December, 2024.







# Pillars of MakSPH Strategic Plan



## Transformative Education



## Knowledge Generation and Translation



## Partnerships



## Institutional Capacity Enhancement

This Annual Report highlights the School's objectives, accomplishments, and ambitions aligned with our old ten-year strategic plan's four pillars, before the launch of the new five-year Strategic Plan in December 2024.

The Plan describes the aspirations of the School and how it will promote public health in addressing today's socioeconomic concerns. It holds that public health must be flexible to address society's ever-changing public health issues.

These commitments address current and future public health issues through three main functions:

- **Research** (advancing public health knowledge and translating it into policies and programs),
- **Education** (preparing quality public health human resources), and
- **Community Service.**

In addition to our daily operations, this Plan aimed to upend the status quo and preserve excellence in communities and health systems.





# Transformative Education



Within our teaching mission, we aspire to maintain leadership in producing outstanding, innovative and diverse human resources for health.

We are committed to providing education that challenges convention and develops diverse leaders who can transform the health of communities and who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt in a rapidly changing world.



Encyclopedia of  
Special Education

A Reference for the Education  
of Children, Adolescents,  
and Adults with Disabilities and  
Other Exceptional Individuals

Editor  
Cecilia R. Reynolds  
Editorial Board  
Malcolm W. Johnston, Chairman

ATKINS

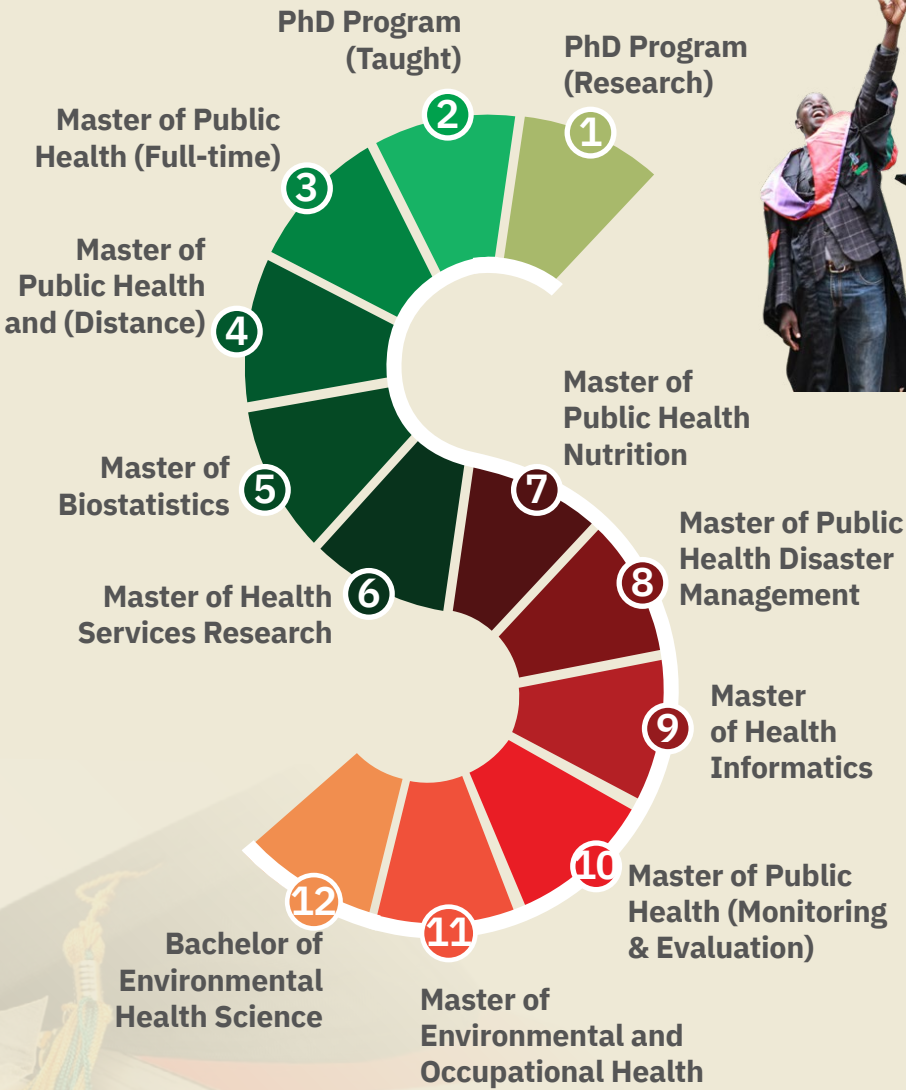
# Our Academic Programs

At Makerere University School of Public Health, we are dedicated to developing the next generation of public health leaders. Our academic programs are designed to meet this target by equipping students and professionals with the knowledge, skills, and real-world experience needed to address today's complex health

challenges; from climate change and pandemics to health equity and system strengthening.

We offer a wide range of academic pathways, including undergraduate, master's, PhD (taught and research), and non-degree options -the certificate courses. Our curricula is built on a strong foundation of interdisciplinary

learning, cutting-edge research, and practical application. Students benefit from a holistic educational experience that combines theory, practice, and global engagement.



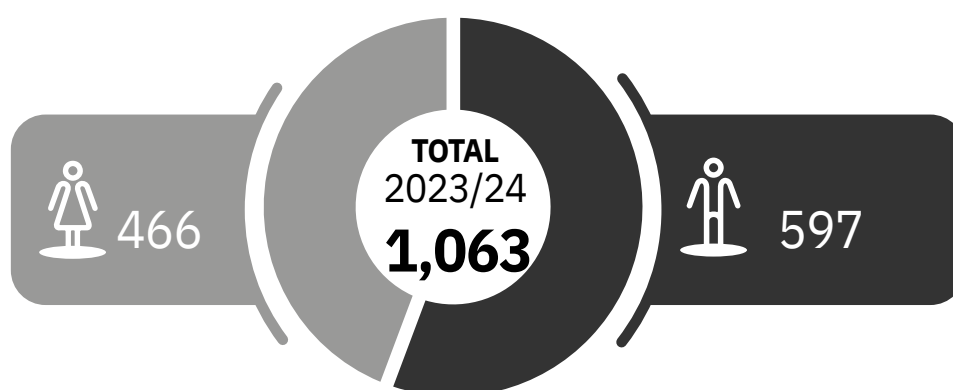
Our graduates lead transformative work in academia, research, government, and global health organizations, driving progress toward a healthier, more equitable world. Out of the over 500 Alumni who responded to our recent survey in 2024, more than 80% were formally employed.



# Teaching and Learning

## Student Enrolment Overview

2023/2024 Academic Year



**Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) recorded a total enrolment of 1,063 students in the 2023/2024 academic year, comprising 466 females and 597 males, reflecting a gender ratio of approximately 44% female to 56% male. This demonstrates continued progress toward gender diversity, especially in historically male-dominated disciplines such as biostatistics and informatics.**

MakSPH currently runs 12 academic programs, including undergraduate, master's, and PhD. The Master of Public Health (MPH) program, both full-time and distance, remains the most subscribed, with 147 and 384 students respectively, representing over one-third of total enrolment. Other well-enrolled programs include the PhD program with 59 students, and the Bachelor of Environmental Health Science (BEHS) program with 118 students, affirming the school's strong appeal across both entry-level and advanced training.

**Gender Highlights:** Notably, some master's programs such as Public Health Nutrition (MPHN) and Monitoring & Evaluation (MPH M&E) show balanced or female-leaning enrolment while, Health Informatics (MHI) remains largely male-dominated, suggesting a need to enhance gender equity in digital health training.

MakSPH's student body continues to be predominantly postgraduate, with over 85% of students enrolled in graduate-level programs, underscoring the School's critical role in advanced public health capacity building for Uganda and the region.



*Tonny Muwonge, who earned a master's degree in Public Health takes a selfie with colleagues on Mak 74th Graduation ceremony.*



*A graduand helps fit the cap on a colleague.*



# Graduation Highlights

At Makerere University's 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the School of Public Health proudly presented 175 graduands, 29 with Bachelor's degrees, 137 with Master's, and 9 with PhDs. The PhD cohort marked the School's single-highest-ever, contributing to the 131 PhDs awarded university-wide last year, and reaffirming MakSPH's growing role in advanced public health research and training.



*State Minister for Higher Education, Hon. John C. Musingo, and Council Chairperson Ms. Lorna Magara walk side by side in the Chancellor's procession at Makerere University's 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation, presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe in January 2024.*





## 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony

MakSPH  
total  
graduands

175



Bachelors

29



Master's

137



9



Jubilant graduands

Bachelor of Environmental Health Science graduands jubilate shortly after graduation.

## Profile of our 2024 PhD Graduates



### Dr. Apophia Agiresaasi on Alcohol Use Among Pregnant Women in Northern Uganda

Dr. Agiresaasi was awarded a PhD in Public Health during the Makerere University 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. Her research revealed that 23.6% of pregnant women in post-conflict northern Uganda consume alcohol, with binge drinking significantly linked to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). A communication intervention reduced binge drinking but had limited impact on overall alcohol use. Agiresaasi recommends integrating culturally sensitive awareness campaigns, community engagement, and consistent messaging in antenatal care to reduce alcohol exposure during pregnancy and improve maternal and child health outcomes.

### Dr. Francis Xavier Kasujja on Type 2 Diabetes Testing in Uganda

Dr. Kasujja was awarded a PhD in Public Health during the Makerere University 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. His research in eastern Uganda found that both Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG) and Glycated Haemoglobin (HBA1c) tests have comparable sensitivity and specificity for type 2 diabetes detection but perform poorly in malaria-endemic regions. HBA1c was also found to be more cost-effective, saving \$1.27 per test. Kasujja recommends improving patient awareness, expanding diagnostic services, and tailoring testing approaches for malaria-prevalent settings to improve early diabetes detection.



### Dr. Celestin Banamwana on Ecological Sanitation in Rwanda

Dr. Banamwana was awarded a PhD in Public Health during the Makerere University 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. His research in Burera District, Rwanda, revealed that only 60.6% of households effectively utilized ecological sanitation (Ecosan) technology, with key barriers including high costs, fear of handling excreta, and poor facility maintenance. The study also found high microbial contamination in faecal by-products, exceeding WHO safety thresholds. Dr. Banamwana recommends improving Ecosan infrastructure, addressing cultural barriers, and promoting effective treatment practices to enhance sanitation coverage and agricultural productivity.

### Dr. Doris Kwesiga on Improving Pregnancy Loss Reporting

Dr. Kwesiga was awarded a PhD in Public Health during the Makerere University 74th Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. Her multi-country study found that underreporting of pregnancy and adverse pregnancy outcomes (APOs) is driven by question framing issues, cultural stigma, and emotional trauma. Interviewer skills like empathy and rapport-building can improve data quality. Kwesiga recommends improving survey question design, enhancing interviewer training, providing emotional support during data collection, and creating supportive policies to encourage accurate reporting, which is essential for effective maternal and child health interventions.



### Dr. James Muleme on Antibiotic Resistance

Dr. Muleme earned a PhD in Public Health for his research on antibiotic resistance of *Escherichia coli* (ESBL-Ec) at the human-animal-environment interface in Wakiso District, Uganda, during the Makerere University 74th Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. His study revealed a 25% prevalence of ESBL-Ec, with high multi-drug resistance, particularly in goat farming households. Key drivers identified include farming practices and inadequate water management. Muleme advocates for improved policy enforcement, enhanced surveillance, and a One Health approach to address antimicrobial resistance, emphasizing the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to safeguard public health and mitigate AMR risks.



### Dr. Frederick Oporia on Improving Lifejacket Wear

Dr. Oporia earned a PhD in Public Health for his study on improving life jacket wear among occupational boaters on Lake Albert, Uganda. His cluster-randomized trial demonstrated that peer-led training significantly increased life jacket use, with self-reported wear rising from 30.8% to 65.1% and observed wear from 1.0% to 26.8% in the intervention arm. Oporia recommends scaling up peer-to-peer training programs, in collaboration with relevant ministries and landing site committees, to improve safety and reduce drowning risk among vulnerable boating communities.





### **Dr. Charles Ssemugabo on Pesticide Residues in Fruits and Vegetables**

Dr. Ssemugabo was awarded a PhD in Public Health during the Makerere University 74th Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. His research revealed that fruits and vegetables in the Kampala Metropolitan Area (KMA) contain pesticide residues exceeding European Union maximum residue limits (MRLs), posing significant chronic health risks, particularly to children. Organophosphates, carbamates, and pyrethroids were the most prevalent. To reduce exposure, Ssemugabo recommends stricter regulation of pesticide use, enhanced consumer awareness, and improved post-harvest practices like washing, peeling, and cooking to reduce residue levels.

### **Dr. Sarah Nantono Bunoti on Pubertal and Child Rights Awareness**

Dr. Bunoti earned a PhD in Public Health for her study on pubertal and child rights awareness, communication, and protection against sexual abuse among 10-14-year-olds in Jinja primary schools, Uganda, during the Makerere University 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony on January 29, 2024. Her research identified challenges like menstrual cramps, body image concerns, and inadequate communication skills from parents and teachers. The school-based intervention significantly improved children's knowledge, especially among boys aged 10 and 11. Nantono recommends specialized training for teachers and the creation of instructional materials to strengthen pubertal education and child protection, ensuring better child rights awareness.



### **Dr. Nanyeenya Nicholus on Low-Level Viraemia and Adherence Counselling**

Dr. Nanyeenya earned a PhD in Public Health for his study on viral non-suppression and the effectiveness of intensive adherence counselling (IAC) for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in Uganda. His research found increasing low-level viraemia (LLV), associated with higher risk of viral non-suppression. The study revealed a lack of awareness among PLHIV and healthcare providers about LLV's risks. IAC significantly improved viral load suppression, with the intervention group achieving nearly twice the success rate compared to non-intervention. Dr. Nanyeenya recommends reviewing the viral load algorithm and expanding IAC to improve HIV management.

# Top Performers (CGPAs)

## Bachelor of Environmental Health Science



**Gloria Namazzi**

4.55



**Shafik Senkubuge**

4.46



**Dilish Abonga**

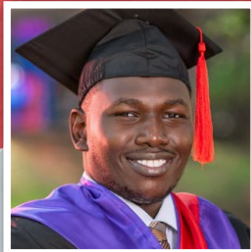
4.44

## Master of Biostatistics



**Mary Mbuliro**

4.77



**Anthony Kirabira**

4.47

## Master of Public Health (Distance)



**Farouq Kayiwa**

4.45

## Master of Public Health (Fulltime)



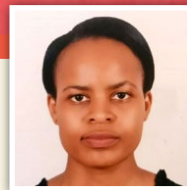
**Juliet Ayesiga**

4.61



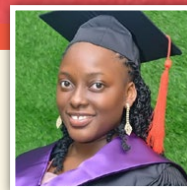
**Arnold Tigaiza**

4.66



**Moureen  
Twinomuzuni**

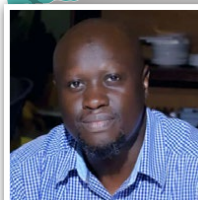
4.65



**Nakamanya  
Sharon Kitibwakye**

4.82

## Master of Public Health Disaster Management



**Innocent  
Okot**

4.76

## Building Capacity in Network Science



*Participants during the training workshop on Network Science and Network Data Analysis at MakSPH RAN lab in October 2024.*

In October 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health, in partnership with the University of Georgia, hosted a five-day in-person training workshop on Network Science and Network Data Analysis. This initiative, part of the ALLSTAR Training Program, reflects our ongoing commitment to building the capacity of future public health leaders. The workshop brought together 35 participants, including graduate students, PhD candidates, research associates, health professionals, and data scientists, creating a diverse and vibrant learning environment.

This intensive program is led by Professor Chris Whalen, supported by Dr. Vincent Michael

Kiberu and Mr. Haron Gichuhi, and was coordinated by Associate Professor Noah Kiwanuka and Mr. Ivan Mutyaba from the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Participants gained critical skills in applying network science

to epidemiological research, enhancing their ability to map disease patterns, assess intervention impacts, and inform public health policy. This collaborative effort underlines the value of interdisciplinary research in addressing complex public

health challenges like tuberculosis and HIV and highlights the essential role of academic institutions in generating evidence that shapes health policies and improves population health outcomes.



*Participants hold certificates during the workshop on Network Science and Network Data Analysis at MakSPH RAN lab in October 2024.*

## Professors Wanyenze and Kamya Receive VC's Research Excellence Awards

At Makerere University's 74th graduation ceremony on January 29, 2024, Professors Rhoda Wanyenze and Moses Robert Kamya were honored with the inaugural Vice Chancellor's Research Excellence Awards. Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo, representing the Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Museveni, presented the awards, with the Chairperson of the University Council, Ms. Lorna Magara, witnessing the ceremony.

Prof. Wanyenze, Dean of the School of Public Health, received the award as the **Best Overall Female Researcher**, while Prof. Kamya was recognized as the **Best Overall Male Researcher**. The awards acknowledge their prolific publication records as per the highest number of publications between the years 2017

and 2023, according to the Scopus database, and impactful contributions to research in infectious diseases, public health, and capacity building, reinforcing Makerere's commitment to becoming a research-intensive university.



*Professors: Wanyenze and Kamya hold their Research Excellence Awards during the 74<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony at Makerere University, January, 2024.*

## David Serwadda Appointed Professor Emeritus

At its 489<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Makerere University Council conferred the title of **Emeritus Professor** upon **Professor David Serwadda**, in recognition of his meritorious service prior to retiring from University service. Dr. Serwadda is celebrated for his extraordinary contributions to academic research and public health. A renowned infectious disease epidemiologist and former Dean of the Makerere University School of Public Health, Prof. Serwadda's work has been instrumental in advancing global HIV prevention.

His pioneering research includes reporting the first cases of Slim's Disease (AIDS) in Uganda (Lancet, 1985) and co-founding the **Rakai Health Sciences Program**, which generated critical evidence on

antiretroviral treatment for HIV prevention. The appointment of Professor Emeritus is for life, subject to University standing regulations on conduct and

performance. He received the award during the Mak 74<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024.



*Prof. David Serwadda is congratulated by Council Chairperson Ms. Lorna Magara, on receiving the Emeritus Professor title as Hon. John C. Musingo and Prof. Umar Kakumba look on.*

# Student Affairs

## MakSPH Students Shine at Open Group India Awards 2024



*Our students present the prestigious 2024 Open Group India Awards for Innovation & Excellence, received in New Delhi, India, to the Dean, Prof. Wanyenze.*

**This recognition is a testament to the strength of our program and the calibre of students it produces.**

Four students from the Master of Health Informatics program at the Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), received international recognition at the prestigious Open Group India Awards for Innovation & Excellence 2024, held in New Delhi in July last year.

The team, comprising Mr. Edwin Ayebare (Team Leader), Mr. Brian Twesigye, Mr. Enock Mwesigwa, and Mr. Iving Mumbere, clinched an Award of Distinction in the INITIATE Enterprise Architecture Student Competition. Competing against 22 university teams from across the globe, our students stood out for their practical and innovative use of enterprise architecture to tackle real-world challenges in health systems.

The INITIATE competition, part of The Open Group's NextGen Digital for the Techade event, nurtures student expertise in applying open, vendor-

neutral technology standards to critical sectors such as health, agriculture, and sustainability. This aligns strongly with the School's mission to leverage digital tools for transformative public health outcomes.

Ms. Irene Wanyana, Coordinator of the Health Informatics Program, lauded the students' achievement as a clear reflection of MakSPH's international relevance. *"This recognition is a testament to the strength of our program and the calibre of students it produces,"* she said. *"It underscores our commitment to developing professionals who bridge theory and practice in solving today's digital health challenges."*

MakSPH congratulates the students and their mentors on this well-deserved honour, which is a proof that homegrown talent can indeed shape global solutions.

## PhD Colloquium Builds Research Community and Capacity

In October 2024, MakSPH held its second PhD Colloquium, a student-led initiative under the PhD Forum, bringing together doctoral candidates, faculty, and researchers for a day of academic exchange and mentorship. The Colloquium provided a platform for PhD students to present their research in progress, receive peer and faculty feedback, and break the isolation often said to be experienced in doctoral training.

Through structured sessions, students refined their research ideas, deepened scholarly engagement, and built confidence in presenting complex public health challenges. The School supports activities, such as the

colloquium, that underscore the value of peer-led academic spaces in strengthening research quality and fostering a vibrant academic community.

The outgoing PhD Forum President, Dr. Nicholus Nanyeenya commended the School leadership for their enduring support. He acknowledged the Colloquium as a strategic forum for shaping research excellence and sustaining doctoral momentum.

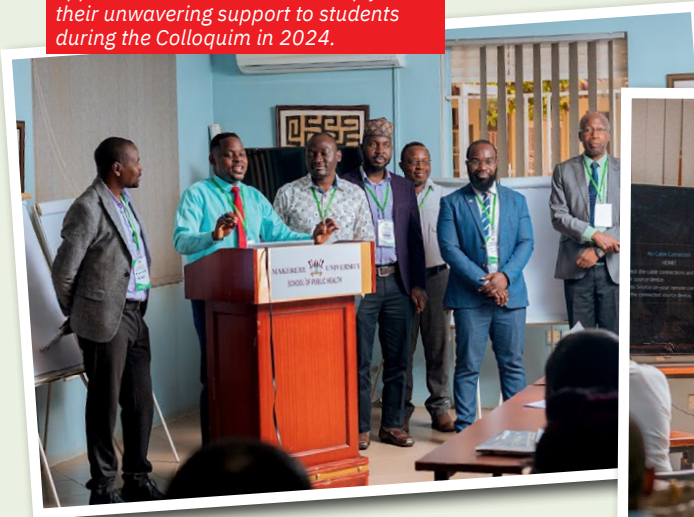
The Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, and Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa, Deputy Dean and Higher Degrees Coordinator, reaffirmed MakSPH's commitment to expanding postgraduate capacity. With over 60 PhD students currently enrolled and the

*MakSPH PhD students in a group photo with their mentors, faculty at MakSPH during the second PhD Colloquium at MakSPH-RAN Kololo annex.*

rollout of a structured taught PhD programme, the School is deepening its investment in high-level academic training.

The Colloquium represents MakSPH's institutional commitment to nurturing public health researchers who are not only academically grounded but also socially responsive. As one participant, Mr. Fred Twinomugisha, noted, *"Presenting my work to such an experienced audience was transformative. The feedback was rich and constructive it will elevate the quality of my research."*

*Outgoing PhD Forum President, Dr. Nicholus Nanyeenya, and his executive appreciate the School leadership for their unwavering support to students during the Colloquium in 2024.*



*Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa, Deputy Dean and Chair of the Higher Degrees Committee, reaffirmed MakSPH's commitment to advancing postgraduate training at the Colloquium in October 2024.*



# Launch of Taught PhD in Public Health

“

**Our taught PhD program responds to a critical shortage of researchers in Africa—currently estimated at 80 researchers per million people**

”



**I chose this program for its well-structured blend of coursework and practical training, which has significantly strengthened my research and teaching skills.**

**Muhumuza Nicholas**

PhD Student, Disease Control & Environmental Health dept.

In August 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health proudly launched its first-ever taught Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Health (PDPH) program, a milestone achievement aligned with Africa's New Public Health Order and the global call to strengthen the public health workforce.

This rigorous three-year, full-time program was designed by our high profiled scholars in consultation with various stakeholders in public health space to meet the urgent need for skilled researchers, leaders, and innovators in Africa's health systems. The program equips early-career and mid-career professionals with the advanced research, leadership, and policy analysis skills essential for the future of global and local public health in Health Systems, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Community Health and Behavioural Sciences, and Disease Control and Environmental Health tracks.

Students undergo foundational training in public health core courses before specializing in their chosen track and conducting doctoral

research that culminates in peer-reviewed publications and a defended thesis. The program lays emphasis on strategic leadership, programmatic excellence, grant competitiveness, knowledge translation, and policy engagement as its key competencies that are critically needed to tackle Africa's public health challenges.

Our taught PhD program responds to a critical shortage of researchers in Africa—currently estimated at 80 researchers per million people compared to the global average of 1,081—and supports the African Union's Agenda 2063 for equitable, people-centered development. We are deeply grateful to all partners, faculty, and supporters who contributed to making this program a reality.

As we nurture a new generation of public health leaders, we reaffirm our commitment to producing knowledge and skills that drive sustainable health improvements for Uganda, the region, and the world. The future of public health leadership is being shaped at Makerere University and it is bright.



*The Dean interacts with the pioneer class of the Taught PhD program during their orientation on August 12, 2024.*

## 2024 PhD Defenses



### Susan Babirye: On HIV Vulnerability



On May 24, 2024, Susan Babirye successfully defended her PhD at Ghent University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Her thesis, **“The Role of Formal and Informal Institutions in Shaping Vulnerability to HIV for Young People (15-24 years) Working in Social Venues in Uganda,”** provides critical insights into the heightened HIV risk faced by young workers in social settings like bars and lodges.

Babirye’s research developed a comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates individual, structural, and coping factors, offering a valuable tool for future HIV prevention strategies targeting this vulnerable yet often overlooked sub-population.

### Bayiga Esther Diana Zziwa: On Pedestrian Safety

Bayiga Esther Diana Zziwa defended her PhD thesis, **“An Analysis of the Pattern of Pedestrian Injuries and Deaths in Relation to Land-Use, Transport, and Socioeconomic Factors in Kampala City, Uganda,”** on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at Makerere University College of Health Sciences Board Room.

Her work, guided by leading experts including Prof. David Guwatudde and Dr. Meleckidzedek Khayesi, addresses the alarming rates of pedestrian fatalities in Uganda, where 13 people die in road crashes daily. Her research is a critical contribution to understanding and improving road safety in rapidly urbanizing cities.



### Roselline Achola: On Family Planning



Roselline Achola successfully defended her PhD thesis, **“Decision Making about Family Planning Use among Refugee and Host Populations in Adjumani District, Uganda,”** on November 13, 2024.

Her research revealed that only about one-third of the population in Adjumani uses modern contraceptives, with decisions shaped by factors like family pressure, fear of side effects, and financial constraints. To address these barriers, Dr. Achola recommends community-based strategies that promote couple counseling and open dialogue, empowering families to make informed choices about family planning.



### **Lukia Namaganda Hamid: On Cerebral Palsy and Malnutrition**

Namaganda Lukia Hamid (BEHS, MPH) successfully defended her PhD on **“Malnutrition as a Probable Predictor of Mortality in Cerebral Palsy (CP),”** with a focus on the impact of positive deviance and parent facilitator training in Eastern Uganda. Her study, nested under the CURIE project at Makerere University School of Public Health, found that children with CP who were severely malnourished faced a fourfold higher risk of death. Her findings spotlight the urgent need for multidisciplinary interventions that address both the nutritional and broader health needs of children with CP.

### **Ronald Ssenyonga: On Critical Health Education**

Ronald Ssenyonga successfully defended his PhD thesis, **“Improving the Ability of Ugandan Adolescents to Think Critically About Health: A Digital Educational Intervention,”** on October 9, 2024, at the University of Oslo. His research, part of the Informed Health Choices (IHC) project, demonstrated that digital resources can significantly improve adolescents’ critical health thinking. However, limited digital infrastructure and the absence of these lessons in national curricula pose major barriers. Dr. Ssenyonga recommends integrating these lessons into the curriculum and investing in basic digital infrastructure to support effective delivery.



### **Dr. Aloysius Ssenyonjo: On Intragovernmental Coordination for UHC**

Dr. Aloysius Ssenyonjo successfully defended his PhD thesis, **“Unpacking Intragovernmental Coordination: An Interdisciplinary Exploration to Advance the Multisectoral Approach to Universal Health Coverage in Uganda,”** on March 25, 2024, at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp. His research revealed that effective intragovernmental coordination is essential for advancing multisectoral approaches to universal health coverage (UHC), but is often hindered by fragmented bureaucratic structures, conflicting interests, and complex power dynamics. Dr. Ssenyonjo recommends promoting shared coordination frameworks, aligning incentives, and investing in long-term institutional reforms to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and support sustainable UHC efforts.



# MakSPH Students Champion Climate Action

At MakSPH, students are not only learning about climate change but are leading the charge in addressing the challenge. In Climate Change and Mitigation Campaign, spearheaded by the 90th Guild Representative Councillor Mujurani Alphersiiru, undergraduate students have taken climate education beyond the classroom and into communities.

The student-led campaign focused on raising awareness about the health impacts of climate change while empowering future leaders to act, recognizing climate change as one of humanity's most pressing threats. A key component of the campaign involved outreach to both primary and secondary schools, where students conducted five interactive sessions to educate

and inspire the next generation of climate champions.

These sessions included climate change quizzes, storytelling, poetry, tree planting, and practical demonstrations on solid waste management. The campaign also addressed

broader public health issues such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), menstrual health, mental wellbeing, and academic motivation—helping students see the connection between environmental health and personal wellbeing.



*Pupils of Kitante Primary School mentored on preserving the environment through the campaign in 2024.*



# 19th MUEHSA Annual Scientific Conference

**The conference highlighted the urgent need for integrated, multidisciplinary approaches to today's most pressing health threats.**

On 9th April 2024, the 19th Annual Scientific Conference of the Makerere University Environmental Health Students' Association (MUEHSA) brought together over 180 participants—including students, researchers, and professionals—in a vibrant one-day event held at the Makerere University School of Public Health Auditorium.

The conference themed *"Building Resilience in a Changing World: The Role of Environmental Health in Combating Climate Change and Antimicrobial Resistance,"* highlighted the urgent need for integrated, multidisciplinary approaches to today's most pressing health threats. Through poster sessions, plenary presentations, and panel discussions, participants explored innovative strategies at the intersection of environmental health, climate change, and antimicrobial stewardship.

The conference opened with remarks

from Mrs. Ruth Mubeezi Neebye, Patron and Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health (DCEH), who emphasized the importance of student leadership and cross-sector collaboration. The keynote address, delivered by Dr. John Bosco Isunju, underscored the national and global climate challenges and the critical role of environmental health in fostering resilience.

The Guest of Honor, Hon. Joyce Kaducu, Minister of State for Primary Education, called for early integration of climate change education into school curricula to empower younger generations with the knowledge and skills to lead change.

This student-led conference reaffirmed the critical role of environmental health professionals in shaping adaptive, resilient health systems. It also showcased the power of youth-led dialogue and innovation in advancing health security and sustainability in a rapidly changing world.

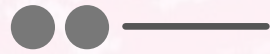


Mukwana Erico hands over the MUEHSA president office to Nichodemus Agumenawe at the conference.

MUEHSA student leaders together with faculty and partners from NTU during the 2024 conference.



# Students Champion Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness



**The students developed impactful social media content, including posters and videos in local languages, focused on educating communities about AMR.**



During World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024, undergraduate students from the Bachelor of Environmental Health Science (BEHS) program at Makerere University School of Public Health, under their association MUEHSA, actively engaged in AMR awareness campaigns through creative competitions.

The students developed impactful social media content, including posters and videos in local languages, focused on educating communities about AMR. Their efforts earned notable recognition, including a “Highly Recommended Video” award and cash prize during the Nottingham Trent University (NTU)–MAK partnership event, and gold medals, certificates, and cash prizes at the National Social Media Contest on AMR, held during the 9th Antimicrobial Resistance Conference in Kampala.

These accolades highlight the students’ innovation, advocacy, and leadership in public health. They also reflect MakSPH’s strong commitment to mentoring young professionals who are ready to take on critical global health challenges like AMR through evidence-based, community-driven action.

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW) is a global campaign held annually from 18th to 24th November to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a growing global health threat. The campaign promotes responsible use of antibiotics and encourages actions to prevent the spread of drug-resistant infections.



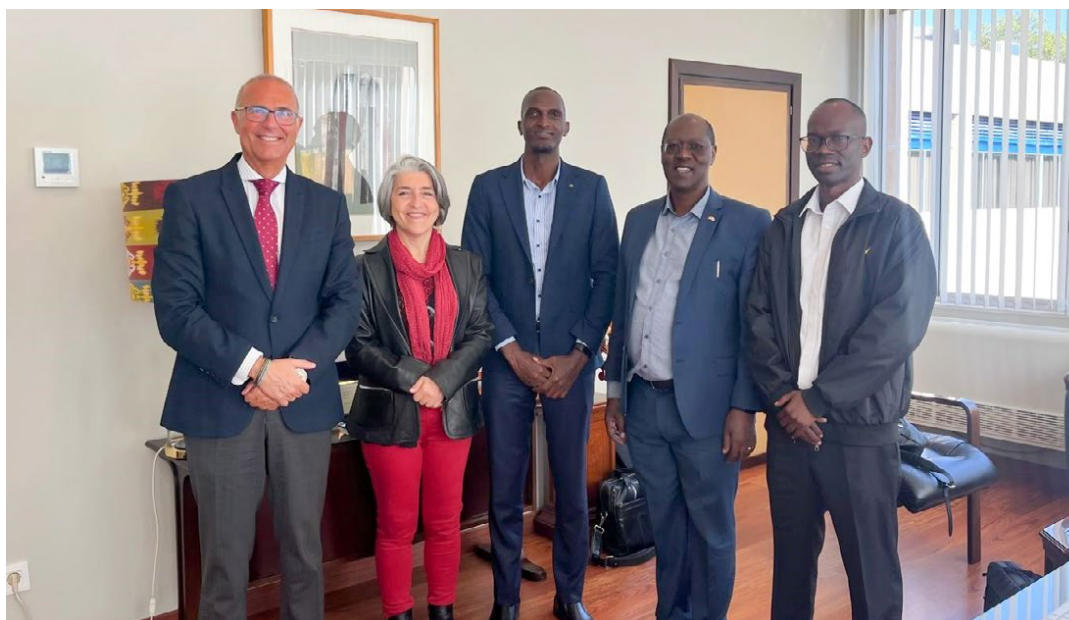
*The MUEHSA students after receiving their awards during the WAAW 2024 at Hotel Africana Kampala.*

# Doctoral Students Enjoy Uninterrupted Time under Erasmus+ Mobility Programme

Under the Erasmus+ Mobility Programme, Makerere University PhD candidates found in Malaga the rare gift of uninterrupted scholarly focus. Rebecca Nuwematsiko reports that the city's libraries and tranquil ambience allowed her to complete all data analysis and a systematic review—work

impossible amid Kampala's competing demands—while enjoying Andalusia's sunshine and warm hospitality. Joseph Mbabazi, likewise, overcame logistical and family pressures; buoyed by attentive University of Malaga (UMA) mentors, he finalised every manuscript ahead of schedule, immersed himself

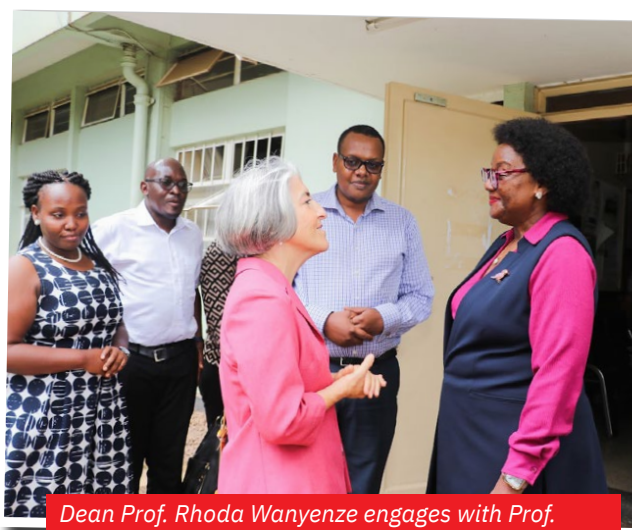
in Spanish culture, reunited with relatives and mapped future collaborations. Olivia Nakisita, juggling motherhood to five children, credits the “quiet” of Malaga for enabling her to draft every paper and an entire thesis in just five months, a task she estimates would have stretched to two years at home.



**At the University of Málaga:** Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. José Pablo Lara Muñoz, and Prof. Maria Cabello, coordinator of the mobility program, hosted MakSPH faculty members Dr. Simon Peter Kibira, Prof. Lynn Atuyambe, and PhD student Dr. David Lubogo in Málaga, Spain 2024.

Faculty observers confirm the environment's academic potency. Because everyday life is conducted mainly in Spanish, distractions are minimal and writing remains centre-stage; consequently, every MakSPH scholar hosted by the University of Malaga has graduated or is on the brink. Beyond individual triumphs, the exchange illustrates how thoughtfully structured mobility—combining robust institutional support with cultural enrichment—accelerates doctoral completion and deepens South-European academic ties. These results spotlight Erasmus+ as an unrivalled catalyst for productivity, resilience and international scholarship among African scholars.

Dr. Arthur Bagonza is the Principal Investigator for the Erasmus+Mobility Programme at Makerere University.



Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze engages with Prof. Maria del Rosario Cabello Porras, coordinator of the Malaga-MakSPH Erasmus exchange program, during her seminar visit, joined by Dr. Arthur Bagonza and program alumni.

# Accelerating Student Success Through Research Mentorship



*Research proposal writing masterclass participants during the training with their mentors.*

On April 16, 2024, Dr. Joan Nankya Mutyoba, Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Makerere University School of Public Health, led a research proposal writing masterclass aimed at supporting master's students to fast-track their research work. This initiative is part of MakSPH's commitment to timely graduation and academic excellence across its nine graduate programs.

The two-day workshop drew over 65 students from the Master of Public Health (Distance Education), Master of Health Informatics, Master of Health Services Research, and Master of Biostatistics programs. Every year, more than 100 students prepare for their proposal defenses, and such sessions provide tailored guidance on research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Students report gaining confidence and clarity in their research processes, benefiting from direct mentorship and the opportunity to address specific academic challenges. These workshops are critical in bridging the gap between coursework and independent research, ensuring students are well-prepared for their careers in public health.

## MakSPH Students Win TB Fund for Innovation

These students, selected from Makerere University's graduate programs, Mathius Amperiize, Ibrahim Sseddangira from the Master of Public Health (MPH) and Mark Outeke from the Master of Health Informatics—were awarded competitive research thesis funding under the D43 program supported by U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) through a partnership between Makerere University School of Public Health, and the University of Georgia

The three exceptional students had demonstrated academic excellence and a strong commitment to using technology to address complex public health challenges. The funding supported their thesis work as they entered the second year of their master's studies in the 2024/25 academic year.

The initiative also equipped the young researchers with cutting-edge skills in digital health and geographic information systems to support Uganda's efforts to



*L-R: Ibrahim Sseddangira, Mark Outeke and Mathius Amperiize.*

improve TB surveillance, diagnosis, and care.

Makerere University School of Public Health continues to champion digital health research, demonstrating strong leadership through its academic programs and strategic investments in innovation. With a firm commitment to nurturing the next generation of scientists, the School is shaping a future where technology drives transformative health solutions across Uganda and beyond.

# Career Guidance, From Class to Industry

As part of its 70th anniversary celebrations, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) held a dynamic career guidance session, **“From Class to Industry: Optimizing Public Health Qualifications for Career Success,”** on October 4, 2024. The event aimed to bridge the gap between academic training and real-world industry demands, responding to student concerns about career direction and mentorship.

The session attracted over 200 participants, including bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D.

students, alongside alumni, faculty, and professionals from various sectors. It was inspired by a master’s student’s expressed need for clearer career guidance, which prompted a quick survey revealing that many students felt unprepared for the job market.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Deogratius Kaheeru Sekimpi, a distinguished alumnus, who highlighted critical skills for public health professionals, including policy planning, leadership, and effective communication. The event also featured a diverse

alumni panel representing government, academia, private sector, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs. Panelists included Dr. Patrick Tusiime, Dr. Adoke Yeka, Dr. Anna Nakanwagi, Nathan Tumhamye, and Ms. Agaba Ann Mary, with Dr. Rawlance Ndejjo moderating the discussion.

The session offered practical insights, inspiring students to align their academic pursuits with emerging industry needs, and concluded with valuable networking opportunities.



*Students in a group photo with faculty, mentors and alumni during the inaugural career guidance seminar in the new MakSPH Auditorium, October 2024.*



*Students attentive during the career guidance session.*



*Dr. Yeka Adoke, a MakSPH alumnus, speaks during the panel discussion at the MakSPH career guidance seminar.*

# Ahumuza Shines at Continental Stage

MakSPH celebrates Ahumuza Bridget, a second-year Bachelor of Environmental Health Science (BEHS) student, for being honored at the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) Africa Region Student Awards 2024. The congress held from November 11th to 13th in Johannesburg, South Africa, focused on **“Environmental Health in Africa: Readiness for the 4th Industrial Revolution.”**

Bridget was recognized with the third-place Outstanding Environmental Health Student Award for her remarkable academic excellence, leadership, and community engagement. As Vice Chairperson of the Makerere University Environmental Health Students Association (MUEHSA), she has actively promoted solid waste segregation and participated in community initiatives on antimicrobial resistance, fire safety, and water sanitation (WASH).

Expressing gratitude, Bridget emphasized her commitment to leadership and sustainable solutions in environmental health.



*Dr. David Musoke, the IFEH President-Elect, hands over the award to Ahumuza Bridget.*



*Environmental health science students celebrate with Ahumuza on her award.*

# MakSPH Graduates First Cohort of IPC Fellows to Strengthen Health Facility Safety



*Graduates of the inaugural IPC fellowship training together with the School leadership, facilitators, officials from the U.S. CDC, and Ministry of Health, Kampala, May 2024.*

In May 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and supported by the U.S. CDC, celebrated the graduation of its inaugural cohort of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) fellows. This yearlong program, launched in 2023, aims to equip frontline health professionals with critical skills to prevent and control infections in Uganda's healthcare facilities.

The seven fellows, selected from over 450 applicants, underwent immersive training in IPC best practices, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application in their workplaces. Their graduation projects addressed pressing challenges in infection control, from medical waste management to compliance monitoring and healthcare worker safety.

Among the standout projects was

that of Ms. Grace Musiimire, an Assistant Nurse Officer at Mengo Hospital, who significantly improved medical waste segregation, raising compliance from 31% to 69% in just six months. This success, achieved through mentorship, targeted awareness campaigns, and close

supervision, exemplifies the fellowship's impact.

MakSPH is also developing a diploma in IPC, currently pending accreditation, to scale nationwide training and ensure sustainable improvements in healthcare safety.



*Ms. Grace Musiimire, an Assistant Nurse at Mengo Hospital and the best Fellow for the cohort, receiving an award from U.S. CDC Atlanta's Dr. Kimberly McKinney during the graduation in May 2024.*

# Building Uganda's Next Generation of Public Health Leaders

Through tripartite partnership of the Ministry of Health, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Public Health Fellowship Program (PHFP) continued to strengthen Uganda's public health systems in 2024 through targeted workforce development.

Under the leadership of Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, the program provided hands-on training through the Frontline, Intermediate, and Advanced Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs), as well as the Global Laboratory Leadership Program (GLLP)—equipping health professionals with critical skills in disease surveillance, outbreak response, and data-driven decision-making.

In 2024:

**52**  
trainees

were enrolled in Frontline FETP (Cohorts 23 and 24), with 41 completing—a 79% completion rate.

All **14**  
Fellows

in the Advanced FETP Cohort 2022 completed their training.

Graduates included key professionals; Brian Agaba, Helen Naiga, Jane Zalwango, King Patrick, Lawrence Oonyu, Marie G Zalwango, Mercy Wanyana, Mackline Ninsiima, Peter Chris Kawungeezi, Robert Zavuga, Thomas Kiggundu, Zainah Kabami, Brenda Simbwa, Rebecca Asunzirwe and Saudah Nabumiru Kizito.

Beyond training, Fellows played an instrumental role in **supporting national outbreak investigations**, including Uganda's response to the **Mpox outbreak**. Trainees from both the Advanced FETP and GLLP contributed significantly to containment efforts, showcasing the program's impact on real-time public health threats.

The PHFP continues to be a cornerstone in **building institutional and human resource capacity** at both national and sub-national levels, directly contributing to Uganda's ability to execute essential public health functions under

the broader **PEPFAR-supported health systems strengthening agenda**.

The PHFP remains central to Uganda's efforts to build resilient

public health systems at both national and sub-national levels, equipping professionals with the skills and experience needed to tackle current and emerging health threats.



*Cohort 4 Graduates, facilitators and chief guests, Program Manager METS, Dr. Evelyn Akello (in red coat) and Director UNIPH, Dr. Alex R. Ario (seated center).*



*Cohort 2022 Fellows with various dignitaries at the graduation ceremony.*

## MakSPH Students Engage in 7<sup>th</sup> Forum Galien Afrique

In October 2024, five postgraduate students from MakSPH participated in the 7th Galien Forum Africa in Dakar, Senegal, under the theme “*Health and Community Actions under Climate and Environmental Crisis in Africa*.” The event featured the Galien Africa Youth Leadership Academy, a six-week program culminating in a Youth Forum where students from across Africa presented AI-driven solutions to climate-related health challenges.

MakSPH students collaborated with peers from Kenya and South Africa to develop an AI-based predictive model for malaria outbreaks in Northern Uganda. Their project, presented by Juma Said

Tusubila and Donna Mudondo Kisembo, received positive feedback for its innovative approach to integrating climate and health data.

Reflecting on the experience, Tusubila noted, “*The Galien Afrique Forum was a transformative experience that deepened my understanding of the intersection of health, technology, and climate resilience.*”

MakSPH is committed to foster interdisciplinary research and equip our students to address pressing public health issues through innovative solutions.



Juma Tusubira and Donna Mudondo presenting at the Forum.

Juma Tusubira (L), Professor William Bazeyo (Centre – Former MakSPH Dean) and Donna Mudondo (R) at the Youth Academy Graduation Ceremony during the Forum.



# 2

## Knowledge Generation and Translation

At Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), we believe that impactful public health begins with robust knowledge generation and effective translation into real-world solutions. This pillar is central to our mission, reflecting our commitment to producing cutting-edge research that addresses national, regional, and global health challenges.

Over the next five years, we aim to solidify our position as a leader in public health research and innovation. We will prioritize high-impact studies that inform health policies and drive meaningful change. Our faculty and students have consistently produced world-class research, with over 300 journal articles published annually, directly shaping public health strategies and interventions.

Moving forward, we will anchor our research around Sustainable Development Goal 3.8—ensuring universal health coverage and access to quality healthcare. We also plan to harness the power of big data and artificial intelligence to deepen our understanding of emerging health issues and strengthen evidence-informed decision-making. To enhance our impact, we will establish a robust Knowledge Management and Communications Unit, ensuring that our research translates into practical, scalable evidence and solutions that improve population health.



# Research Projects & Impact



**344**  
peer reviewed  
articles  
published in  
2024

Scan the QR  
code to explore  
our latest  
peer reviewed  
articles

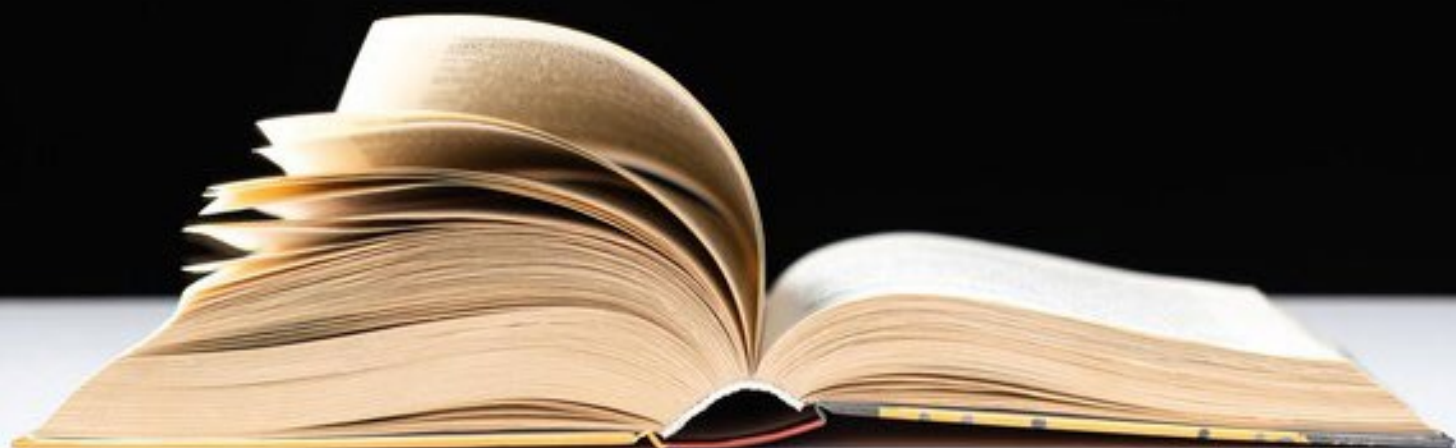


Over the past five years, our faculty have driven public health forward with groundbreaking research, averaging over 300 peer-reviewed publications annually and reaching 344 articles in 2024 alone. This robust output has shaped local and global health policies—from informing Uganda’s Ministry of Health strategic direction to contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 3 targets.

Equally encouraging is the rise of our early-career researchers: more young faculty and students are securing grants and leading studies that translate evidence into action. We recognize, however, that

our funding and publications remain concentrated in well-resourced areas, leaving some critical SDG 3 priorities underexplored.

As we celebrate these achievements, we recommit to diversifying our research portfolio, strengthening capacity across all priority health domains, and ensuring our evidence continues to guide policies and improve health outcomes. Congratulations to everyone whose dedication fuels this impact. You can explore our latest publications at the MakSPH publications here; <https://sph.mak.ac.ug/publications/>



# R4S Celebrates 5 Years of Advancing Equity in Family Planning

From October 2019 to December 2024, the Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S) project, with funding from USAID and led by FHI 360, worked to enhance the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and equity of family planning (FP) programs in Africa and Asia. Other partners included Evidence for Sustainable Human Development Systems in Africa (EVIHDAF), Population Services International (PSI), and Save the Children. At Makerere University School of Public Health, the project focused on expanding client-driven approaches, improving access to FP through innovative channels, and scaling high-impact practices to ensure equitable FP services. MakSPH played a key role in shaping Uganda's FP landscape. The school conducted a formative assessment on FP inequities, self-care, Adolescents and Young People, and high-impact practices, which led to the development of the FP Research and Learning Agenda (2021-2025), and partly informed the

FP2030 commitments, and the FP Costed Implementation Plan (2020-2025). The findings on FP inequities led to the establishment of the FP Equity Steering Committee (ESC), chaired by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and co-chaired by UNFPA, with MakSPH serving as the secretariat, with representation of the adolescents, refugees, and people with disabilities guided by a roadmap, the ESC developed an equity measurement framework and spearheaded initiatives to address inequities in FP programming in Uganda.

Other key achievements in the five years include mapping FP implementing partners to assess geographical inequities, co-creating recommendations for FP-HIV integration, and informing Uganda's National Self-Care Guidelines for Sexual and Reproductive Health. The FP Research and Learning Agenda has been widely adopted, with 14 out of 28 organizations using it to design programs and 10 academic institutions

incorporating its questions into research. Additionally, MakSPH engaged over 40 postgraduate students through webinars to inspire the next generation of FP researchers. Already, five students developed proposals addressing critical questions from the FP Research and Learning Agenda. This is aimed at ensuring the sustained impact of the project.

This work was led by Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze and a dedicated team: Prof Fredrick Makumbi, Dr Joseph Matovu, Dr Simon Peter Kibira, Dr Suzanne Kiwanuka. It was coordinated by Sarah Nabukeera. The R4S project has significantly advanced innovation and equity in family planning while strengthening Uganda's health systems to ensure broader access to quality services, underscoring MakSPH's commitment to evidence-based solutions that deliver sustainable impact, empowering individuals and fostering resilient communities for a healthier future.

**The R4S project has significantly advanced innovation and equity in family planning while strengthening Uganda's health systems...**



*Stakeholders and researchers during a technical working group meeting.*

# Closing HIV Prevention Gaps for High-Risk Men

Kayungirizi (“to connect”), an HIV prevention effort in Uganda’s high-risk areas, began on July 1, 2024. Dr. Esther Buregyeya, Associate Professor and Head of Disease Control & Environmental Health Department at MakSPH, leads this three-year (July 2024–June 2027) NIH-funded research that is creating waves in Kampala.



*The study team after data collection from one of brothels of female sex workers in Kyebando.*

**I**t aims to reverse the trend by enabling female sex workers (FSW) to become change agents, especially because HIV prevalence among FSW is 35%, seven times the national average, and their male clients remain a hidden, vulnerable category. Kayungirizi is basically about connecting and trusting others. The project bridges the gap by providing HIV self-testing (HIVST) kits and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) starter packs to high-risk men who would otherwise fall through the cracks. The intervention, co-designed with FSW and informed by their lived experiences, targets not just medical but also social and institutional barriers to care.

Through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews, the research team has listened to the voices

of FSW, male clients, and community leaders, ensuring the intervention is both practical and compassionate.

Kayungirizi’s has potential to impact lives especially by making HIV Self Testing kits and PrEP more accessible, thereby significantly reducing HIV transmission among a vulnerable population. But its reach goes beyond health outcomes—it’s about dignity, empowerment, and community resilience. The findings from this work are poised to shape national policies, offering a blueprint for scaling up HIV prevention efforts not just in Uganda but across sub-Saharan Africa.

This project is a collaboration between San Diego State University, the Ministry of Health in Uganda, and local civil society organizations. Professor

Susan Kiene, the Co-Principal Investigator, alongside, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi, and Prof. Noah Kiwanuka as co-investigators.

This partnership reflects the School of Public Health’s relentless commitment to research that improves lives, transforms systems, and takes us closer to an HIV-free generation.

**The project bridges the gap by providing HIV self-testing (HIVST) kits and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) starter packs to high-risk men who would otherwise fall through the cracks...**

# How SMS, Calls & Transport is Boosting TB Diagnosis



*A patient reading an SMS reminder for her medication on a basic mobile phone.*

**The MILEAGE4TB Project, led by Dr. Esther Buregyeya (PI), Dr. Noah Kiwanuka, and Dr. Lynn Atuyambe, and funded by the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), aims to improve tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis completion in Uganda using SMS reminders, phone calls, and transport incentives.**

**G**lobally, over 10 million people develop TB each year, yet 1 in 4 are not identified or reported by TB programs. Uganda remains among the 30 high TB/HIV burden countries, with many patients failing to complete testing or start treatment. The study targeted presumptive TB patients—those with symptoms—to increase diagnosis and linkage to care.

A formative study revealed that 28.3% of patients with TB symptoms did not complete diagnosis, and 13.7% of confirmed TB patients failed to start treatment. This study was conducted across six facilities: Kiruddu National Referral Hospital, Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital, Mukono and Luwero General Hospitals, Kawolo Hospital, and Wakiso HC IV.

Initial interventions included SMS and transport incentives. However, stakeholder input—including TB patients, health workers, and

policymakers—led to the addition of phone calls due to concerns over SMS fatigue, privacy, and limited engagement.

A randomized controlled trial involving 2,355 participants found that supplementing standard TB care with phone calls and transport incentives significantly improved diagnosis completion rates—rising to 81.6% compared to 64.3% under standard care. In contrast, SMS reminders alone did not make a notable difference. These findings highlight the value of personalized follow-up and support in enhancing TB diagnosis completion, particularly in high-burden settings like Uganda.

Beyond improving TB diagnosis, MILEAGE4TB is building Uganda's research capacity by mentoring and supporting three master's and one PhD student, and providing hands-on training in clinical trials.

# MakSPH Leading Preparedness through Africa-Europe Research Cluster



*Stakeholders in a group photo during Mortality Surveillance Project dissemination Workshop at the MakSPH Auditorium in 2024.*

The Africa-Europe Cluster of Research Excellence (CoRE) for Preparedness and Response to Pandemics and Shocks, established by ARUA and The Guild, is a key initiative under the AU–EU Innovation Agenda. In 2024, CoRE focused on closing gaps in epidemic preparedness by assessing past health shocks and strengthening system resilience across Africa and Europe.

In Uganda, the CoRE advanced its agenda through the Mortality Surveillance Project in Kalangala and Buvuma districts, training over 700 health workers, Village Health Teams, and community leaders. The project identified barriers to death notification and registration, contributing to

the development of Uganda's National Mortality Surveillance Road Map (2024–2028).

Another effort—the RIF COVID/Ebola Project in Mubende and Kassanda—analyzes how Uganda's COVID-19 response shaped its 2022 Ebola outbreak management. CoRE member Steven Kabwama presented key findings from Wakiso district at the Global Health Security Conference 2024 in Sydney, showing how COVID-era innovations improved maternal and child health services.

The CoRE is a network led by Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze (Makerere University) alongside Dr. Suzanne Kiwanuka, Dr. Rawlance Ndejjo, Mr. Steven Kabwama,

and Mr. Douglas Bulafu. They collaborate with Co-lead Prof. Niko Speybroeck (Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium), Prof. Lucy Gilson (University of Cape Town), Prof. Ibrahima Seck (University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal), Assoc. Prof. Katerini Storeng and Prof. Victoria Muinde (University of Oslo), Prof. Olufunmilayo Fawole (University of Ibadan), Prof. Tobias Alfvén (Karolinska Institutet), and Prof. Mala Ali Mapatano (University of Kinshasa).

Together, this diverse team is building a foundation for equitable research, policy influence, and shared innovation in pandemic preparedness and response.



*Strengthening Mortality Surveillance: Capacity-building activities underway at Bwendero HCIV, Kalangala District, Uganda.*



*Prof. Rhoda K. Wanyenze, Dean of the School of Public Health and CoRE Lead, chairs a meeting with visiting CDC officials to discuss progress on the Mortality Surveillance Project.*

# CityMove Rooting for Healthier Urban Environments

Since January 2024, the CityMove Project has been at the forefront of transforming urban spaces into vibrant hubs for physical activity and healthier living. Under the leadership of Dr. Rawlance Ndejjo and Dr. Esther Buregyeya, this multi-city initiative is examining how urban design and policy can reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases through increased physical activity.

Spanning six cities across Europe, Africa, and Latin America, CityMove brings together over 50 international researchers and nine partner organizations. The project adapts the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) into locally scalable interventions to support more active and inclusive urban environments.

In Kampala, CityMove is already catalyzing innovation through

evidence-based research and strategic partnerships. It began with a comprehensive assessment of barriers and opportunities for active mobility, followed by stakeholder engagements examining gender and power dynamics in urban movement. These insights informed targeted actions on the ground.

In 2024 CityMove in collaboration with the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) launched Kampala Car-Free Day on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The event sought to promote walking and cycling, raised awareness about air pollution, and advocated for safer, people-centered streets. Monthly cycling events and a living lab—established in partnership with KCCA and eBee—have further fostered a culture of active mobility and riding safety.

CityMove also convened over 500 stakeholders through

virtual and in-person forums, stimulating dialogue and policy interest. KCCA is now actively investing in recreational cycling and non-motorized transport infrastructure.

Beyond policy and practice, CityMove is building academic capacity. One PhD and one master's student are contributing to research and data generation, reinforcing MakSPH's commitment to mentorship and local ownership.

**Spanning six cities across Europe, Africa, and Latin America, CityMove brings together over 50 international researchers and nine partner organizations.**



*Mr. Hakim from CityMove partner eBee during one of the Kampala Cycling Days.*

# Cities of Youth Tackling Gendered Impact of Climate Migration on Health

In April 2024, we set out on an ambitious four-year journey with the *Cities of Youth* project, backed by DANIDA. This initiative brings together MakSPH and School of Women and Gender Studies, working alongside the University of Southern Denmark and Tufts University. Together, we're investigating how climate-driven migration is shaping the lives, health, and opportunities of young people in Uganda's growing cities—Mbale and Mbarara.

Officially launched on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Hotel Africana, Kampala, the *Cities of Youth* project is already making an impact. Our visits to Mbale and Mbarara brought us face-to-face with city leaders, youth representatives, and local stakeholders, sparking important conversations on climate-driven migration. We've also mapped out existing research, policies, and data, revealing key gaps and opportunities to better support young people navigating these challenges.

The *Cities of Youth* project is already making a difference. It's bringing climate migration into focus for city leaders and inspiring action to include it in urban planning. More than 60 participants—youth leaders, civil society groups, and local authorities—have joined the conversation, sharing ideas and shaping solutions to support young people on the move.

The *Cities of Youth* project is not just about research—it's about building local expertise and fostering collaboration. Four PhD students—Gloria Bahizi, Arnold Tigaiza, Donna Keirungi, and Resty Magezi Kyomugaba—are



*Mr. Adam Sparre Spliid, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation at the Danish Embassy in Kampala, joins the Cities of Youth Project team for a photo during the official launch.*

at the heart of this work, guided by a team of dedicated scholars. They're working alongside international partners like Prof. Angela Chang (University of Southern Denmark) and Dr. Elizabeth Stites (Tufts University), as well as national investigators Dr. Rawlance Ndejjo, Dr. Charles Ssemugabo (Makerere School of Public Health), Prof. Sarah Ssali, and Dr. Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi (Makerere School of Women and Gender Studies).

*Cities of Youth* is shaping national and local policy discussions, laying the groundwork for long-term tracking of climate migration and its impact by

aligning with Uganda's National Development Plan IV.

With a hands-on approach and strong partnerships, *Cities of Youth* goes beyond research to creating real solutions for real people. The project is also shaping cities that are more resilient and inclusive by tackling climate migration challenges head-on, people, their futures, and creating a Uganda where no one is left behind in the face of climate change at its core.

**The *Cities of Youth* project is not just about research—it's about building local expertise and fostering collaboration.**

*Hon. Dr. Peace Regis Mutuuza, Minister of State for Gender and Culture, officially launches the Cities of Youth project as Chief Guest.*



# SIHI Uganda Driving Grassroots Health Transformation



*Dr. Richard Mangwi, Tomas Lundström (Embassy of Sweden Kampala), SIHI Uganda Hub Director Dr. Phyllis Awor, Dr. Richard Walex Walyomo (Division Medical Officer, Central Division, KCCA), and Ms. Joy Angulo (Gender, Adolescent, and Youth Advisor, USAID) at the SIHI Uganda national dissemination workshop on April 30, 2024, at Golf Course Hotel, Kampala.*

The Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) Uganda Hub run by MakSPH has been a driving force behind community-driven health initiatives since 2017. SIHI has backed more than 30 homegrown ideas by means of research, capacity building, and seed finance, hence benefiting thousands all throughout Uganda.

SIHI Uganda brought together national and regional dissemination seminars in 2024 to showcase such impact-driven ventures as the Baby Ubuntu Program, Parenting for Respectability, and refugee-focused Care Groups. By strengthening community-level involvement, these activities helped to establish important connections between policymakers and innovators.

Twenty innovators from ten projects improved their knowledge in project management, entrepreneurship, and research by means of the 2024/2025 Capacity Building

Fellowship. Already translating into better innovation delivery are observable increases in knowledge and practical instruments such M&E systems and proposals.

Apart from training, SIHI supported four exceptional projects running the Small Grants Program from remote areas' maternity health services to insurance and sanitation technologies. Field-based case studies also recorded the effect of novel solutions targeting economic empowerment and reproductive health. From helping jigger-infested kids like Joy to walk again to promoting respectable healthcare for

women, SIHI Uganda's work shows the strength of local ideas to have worldwide influence.

SIHI Uganda keeps increasing social innovation as a pillar of health systems resilience linked to a worldwide network of 15 hubs with help from the World Health Organization (TDR), Sida, and the Embassy of Sweden. The project, headed by Dr. Phyllis Awor, is an important contributor to Uganda's path toward universal health care by means of alliances, innovation, and a dedication to justice.

**SIHI Uganda keeps increasing social innovation as a pillar of health systems resilience linked to a worldwide network of 15 hubs with help from the World Health Organization (TDR), Sida, and the Embassy of Sweden.**

# Strengthening Governance for SDG Synergies in East Africa

Through a dynamic, multi-country partnership, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) is advancing research that addresses one of the most pressing challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): fragmented efforts and uncoordinated development initiatives. The project, “Beyond Cherry-Picking: Aligning Development Actors and Efforts for Inclusive and Effective Governance of Trade-Offs and Synergies between SDGs in East Africa,” is part of a five-year international collaboration led by Wageningen University and Research (WUR), with MakSPH as a key partner. Other partners in this work include the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya; the Water and Land Resource Centre (WLRC), Ethiopia; the Ministries of Water and Environment and Health in Uganda; and the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

Since 2022, the project has

engaged governments, donors, academia, and civil society to assess governance mechanisms that align efforts across water, energy, food, and health systems—especially in informal urban settlements like those in Kampala. Research led by MakSPH’s Dr. Richard Mugambe, with contributions from PhD fellow on the project Mr. Tonny Ssekamate (registered at WUR), are exploring how disruptions and reconfigurations at the nexus of these sectors impact livelihoods, health, and equity. The findings from their investigations will provide a grounded understanding of governance trade-offs from household to global levels.

This work is driving actionable insights,

informing policy dialogues, and producing tailored recommendations to improve coherence between national and donor priorities and public-private investments. Policy briefs and engagement with ministries of Health and Water and Environment, alongside

Kampala Capital City Authority, ensure that research that is responsive to real governance needs will be produced.

As part of a broader effort with partners in Kenya and Ethiopia, this initiative repositions MakSPH at the forefront of research that bridges science, systems, and solutions to support better governance, reduced duplication, and greater synergy across development efforts in East Africa.

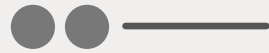
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**Since 2022, the project has engaged governments, donors, academia, and civil society to assess governance mechanisms that align efforts across water, energy, food, and health systems—especially in informal urban settlements like those in Kampala.**

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# Championing Emergency Medical Services in Mukono through Reform



**The Mukono EMS Baseline has laid a solid foundation for measuring improvements in emergency response and catalyzing policy and system-wide reforms.**



In 2024, MakSPH conducted a comprehensive baseline assessment of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Mukono District, a rapidly urbanizing region in central Uganda. Despite its proximity to Kampala, Mukono continues to face critical health challenges, including a high burden of road traffic injuries and maternal and neonatal emergencies, with limited emergency care infrastructure and coordination.

The assessment, led by Dr. Frederick Oporia, aimed to determine the operational readiness of both prehospital and hospital-based EMS. The study revealed fragmented services, inadequate ambulance coverage, a shortage of trained personnel, and poor coordination between emergency responders and health facilities.

The findings are now informing

targeted efforts to strengthen emergency care, including improved governance, expanded funding, standardized EMS training, and better inter-agency coordination. As a result, the baseline report now guides partners, particularly the Ministry of Health, Mukono District Local Government, WHO Uganda, and UNICEF Uganda, toward practical, evidence-informed solutions with the support and funding from the UN Road Safety Fund.

The Mukono EMS Baseline has laid a solid foundation for measuring improvements in emergency response and catalyzing policy and system-wide reforms. It represents a critical step toward building a more resilient, responsive, and equitable emergency care system for one of Uganda's fastest-growing districts.



*An ambulance delivers a patient for a medical emergency in a remote facility.*

# Evidence for Road Safety in Uganda



*A high-angle view of Kampala's Clock Tower area on Queen's Way, showcasing the new flyover infrastructure amidst traffic congestion and motorists navigating incorrectly. Despite recent upgrades, challenges in traffic management and adherence to road rules persist. Authorities have observed instances where some motorists deliberately violate barriers, creating unauthorized lanes, which compromises road safety.*

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**In 2024, careless overtaking and speeding emerged as the leading causes of road crashes, accounting for nearly half (44.5%) of all reported incidents...**

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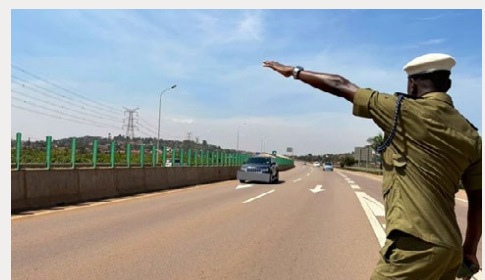
**Source: 2024 Uganda Police Road Traffic Report**

Since 2021, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) has partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), and the Uganda Police Directorate of Traffic and Road Safety to reduce road traffic injuries in Kampala. Under the leadership of Dr. Frederick Oporia, the 2024 phase of this collaboration focused on generating real-time, location-specific data to inform targeted interventions, with technical support from the Johns Hopkins University International Injury Research Unit.

Key efforts included systematic data collection at 16 strategic sites, focusing on critical road safety issues like speeding and helmet use. This evidence base has guided new policies, including revised urban

speed limits and the enforcement of child restraint regulations under the Traffic and Road Safety (Prescription of Speed Limits) Regulations, 2024.

Results shared with city leaders, MPs, and the media have sparked significant policy shifts, contributing to a safer urban transport environment. These efforts have also strengthened local capacity for injury surveillance, reinforcing MakSPH's role in shaping evidence-based road safety strategies for lasting impact.



# UPHIA 2024–25: Charting Uganda’s Next Leap in HIV Response

The UPHIA 2024–2025 is a nationwide household survey led by the Ministry of Health, with technical support from MakSPH and the U.S. CDC, under PEPFAR funding. The initiative builds on previous UPHIA surveys to provide updated, actionable data on the HIV epidemic and non-communicable disease (NCD) risks across Uganda.

In 2024, planning for the nationwide, household-based survey that will be conducted across 6,000 randomly selected households in 191 enumeration areas over four months as part of the UPHIA 2024-2025 kicked off. The survey, targeting individuals aged 15+ (and 10–14 in select regions), aims to estimate HIV incidence, prevalence, and viral load suppression; evaluate uptake and barriers to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services.

It also introduces a focus on NCDs, measuring the prevalence of raised blood pressure, elevated blood glucose, and obesity; and examine HIV risk behaviours and demographic factors.

UPHIA’s results will inform national progress toward UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets, where Uganda currently stands at 80.9% diagnosed, 96.1% on treatment, and 92.2% virally suppressed. Data will also support policy, program planning, and resource allocation.

MakSPH brings research leadership to this effort,



*Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze and Dr. Mary Adetunke Boyd US-CDC Uganda country representative interacting during a UPHIA planning meeting at the MakSPH Auditorium.*

coordinating implementation while ensuring ethical and scientific rigor. Through UPHIA, Uganda not only monitors the HIV epidemic but strengthens public trust in data-driven health policy.

Other implementing partners of UPHIA 2024-2025 include Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI), and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Uganda, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic Services (NHLDS).

Together with other partners, the School of Public Health is to lead on the research component toward a healthier, more informed Uganda.

**UPHIA will track Uganda’s progress towards the UNAIDS targets for HIV testing, HIV treatment and viral suppression, and inform improvements in the HIV policy and programs.**

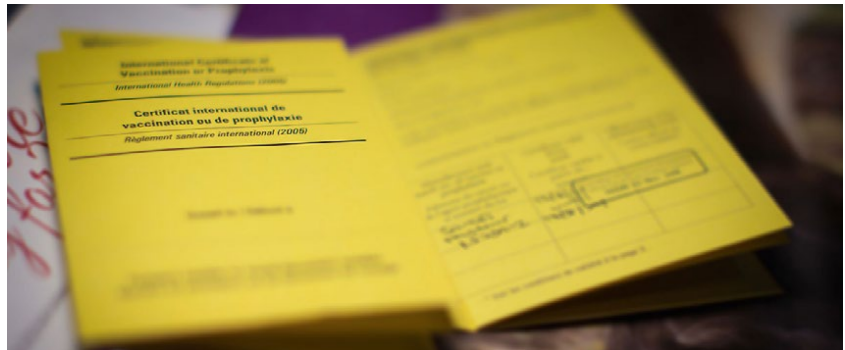
**EVERY DROP COUNTS**



# Supporting Uganda's Yellow Fever Fight

Yellow fever is a life-threatening viral disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes, primarily *Aedes aegypti*, and is endemic in parts of Africa and South America. Infected individuals may experience sudden fever, jaundice, bleeding, and in severe cases, organ failure and death. Uganda is classified by the World Health Organization as a high-risk country for yellow fever transmission due to its tropical climate, presence of the mosquito vector, and recurring outbreaks in both urban and rural areas. This risk is heightened by high population mobility, low vaccination coverage, and expanding urban centers. Vaccination remains the most effective preventive measure, providing lifelong protection with a single dose. In light of this, Uganda's engagement in the global Eliminate Yellow Fever Epidemics (EYE) strategy is vital—not only to safeguard its population but also to strengthen regional and global health security.

In April 2024, Uganda implemented the second phase of its Yellow Fever Preventive Mass Vaccination Campaign



(PMVC) across 53 districts in six regions—Kampala, South Buganda, North Buganda, Ankole, Teso, and Karamoja—targeting individuals aged 1 to 60 years. A post-campaign coverage survey conducted in June 2024 by MakSPH, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, PATH, WHO, and GAVI, revealed that only 55.6% of eligible individuals had received the vaccine during the campaign, with coverage increasing to 62.6% when accounting for prior vaccinations. Uptake was highest in rural areas and among school-aged children, but worryingly low in Kampala (37.3%) and among wealthier households, non-Ugandans, and persons with disabilities. Awareness played a critical role: high-coverage regions like Karamoja and Teso benefited

from intensive mobilization by local leaders and Village Health Teams. As Uganda moves toward eliminating yellow fever epidemics, strategic, inclusive communication and early community engagement will be key to achieving universal coverage.

**As Uganda moves toward eliminating yellow fever epidemics, strategic, inclusive communication and early community engagement will be key to achieving universal coverage.**



Ms. Sarah Nabukeera, one of the researchers on the Yellow Fever survey during a training of Research Assistants before going to the field.

## MakSPH Celebrates Sixth Cohort of Seed Grant Awardees

*MakSPH management team cut cake during the Staff end of year party during which four early career researchers received funding awards.*

MakSPH recognized the sixth cohort of its Seed Grant Awardees at the 2024 end-of-year staff party held on Friday, December 13. The Seed Grants Programme, coordinated by the School's Grants and Research Capacity Building Committee, supports early-career faculty, research associates, and fellows

to pursue high-impact public health research aligned with national and global priorities.

This year's awarded projects span critical areas such as climate change and health, global health security, antimicrobial resistance, non-communicable diseases, and

urban resilience. Since inception, the programme has supported over 20 projects, catalyzing peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and larger research grants.

### The 2024 awardees are:



**Ms. Irene Wanyana,**  
Assistant Lecturer,  
Epidemiology &  
Biostatistics – Scoping  
review of digital health  
applications for NCDs in  
Africa



**Dr. Edward Buzigi,**  
Lecturer, Community  
Health & Behavioural  
Sciences – Determinants of  
sugar-sweetened beverage  
use during complementary  
feeding in Kampala



**Mr. Michael Toskinz  
Wagaba, Research  
Associate – Climate  
change-related food  
insecurity in Nakivale  
refugee settlement**



**Dr. Justine  
Namakula, Research  
Associate – Policy  
options for flood  
resilience in Kampala**

Dr. David Musoke, Chair of the Committee, commended the initiative for enhancing evidence generation and supporting the professional growth of emerging researchers. The programme reflects MakSPH's commitment to nurturing the next generation of public health scientists.

*Ms. Irene Wanyana, Mr. Michael Toskinz Wagaba, Dr. David Musoke, Ms. Susan Mawemuko, Dr. Susan Kiwanuka and Dr. Buzigi after receiving the award in December 2024.*



# Enhancing Gender-Sensitive HIV Care

**Findings suggest promising effects on provider competence and client outcomes, including ART adherence.**



The HIV Gender Study led by Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze (MakSPH) and Prof. Katelyn Sileo (University of Texas at San Antonio), disseminated to a technical team at the Ministry of Health with findings of the study.

The study grounded in formative needs assessments, the intervention addressed a critical gap in HIV care: the need for providers to recognize and respond to gender disparities and biases that shape HIV outcomes aimed to pilot and evaluate a gender-sensitive training program for HIV providers across three Ugandan districts: Wakiso, Luwero, and Mityana.

Over four years, the project developed and implemented a four-session training designed to build

awareness of gendered barriers to care, motivate providers to address disparities, reduce implicit bias, and equip them with practical, client-centered skills. The program's feasibility, acceptability, and impact were rigorously evaluated through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with 144 HIV care providers and 238 clients at baseline, 6 months, and 12 months. Findings suggest promising effects on provider competence and client outcomes, including ART adherence. The study was implemented in partnership with Mildmay Uganda and funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, USA, reaffirming the importance of gender equity in effective HIV care.



*The HIV Gender Study led by Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze (MakSPH) and Prof. Katelyn Sileo (University of Texas at San Antonio) engaging Ministry of Health at Lourdel towers, Makerere.*

# Cholera, Diarrhea Surveillance Begins at High-Risk Borders



*L-R: Prof. Christopher G. Orach, Prof. David Sack, MoH's Dr. Godfrey Bwire and Dr. Christine Nalwadda, during an engagement meeting at MakSPH in 2024.*

**The project will introduce targeted surveillance at five sites—Kyangwali and Amuru Transit Centres, and hospitals in Nebbi, Kasese, and Busia...**

To support Uganda's commitment to cholera elimination by 2030, MakSPH, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, is leading a strategic study to identify diarrhea pathogens and detect cholera early in high-risk border communities.

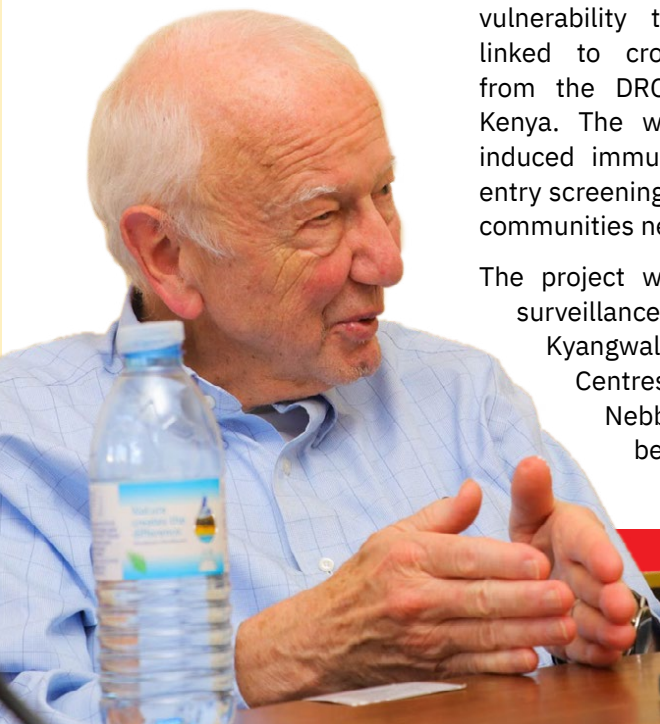
Led by Prof. David Sack from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, MakSPH's Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach, with co-investigators Dr. Godfrey Bwire (MoH) and Francis Ongole from Uganda National Health Laboratory Services (UNHLS), the study addresses Uganda's vulnerability to cholera outbreaks linked to cross-border movement from the DRC, South Sudan, and Kenya. The weakening of vaccine-induced immunity and limited pre-entry screening exacerbate the risk in communities near borders.

The project will introduce targeted surveillance at five sites—Kyangwali and Amuru Transit Centres, and hospitals in Nebbi, Kasese, and Busia—beginning with a two-to-three-month pilot

in June 2024. Using rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) and intensive monitoring, the initiative aims to detect cholera and other diarrheal diseases early, interrupt transmission, and inform national policy.

Beyond cholera, the study will generate valuable data to strengthen Uganda's broader diarrheal disease response, ultimately protecting both migrant and host populations while contributing to regional health security and global elimination targets.

Cholera remains a persistent public health threat in Uganda, with outbreaks reported annually since 2000. The disease is closely tied to unsafe water, poor sanitation, and overcrowded conditions. Border districts face heightened risk due to frequent cross-border movement, especially during conflict and refugee influxes. Vulnerable groups include refugees, fishing communities, and residents of urban slums. In response, the Ministry of Health continues to promote safe water, sanitation, hygiene, surveillance, and effective case management to curb the spread.



*Dr. David Sack, a Professor of International Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health*

# Navigating Gendered Impacts of Flooding in Refugee Settlements



*Flood-affected refugee households in Adjumani District, Northern Uganda, 2024.*

As part of the INFLOW project, funded by the CLARE programme and co-led by the University of Reading and MakSPH researchers are advancing flood resilience in Uganda and South Sudan alongside partners such as the Uganda Red Cross Society, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, and government ministries, focuses on improving flood prediction and response along the Nile River.

In 2024, MakSPH researchers developed and submitted a study protocol examining the Differential Impacts of Floods on Gender in refugee households in Adjumani District. The study will explore how

flooding affects women and men differently, particularly in terms of decision-making and adaptive responses within households. Research tools have been localized in Arabic and Madi to reflect the linguistic needs of the communities.

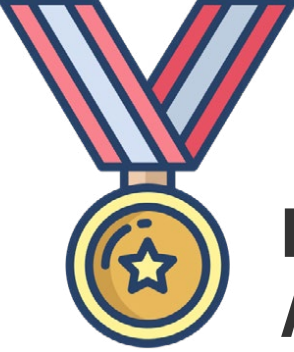
Ethical approval is under review by the Makerere IRB and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. Fieldwork has been completed in Oliji, Nyumanzi, and Ayilo 1 settlements. This work supports evidence-based approaches to gender-responsive disaster planning in humanitarian contexts and enhances Uganda's capacity for climate adaptation.



*A child walks barefooted through flood water in Adjumani District, Northern Uganda in 2024.*



*Ms. Harriet Aber, (C) and the INFLOW project team during a stakeholder engagement meeting in Adjumani in 2024.*



# MakSPH Faculty Inducted into Academy of Science Fellowship

Four faculty members from MakSPH were inducted as Fellows of the 2024 Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS), one of the nation's most respected scientific bodies. This marks the first time MakSPH

has had the highest number of faculty inducted in a single year. The prestigious recognition was conferred on Friday, November 1, 2024, at Four Points by Sheraton in Kampala, Uganda.



*The 2024 Uganda National Academy of Sciences Fellows.*

The recipients are;



**Dr. David Guwatudde**, a Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the MakSPH where he has been teaching for over 32 years. In the last decade, Dr. Guwatudde's research interest has been on characterising the epidemiology, evaluation and effectiveness of appropriate interventions for prevention and control of selected non-communicable diseases (NCD) especially diabetes and hypertension.



**Dr. Fredrick Edward Makumbi**, an Associate Professor of Biostatistics at MakSPH in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. A seasoned public health professional in Uganda, he is also a Gates Fellow. Through his expertise in population health and the evaluation of public health interventions, Dr. Makumbi has generated significant evidence that impacts the field. He has published over 300 journal articles and leads the PMA project, which focuses on evaluating schistosomiasis and family planning initiatives in Uganda.



**Dr. David Musoke**, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health at MakSPH. He serves as the Chair of the Grants and Research Capacity Building Committee at MakSPH and is the President Elect of the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH). A graduate of Makerere University, his research interests include environmental health, malaria prevention and community health. He led the organization of the first International Community Health Workers symposium which was held in Uganda, and is an academic editor and reviewer for several journals.



**Dr. Victoria Nankabirwa**, an experienced clinical researcher and Lecturer in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at MakSPH. She holds a PhD from the University of Bergen and is also a member of the WHO Immunization and Vaccine-related Implementation Research (IVIR) Advisory Committee. Her key interests include mother and child outcomes, particularly survival and the impact of immunization.

The visits introduced the young learners to public health as a career path through interactive sessions, facility tours, and peer-led mentorship by Environmental Health Sciences students.

## Inspiring Future Public Health Leaders

In 2024, MakSPH hosted students from Nabisunsa Girls' School and St. Peter's Secondary School Bombo Kalule for hands-on academic exposure. The visits introduced learners to public health as a career path through interactive sessions, facility tours, and peer-led mentorship by Environmental Health Sciences students. These engagements offered practical insights into university life, course content, and career possibilities—motivating the next generation to pursue health sciences. MakSPH remains dedicated to fostering early interest in public health through mentorship, outreach, and educational partnerships.

Students from Nabisunsa Girls' School interact with their alumnus and Dean, Makerere University School of Public Health, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze during their tour to the School in 2024.



Students from St. Peter's Secondary School Bombo-Kalule during their visit to Makerere University School of Public Health in 2024.



# Offering Leadership for Malaria Elimination Across Africa



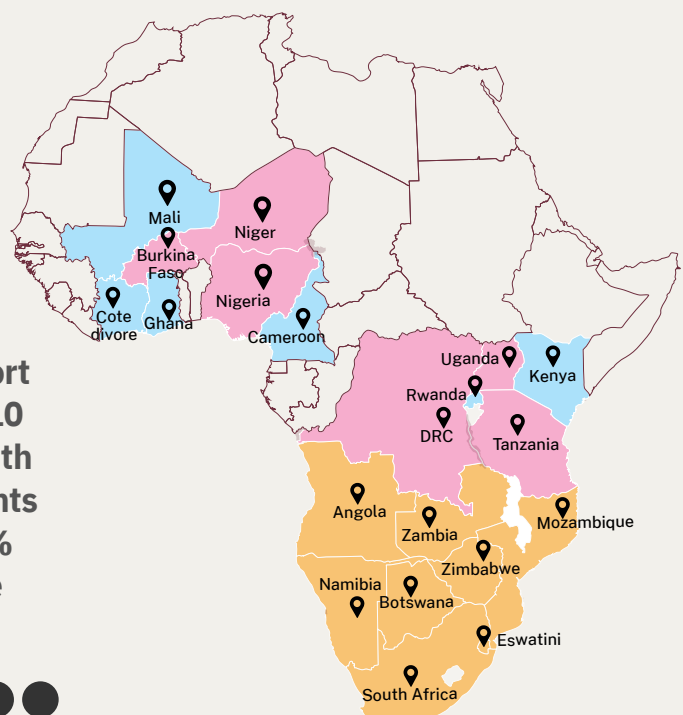
In 2024, MakSPH, in collaboration with ten public health institutions across nine high-burden malaria countries; Uganda, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin, advanced the African Leadership and Management Training for Impact in Malaria Eradication (ALAMIME) program. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ALAMIME aims to strengthen leadership, management, and data-driven decision-making capacities among malaria program personnel at national and sub-national levels. The program is led by Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa, and deputized by Prof. Dosithée Ngo Bebe.

The third cohort attracted 1,010 applicants, with 259 participants selected—46% of whom were women. These individuals represented diverse roles, including national malaria control program heads, senior ministry staff, regional coordinators, district officers, and NGO representatives. The comprehensive training encompassed four modules,

combining online and face-to-face sessions. Notably, 89% of participants completed all deliverables, earning certificates of completion.

Beyond individual training, ALAMIME facilitated 66 targeted alumni webinars and two consortium-wide webinars, to foster continuous learning and collaboration. Topics addressed included emerging challenges such as artemisinin resistance and malaria vaccine developments.

**The third cohort attracted 1,010 applicants, with 259 participants selected—46% of whom were women...**



These sessions attracted substantial participation, with up to 416 attendees, a robust commitment to malaria eradication efforts.

Through ALAMIME, MakSPH and its partners are cultivating a cadre of skilled leaders equipped to implement evidence-based strategies, adapt to evolving malaria landscapes, and drive progress toward the ultimate goal of malaria elimination

in Africa. The partnering universities include; Makerere University, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), University of Sierra Leone, University of Ibadan, Ahmed Bello University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Kinshasa, Abdou Moumouni University, University of Joseph Ki Zerbo, University of Lome and Regional Institute for Public Health



*ALAMIME individual training session in Niger.*



*ALAMIME individual training session in Sierra Leone.*



*ALAMIME individual training session in Tanzania.*



**Mr. Asiko praised the School's capacity and leadership in public health research, policy, and education, noting its strategic role on the continent.**

## MakSPH Hosts Rockefeller Vice President for Africa

In 2024, MakSPH was honored to host Mr. William Asiko, Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation's Africa Regional Office, during a courtesy visit to the Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze. The visit focused on reviewing ongoing Rockefeller-supported research and infrastructure projects, including the newly completed state-of-the-art auditorium on the Makerere main campus, where the Foundation supported its furnishing.

Mr. Asiko praised the School's capacity and leadership in public health research, policy, and education, noting its strategic role on the continent. The Rockefeller Foundation has been a transformative partner since the 1950s—supporting faculty development, family planning and maternal and child health research, and the establishment of Uganda's MPH program through the Public Health Schools Without Walls initiative.

The Foundation is supporting MakSPH in becoming a Centre of Excellence in behaviour change in partnership with Africa CDC through its investment in a new Master's program in Health Promotion and Communication. This program is jointly crafted by the School of Public Health (Department of Community Health and Behavioural Sciences) and the School of Languages, Literature, and Communication (Department of Journalism and Communication), designed with a myriad of stakeholders. MakSPH remains deeply grateful for the Foundation's longstanding support, which has strengthened our capacity to tackle food security, climate change, and health system challenges across the region.

**L-R:** MakSPH leaders; Dean Rhoda Wanyenze, Dr. Christine Nalwadda, Head, Community Health and Behavioral Sciences, Prof. Esther Buregyeya, Head, Disease Control and Environmental Health, Dr. J.B Isunju, the VAA-HNAP focal person and The Rockefeller's Gerry Gimaiyo and William Asiko, the Foundation's Vice President for Africa.



## MakSPH, HISP Uganda Hint on Collaboration

On July 17, 2024, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Ms. Irene Wanyana, and Dr. Roy William Mayega of Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) met with Mr. Eric Munyambabazi and Dr. Prosper Behumbize of HISP Uganda to explore strategic collaborations. The discussion focused on leveraging research and innovation to address climate change, health systems strengthening, and other pressing public health issues. HISP Uganda, a locally registered non-profit, brings together professionals in public health and informatics. This

potential partnership aims to harness data-driven solutions and shared expertise to improve health outcomes and inform policy through evidence-based approaches.



*L-R: Mr. Eric Munyambabazi, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Ms. Irene Wanyana, Dr. Roy William Mayega and Dr. Prosper Behumbize shortly after the MakSPH-HISP Uganda meeting in the Dean's Office, at the MakSPH Building Mulago.*

## MakSPH, IDRC Launch Uganda Zero-Dose Learning Hub

On March 27, 2024, MakSPH, in partnership with PATH and the Infectious Diseases Research Collaboration (IDRC), launched the Uganda Zero-Dose Learning Hub, to advance immunization equity, with support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. This three-year project aims to strengthen immunization equity by identifying and addressing the needs of zero-dose (ZDC) and under-immunized (UI) children, as well as missed communities in Uganda.

The Learning Hub, implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, focuses on generating actionable evidence to guide national immunization efforts. The project will identify and characterize ZDC, assess barriers to reaching them, and evaluate the effectiveness of current immunization strategies. Data will be collected in Kasese, Mubende, and Wakiso districts under the



*Dr. Chrispus Mayora, a Lecturer and Health Economist at MakSPH. He is one of the researchers supporting the learning hub.*

leadership of Prof. Moses Kamya, the Hub Director.

Dr. Allan Muruta Niyonzima, Commissioner for Integrated Epidemiology Surveillance and Public Health Emergencies at the Ministry of Health, officiating at the launch emphasized the importance of this initiative, noting that it aims to foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making to improve vaccination coverage and reach every child.

# Strengthening Mortality Surveillance in Uganda's Island Districts

Trainers heading to Buvuma district to conduct mortality surveillance capacity building conducted by MakSPH and MoH.

In November 2024, MakSPH, through its Cluster of Research Excellence in Preparedness and Response to Pandemics and Shocks (CoREPREPS), convened a dissemination workshop on improving death notification and reporting in Kalangala and Buvuma districts. This work is supported by the CDC Foundation, US CDC, AFENET, Ministry of Health, NIRA, and local governments. The project addressed persistent gaps in mortality surveillance in these remote Lake Victoria island communities.

In a country where fewer than 1% of deaths are officially registered, the project used implementation research to

uncover barriers such as long distances to health facilities, poor documentation, and limited awareness. Over 700 stakeholders—health workers, Village Health Teams, records officers, and local leaders—were trained on death notification tools and procedures.

The result: improved reporting, stronger community-institution collaboration, and renewed momentum for civil registration reform. Participants expressed increased confidence in navigating reporting systems and called for sustained support to institutionalise progress.

This initiative shows the real impact of listening to

**This initiative shows the real impact of listening to communities and designing solutions that fit their unique challenges.**

communities and designing solutions that fit their unique challenges. By working closely with local leaders and health workers, it not only improved how deaths are reported but also built trust and confidence.



Trainers from Makerere University School of Public Health and the Ministry of Health, represented by Dr. Bahizi Archibald (right), en route from Kiyindi Port to Buvuma District to conduct capacity building on death reporting and notification.

Researchers and practitioners display their certificates after the regional SBC training at MakSPH.

## Enhancing Regional SBC Capacity Through Context-Driven Training

In April 2024, MakSPH hosted a regional Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) training under the USAID-funded *Agency for All* project, equipping over 25 practitioners and researchers from across Africa and South Asia with practical tools for designing impactful, evidence-based SBC programs.

The five-day course co-led with the African Society for Social and Behaviour Change (AS-SBC) and the University of Witwatersrand, focused on integrating agency, gender, and social norms into public health interventions. Through interactive sessions

and real-time fieldwork in Kamwokya, participants engaged with behavioural insights, community-based analysis, human-centred design, and ethical programming.

The training was facilitated by leading experts from Uganda, South Africa, and the U.S., fostering rich cross-regional exchange and professional networking. Participants left empowered, with many noting a shift in how they approach SBC challenges in their contexts.

By bridging global expertise with local realities, this initiative

**By bridging global expertise with local realities, this initiative reinforced MakSPH's position as a continental leader...**

reinforced MakSPH's position as a continental leader in SBC knowledge and capacity-building—offering a replicable model for strengthening public health communication and behaviour change strategies across the Global South.



Participants doing group work during the regional SBC training at MakSPH.



# NTU-Mak Partnership Championing AMR Stewardship



Group photo after the antimicrobial stewardship workshop with participants and facilitators (from both the UK and Uganda) in Nakaseke district.

To tackle rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR), MakSPH, in partnership with Nottingham Trent University and Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, is implementing a Centre of Excellence on Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) in Central Uganda. The initiative, funded by the UK's Fleming Fund under the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship Scheme (CwPAMS), aims to build sustainable AMS capacity through a One Health approach.

Using a hub-and-spoke model, Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital mentored seven lower-tier facilities across Wakiso, Nakaseke, and Butambala. The project has trained over 850 health practitioners and community health workers on AMR, IPC, and rational antibiotic use. Key activities included microbiology capacity-building, AMS action planning, PPS data collection, and establishing facility-based AMS committees.

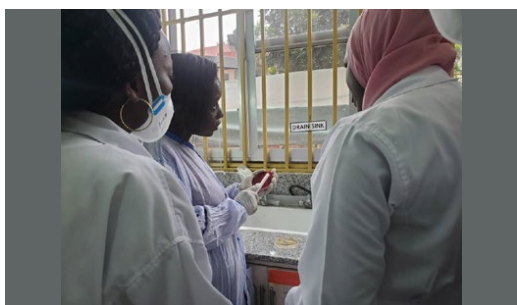
Over 90% of trained CHWs report discouraging self-medication in

their communities, and 78% of health workers improved hygiene practices. Facilities introduced antibiotic guidelines, and cross-disciplinary collaboration between labs and clinicians significantly improved diagnostic accuracy.

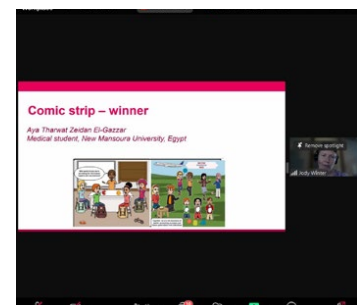
With over 800 members in its Community of Practice, this project is reshaping practice on the ground as well as influencing policy and service delivery, positioning MakSPH as a regional leader in combating AMR through practical, scalable solutions.



Dr Herbert Bush Aguma, a lecturer from the Pharmacy Department at Makerere University sharing key findings during GPPS dissemination at Gombe Hospital.



Lydia Namakula (centre), one of the facilitators from National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic Services, demonstrating to the laboratory staff of Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital how to inoculate urine samples during a practical session.



Dr. Jody Winter, recognizing the winner of the comic strip category in the students' WAAW competition.

# Buprenorphine Integration in Ugandan Drop-in Centers for harm reduction

Buprenorphine, an opioid medication used to manage pain and treat opioid addiction, is increasingly critical in Sub-Saharan Africa, where injection drug use has surged, driving up HIV rates. In Uganda, the HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs stands at an estimated 17%, yet harm reduction interventions are only now beginning to take shape.

In response, a pilot study was conducted to integrate buprenorphine into community-based harm reduction drop-in

centers (DICs) in Kampala. This initiative, led by Dr. Julia Dickson-Gomez from the Medical College of Wisconsin and Dr. Musinguzi Geoffrey from Makerere University, with funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), aimed to establish a scalable model for medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD). The study found that of the 71 clients screened, 54 initiated buprenorphine treatment, and 72% of these clients were still in treatment at the 3-month mark. Peer referrals played a critical

role in recruitment, underscoring the importance of community support in sustaining treatment.

The program's low-threshold approach, which included flexible dosing (8-24 mg/day) and home induction, significantly reduced non-fatal overdoses from 75.5% to 0%. Clients also received comprehensive care, including HIV/HCV testing, PrEP, and harm reduction supplies, ensuring holistic support and improving long-term outcomes.

*In the photo, Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi, the Uganda PI, Commissioner narcotics and Drugs Police, the Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dr. Julia Dickson-Gomez of Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (MCW), Wamala Twaibu, Executive Director UHRN and Matayo Baluku, CDC.*



# MakSPH Enhances Capacity of M&E Officers to Evaluate Government Programs



In July 2024, MakSPH, in collaboration with the School of Statistics and Planning (MakSSP), conducted a high-impact training in Impact Evaluation for Evidence-Based Decision-Making. Supported by the Hewlett Foundation through the IEED project, this initiative equipped over 40 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialists and policy analysts from more than 20 government institutions with critical skills to assess the effectiveness of public programs.

The training held from 1st to 4th July addressed gaps identified by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), including limited capacity in rigorous evaluation methods. Participants, drawn from Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and Parliament, gained practical insights in evaluation design, data use, and advanced methodologies like cost-effectiveness analysis,

randomized control trials, and regression discontinuity.

Mr. Timothy Lubanga, Assistant Commissioner for Monitoring and Evaluation, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda, representing OPM's Permanent Secretary, praised the training as a crucial step towards building a skilled M&E

workforce aligned with National Development Plan IV priorities. MakSPH Dean and IEED Project Lead, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, emphasized the importance of integrating evidence into decision-making to enhance program impact, ensure value for money and efficient delivery of services.



*One of the participants from the Impact Evaluation training for government M&E officials receives a certificate of participation.*

# Advancing Evidence-Based Alcohol Policy Reform in Uganda

The Regulating Alcohol Packaging and Supply in Sub-Saharan Africa (RAPSSA) project, led by MakSPH in partnership with the Universities of Stirling, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Malawi, has provided critical evidence to guide alcohol policy reform across the region. This initiative funded by the UK Medical Research Council, rigorously examined Uganda's ban on alcohol sachets, yielding insights with far-reaching implications for public health regulation.

Through mixed-methods research—including policy analysis, stakeholder interviews, and community discussions in Gulu and Wakiso districts—the project team, led by Dr. Isabelle Uny, Prof. Nazarius Tumwesigye, and Ms. Cissie Namanda, documented both the policy's successes and unintended consequences. While the 2016 sachet ban effectively removed the most problematic ultra-cheap formats and reduced youth consumption, it also exposed regulatory gaps as producers shifted to small plastic bottles and



*Professor Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye addressing the media during the RAPSSA dissemination workshop in Kampala, 2024.*

illicit homebrews.

The findings, presented at a high-level dissemination forum in Kampala in November 2024, underscore the need for comprehensive alcohol control measures. Key recommendations include standardized packaging

regulations, minimum unit pricing, enhanced excise taxes, and stricter enforcement mechanisms—proposals now informing Uganda's participation in global alcohol control initiatives and upcoming regional policy discussions in Tanzania.

*The RAPSSA project team with members of parliament and key stakeholders during an engagement meeting in Kampala, 2024.*



## Building Capacity for Judicial Officers in HIV Response in Northern Uganda

*Judicial Service Officers during the workshop in Gulu, August, 2024.*

Over 40 Judicial Officers from Uganda's Greater North, including Judges, Registrars, Chief Magistrates, and Grade One Magistrates from Lango, Acholi, and West Nile Sub-regions, participated in a critical capacity-building session at Bomah in Gulu City on 15th August 2024. The training, organized by MakSPH, Uganda AIDS Commission, Judicial Training Institute (JTI), and Makerere Law School, focused on rights-based legal enforcement for HIV and key populations.

Dr. Daniel Byamukama, Head of HIV Prevention at the Uganda AIDS Commission, stressed the urgency of the work, noting that HIV prevalence remains



alarmingly high among key populations—33% among sex workers, 15% among prisoners, and 17% among people who inject drugs. The session emphasized the critical role of judicial officers in supporting Uganda's commitment to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, in line with the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG).

This initiative aims to foster a rights-responsive approach, ensuring that all individuals, including vulnerable populations, have equal access to justice and health services as part of the broader effort to combat HIV/AIDS.

## Strengthening Maternal & Newborn Health

In June 2024, MakSPH, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and key partners, launched the updated **2023 Situational Analysis on Maternal and Newborn Health in Uganda**. This comprehensive report, led by the Centre of Excellence for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health at MakSPH, provides a critical assessment of the progress and ongoing challenges in maternal and newborn health.

The analysis, supported by the National Planning Authority, UNICEF, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and MRC/UVRI, reveals that Uganda continues to lose over 62,000 mothers and newborns annually to preventable causes such as birth asphyxia, sepsis, and prematurity. These tragic losses are disproportionately higher in underserved regions like Karamoja and West Nile.

Key recommendations from the report include scaling up access

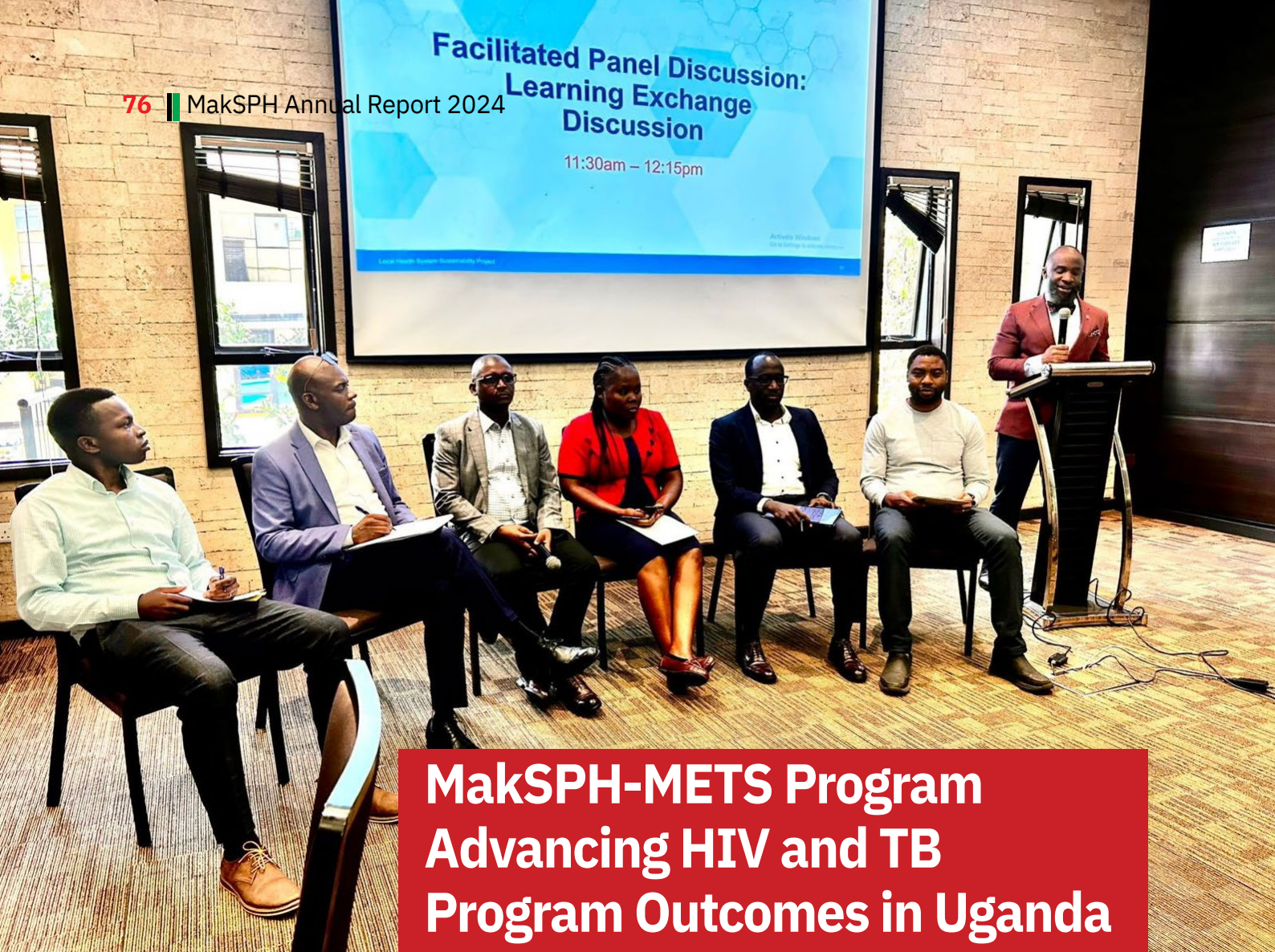
to quality maternal and newborn care, enhancing accountability, strengthening community engagement, and investing in specialized care for small and sick newborns. The findings provide critical evidence to guide national priorities in line with Uganda's Health Sector Development Plan and the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report was officially launched by Hon. Margaret Muhanga, Minister of State for Primary Health Care, who underscored Uganda's commitment to ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths by 2030.



*L-R: Assoc. Prof. Peter Waiswa, Joy Lawn, a Ugandan-born, British-trained Professor, Paediatrician & Perinatal Epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Hon. Acora Nancy Odongo, MP Lamwo County, Lamwo district, Hon. Margaret Muhanga, State Minister for Primary Health Care and Dr. Olaro Charles, Director General of Health Services (MoH) at the launch of Uganda's situational analysis on MNH in Kampala, 2024.*



## MakSPH-METS Program Advancing HIV and TB Program Outcomes in Uganda

*Ugandan representatives from METS and USAID/SITES collaborate with regional experts at the East African Community's Digital Health, Data, and Technologies (DIDATI) conference, where cross-border health data sharing frameworks between member states were developed.*

MakSPH continues implementing the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support (METS) Program (2020–2025), funded by the CDC. This initiative strengthens Uganda's capacity for regionally centered HIV and TB programs through three core areas:

### Data Science and Informatics (DSI)

In 2024, METS played a key role in Uganda's digital health transformation. The team supported the Ministry of Health in developing the UgandaEMR+, an integrated electronic medical records system now deployed

across health facilities. The system improved data flow between UgandaEMR+ and other platforms (EAFYA and ALIS) after their rigorous testing at Naguru and Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital hospitals, eliminating manual data transfer. The system also automated reporting to the national DHIS2, improving accuracy. Additionally, METS supported the National Data Warehouse, enabling centralized access to all health related information for strategic decision-making. This

integration has improved seamless information flow between systems, eliminated the tedious manual processes, and full automation of report submission from Uganda EMR+ directly into the national electronic health management information system (eHMIS).

Most impactful has been the synchronizing between the Uganda EMR+ and ART Access, which has created a lifeline for those on antiretroviral treatment. Clients registered into the EMR are not now able to be linked to the

**The system also automated reporting to the national DHIS2, improving accuracy.**

pharmacies in their communities for convenient drug refills.

## Disease Surveillance and Response (DSR)

METS supported viral load monitoring in 2024, with over 1.3 million individuals tested and a 96% viral suppression rate achieved. The support includes data cleaning, analysis and quarterly reporting as part of efforts to measure progress towards achieving the 3rd 95- viral load suppression. METs also supported the MoH with integration of the mortality reporting tools into the EMR, electronic system upgrades at health facilities, orienting care providers on death notification processes and ensuring that reports are shared with MoH for proper planning.

As a result of this support to community and facility mortality surveillance, between April and December 2024, 100 facilities were activated in Kigezi, Hoima, Rwenzori regions, Kampala and Kibuku districts. A total of 767 deaths in health facilities and 302 in communities were identified in the period and health workers were oriented on death notification and certification of cause of death. The program also focused on mortality data integration within the UgandaEMR+ system to improve reporting accuracy.

## Health Systems Strengthening (HSS)

METS provided Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) support to Regional Referral Hospitals (RRHs) through mentorship and capacity building. Despite



*Dr. Evelyn Akello (R) hands over equipment to MARPI delegation.*

funding challenges, CQI activities led to improved health system capacity from 58% to 79% between 2022 and 2024. Key efforts included supporting CQI projects and integrating the 5S approach to enhance service delivery.

Through these initiatives, MakSPH-METS is driving health system transformation, fostering data-driven healthcare, and enhancing HIV and TB program outcomes.



*Handover of network equipment to staff from Mulago National Referral Hospital.*

# Critical Data Gaps Threaten Newborn Health in Uganda, Study Finds

On July 30, 2024, in Entebbe, the first national dissemination workshop for the Improving Quality and Use of Newborn Indicators (IMPULSE) Project was held, bringing together key stakeholders from the Ministry of Health and different districts. This Chiesi Foundation-funded initiative (2021-2024) aimed at reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths by improving routine newborn data quality and use in low- and middle-income countries.

The study was implemented by Makerere School of Public Health and Doctors with Africa CUAMM in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and WHO. In Uganda, it covered Karamoja, Lango, West Nile, and Kampala, assessing 30 Comprehensive Emergency

Obstetric Care facilities and 20 subnational health facilities. The study, assessed the quality of routine health facility data based on four data quality dimensions: Consistency, completeness (in reporting and facility register documentation), timeliness, accuracy, and internal consistency. Furthermore, the data elements were assessed in form of three forms: newborn outcome measures, denominators, and newborn intervention measures.

Key findings show that up to 30% of health reports were inaccurate, with major gaps in essential data like birth weight and uterotonic use, impacting care quality. The study also identified infrastructure

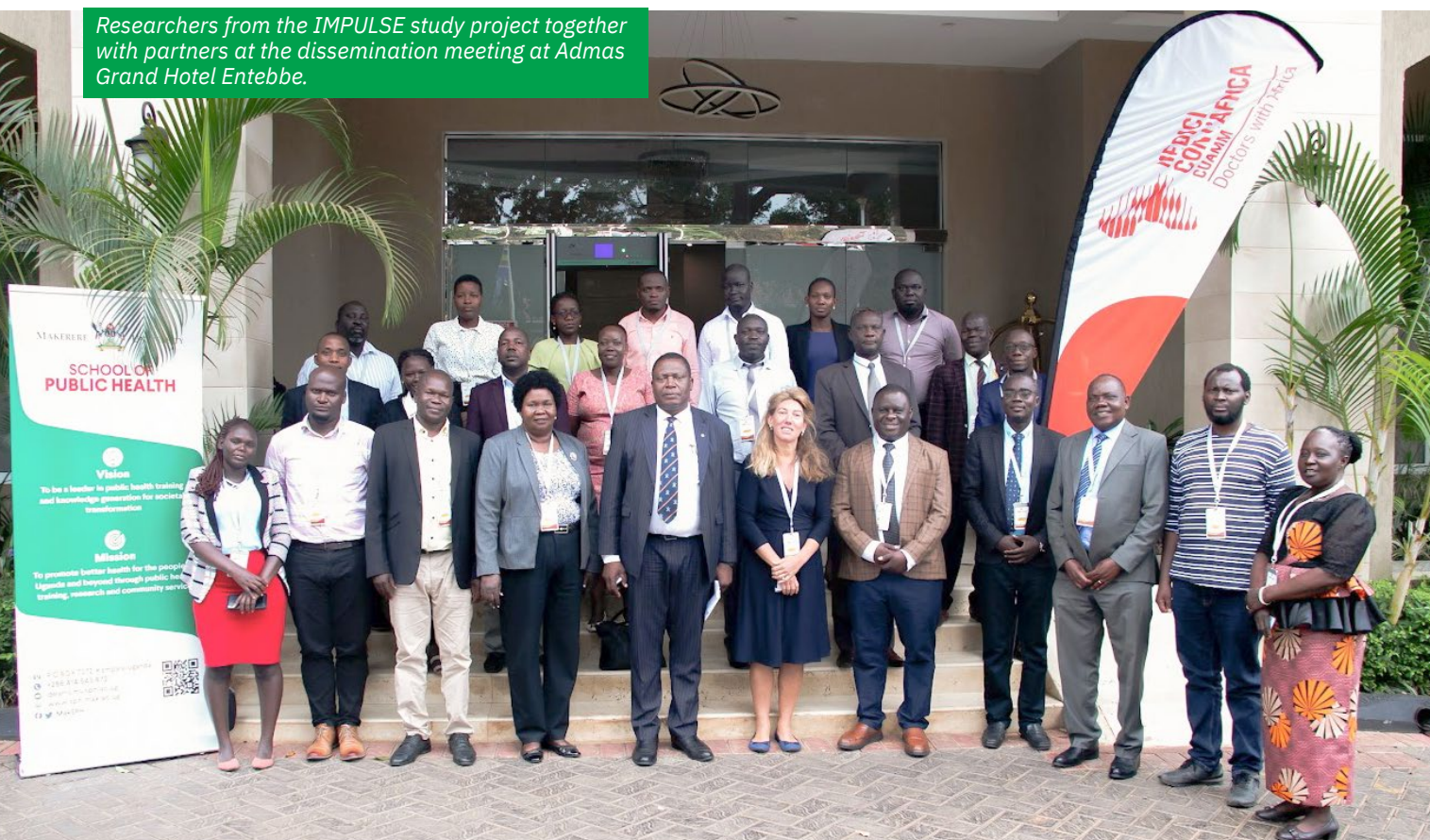
challenges, including unreliable power and internet, which hinder accurate data reporting.

Researchers emphasize that quality data drives better decisions, leading to improved maternal and newborn health outcomes.



Researchers from the IMPULSE study project Dr. Muhumuza Kananura Rornald, Dr. Marzia Lazzerini, Peter Waiswa and Dr Jerry Ichtho - the Senior Technical Advisor, Programs, CUAMM.

Researchers from the IMPULSE study project together with partners at the dissemination meeting at Admas Grand Hotel Entebbe.



# Turning the Tide on Childhood Obesity

The extent and nature of food advertising targeted to children and adolescents in Uganda (FACe-U project), led by Dr. Gloria Seruwagi, Ms. Florence Tushemerirwe, and Dr. Suzanne Kiwanuka, is addressing the growing challenge of childhood obesity in Uganda, where 4% of children under five and 16% of adolescent girls were obese in 2016. This surge, driven by rapid urbanization and aggressive marketing of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), is being tackled through research and policy action.

In 2024, the project collected and analyzed data from three key regions – Kabale Municipality, Mbale City, and Kampala City – revealing widespread exposure of children to unhealthy food advertising. These findings have directly informed the development of critical policies aimed at regulating food marketing and promoting healthier diets. These include the Uganda Nutrient Profile Model,



*Some Girl Guides participants in the Healthy Diet Awareness creation engagement at the Uganda Girl Guides Association National Competition and Training Camp, held from 23rd to 28th August 2024, in Kampala.*

Front-of-Pack Labelling Policy, Food and Nutrition Bill 2024, Draft School Policy, and the Draft Regulations to restrict the marketing of unhealthy food and sugar-sweetened beverages to children.

At the community level, project findings have inspired local governments to prioritize cleaner

food environments for children, while early steps to align school curricula with nutrition education are underway, creating a foundation for long-term change.

Collaborating with partners like Makerere University, UNICEF, and INFORMAS, the project is building momentum for healthier futures.



# Gender Equity in Higher Education, a landscaping study

In 2024, MakSPH, in collaboration with Higher Education Resource Services East Africa (HERS-EA), conducted a comprehensive landscaping study on gender equity and leadership in universities across East Africa. The study, led by Professor Rhoda Wanyenze, with co-investigators Dr. Euzobia M. Mugisha Baine and Dr. Naomi Watasa Lumutenga, was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and covered 30 universities across seven East African countries.

The study's report released in March 2024 highlights persistent gender gaps in university leadership despite increasing overall female enrolment. It exposes hidden norms and structural barriers that hinder women's career advancement and leadership within academia. The findings also emphasize the critical need for accountability in policy implementation and propose a non-punitive self-assessment scorecard for universities to track their gender

equity progress.

The study's insights underscore the importance of higher education in empowering women, breaking cycles of disadvantage, and fostering broader societal benefits. It calls for the creation of replicable communities of practice within universities to champion gender equality, ensuring that East Africa's higher education institutions become inclusive spaces for all.

## Key Findings

### 1. Universities Reviewed

Makerere University (Uganda), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), University of Nairobi (Kenya), National University of Rwanda (Rwanda), University of Juba (South Sudan), University of Burundi (Burundi), and University of Kinshasa (DRC).

### 2. Gender Policy Landscape

Only 4 of 7 universities had gender policies—most overdue for review, with weak or absent implementation and unclear progress on targets.

### 3. Representation in Leadership

Women remain underrepresented in academic, research, and administrative leadership—comprising  $\leq 15\%$  of professors at Mak, UDSM, and UNIKIN. At Makerere, women occupy just 28% of academic and research positions, mirroring trends across Uganda's 46 universities.

### 4. Institutional Gaps

Capacity-building is merit-based with no affirmative action. Childcare policies exist but lack implementation, and workload policies remain gender-neutral, overlooking women's specific needs.



# Uganda Pioneers Climate-Resilient Health Systems Through H-NAP

In August 2024, Uganda became the first African country and only the second globally, after Nepal, to launch a Health National Adaptation Plan (H-NAP). This ground-breaking roadmap aims to fortify Uganda's health systems against escalating climate risks. The H-NAP 2025–2030, developed by the Ministry of Health with technical assistance from MakSPH and support from the Rockefeller Foundation, is a critical step toward safeguarding public health in a changing climate.

The plan builds on the 2023 Climate Change Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment (VAA) and draws on insights from over 700 health facilities across Uganda that disclosed widespread threats

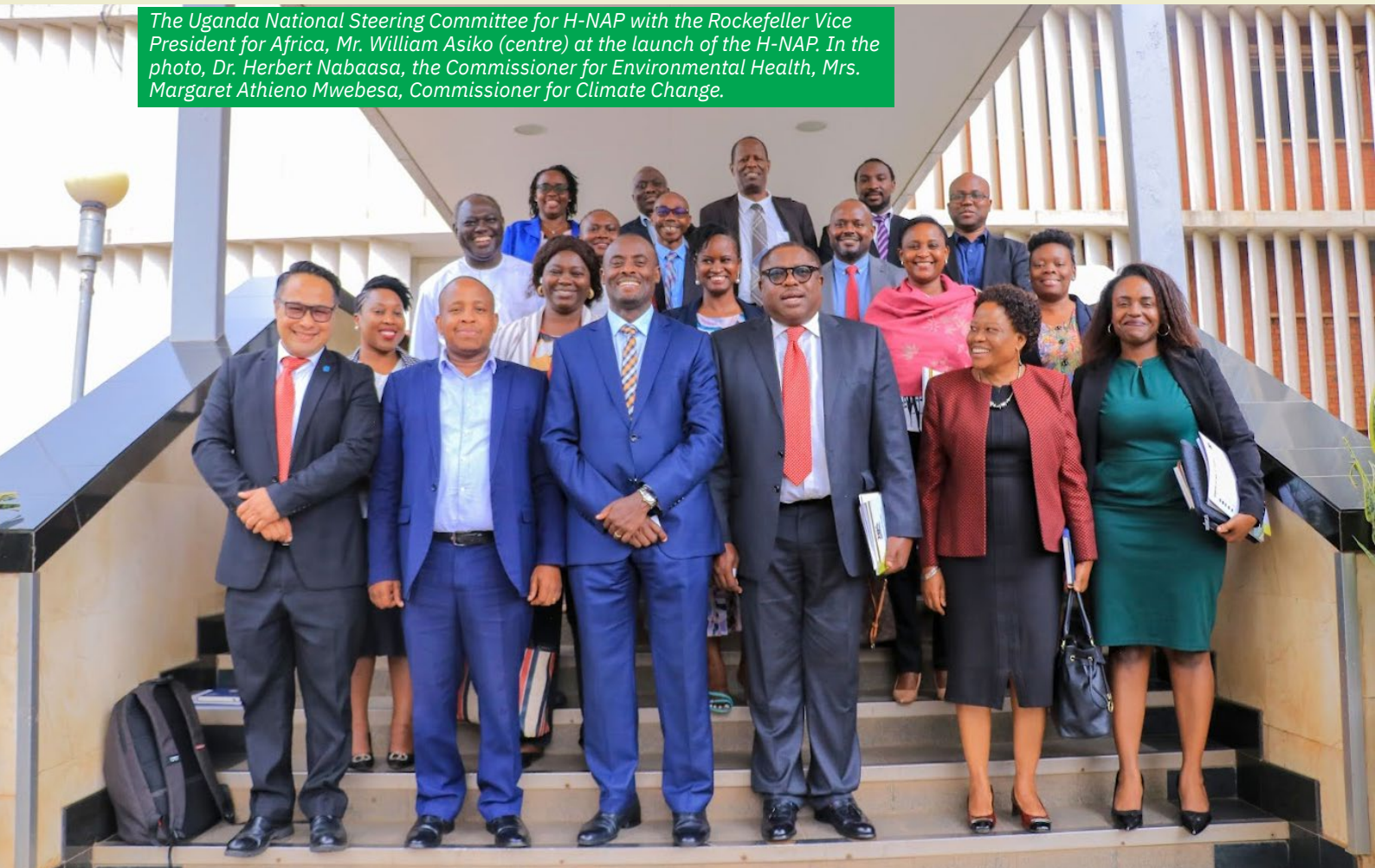
like disease outbreaks, food insecurity, and disrupted health services due to climate change. The assessment, led by Dr. John Bosco Isunju, provided the evidence base for the H-NAP, in alignment with national priorities like the Climate Change Act (2021) and the Nationally Determined Contribution (2022). Since its launch, the H-NAP has set a new benchmark for climate resilience, inspiring similar

efforts in over six countries in Africa while reinforcing Uganda's leadership in global climate action.



*Rt. Hon. Lukia Isanga Nakadama, Uganda's 3rd Deputy Prime Minister and Minister without Portfolio launching the 2025-2030 H-NAP at Sheraton Hotel in Kampala, August, 2024.*

*The Uganda National Steering Committee for H-NAP with the Rockefeller Vice President for Africa, Mr. William Asiko (centre) at the launch of the H-NAP. In the photo, Dr. Herbert Nabaasa, the Commissioner for Environmental Health, Mrs. Margaret Athieno Mwebesa, Commissioner for Climate Change.*



# MakSPH at the Forefront of Landmark HIV Prevention Breakthrough



*Some of the participants of the study celebrating the results and the efficacy.*

In 2024, MakSPH played a critical role in a groundbreaking global HIV prevention trial that demonstrated the 100% efficacy of twice-yearly Lenacapavir injections in preventing HIV among women. The trial, published in the New England Journal of Medicine in March 2024, outperformed daily oral PrEP, providing a more effective, long-acting alternative for high-risk populations.

The trial, led by Gilead Sciences, included three sites in Uganda: the Makerere University–Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration (MU-JHU) in Mityana, the Africa Medical and Behavioural Sciences Organization (AMBSO) in Masaka, and the MakSPH-coordinated site in Kalangala, in partnership with UVI-IAVI. The national coordination was led by MU-JHU Mulago, with Prof. Noah Kiwanuka heading the MakSPH team and Dr. Flavia Matovu

Kiweewa serving as the Principal Investigator for Uganda.

The breakthrough builds on earlier Associate Professor Noah Kiwanuka's research at MakSPH, which had highlighted alarmingly high HIV incidence rates among adolescent girls and young women, particularly in fishing communities. This foundational work, supported by a 2017 HIV recency survey funded by Gilead, laid the groundwork for this transformative intervention. This achievement underscores

MakSPH's commitment to advancing evidence-based, life-saving innovations in global health.

*Dr. Alex Kintu, former Medical Monitor for the PURPOSE 1 Study at Gilead Sciences, pictured with Uganda PURPOSE 1 Investigators: Dr. Flavia Matovu Kiweewa (National Principal Investigator and Site PI, MU-JHU Mityana), Dr. Noah Kiwanuka (Site PI, Makerere–Kalangala), and Dr. Godfrey Kigozi (Site PI, AMBSO–Masaka) during a meeting at AMBSO Masaka offices in 2023.*



*Len study team.*

## 3



# Partnerships



MakSPH makes a conscious effort to preserve, grow, and fortify its connections and collaborations in community service, research, and teaching. Partners have played a crucial role in the growth and influence of the School since its establishment in 1954. These initiatives have encompassed local, national, regional, and global contexts, and have contributed to expanding the School's collaborative research at both regional and international levels.

The School fosters partnerships with universities, research institutes, and NGOs to engage its PhD staff in research, service, and capacity building. It also coordinates regional projects within Africa and implements a field-based teaching model in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, district health services, and exchange programmes for students. To that purpose, MakSPH has maintained solid ties in more than 30 countries over the last decades

# Recognising Our Partners

thank you



## Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam

**WHO Representative to Uganda (2018–2024)**

Makerere University School of Public Health extends sincere appreciation to Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam for his exemplary service and partnership during his tenure as WHO Representative to Uganda. His leadership deepened the WHO–MakSPH collaboration, enabling impactful research, policy influence, and health systems strengthening in Uganda. Notably, during his tenure, a formal MoU was established that helped align efforts with national priorities and improved coordination across stakeholders. His legacy includes evidence-based policies and lasting contributions to Uganda’s public health landscape. We thank him for his commitment and wish him continued success in his next chapter.



Former MakSPH Dean and Professor Emeritus, Dr. David Serwadda together with MakSPH staff presenting an appreciation gift to Dr. Tegegn in recognition of his great contribution as WHO Country Representative to Uganda, 2024.

## Gratitude to Ambassador Karin Boven

Makerere University School of Public Health extends heartfelt appreciation to H.E. Dr. Karin Boven, outgoing Ambassador of the Netherlands to Uganda (2020–2024), for her committed partnership and support. Through the Netherlands Government and Nuffic, her tenure saw enhanced collaboration in public health training, research, and infrastructure development. Dr. Boven's leadership has been instrumental in strengthening our institutional capacity and deepening the ties between Uganda and the Netherlands. We celebrate her legacy and wish her continued success in her new posting as Ambassador to Kosovo. Thank you for your friendship and steadfast support to MakSPH and Uganda.



## *Thank you,* **Ambassador Natalie E. Brown**

We extend our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Natalie E. Brown, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Uganda from November 2020 to August 2023. Her support for public health and development, particularly in advancing women's leadership and empowerment, was deeply impactful. Ambassador Brown not only championed health initiatives nationally but also created space for meaningful dialogue, mentorship, and solidarity among professional women. Her personal engagement and generosity of spirit—hosting and encouraging us through genuine, heartfelt conversations—left a lasting impression. We celebrate her contributions to Uganda and the supportive partnership she fostered with the School of Public Health.



## Welcome Dr. Mary Adetunke Boyd to Uganda

Makerere University School of Public Health warmly welcomes Dr. Mary Adetunke Boyd, the new CDC Country Director for Uganda. On June 17, 2024, Dr. Boyd visited our Crane Survey Project, a key U.S.-supported initiative focused on HIV prevention and care among high-risk populations. She takes over from Dr. Lisa Nelson, whose leadership was instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since formally establishing its Uganda office in 2000, CDC has played a pivotal role in advancing HIV/AIDS and TB prevention, integrating services, and strengthening Uganda's public health systems. We look forward to continued collaboration under Dr. Boyd's leadership.

## Dr. Lisa Nelson's Impactful Tenure in Uganda

We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Lisa Nelson, who concluded six years of outstanding service as CDC Uganda Country Director. A champion of evidence-based decision-making, quality improvement, and capacity building, Dr. Nelson played a transformative role in Uganda's HIV, TB, and health security programs. She supported the Uganda Public Health Fellowship Program and nurtured a new generation of public health professionals through mentorship and hands-on leadership. Under her stewardship, CDC Uganda responded to major disease outbreaks and advanced implementation science and surveillance efforts. Dr. Nelson also led the development of six PEPFAR Country Operational Plans and represented the U.S. on Uganda's Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism. Her collaborative spirit, deep engagement, and commitment to strengthening Uganda's health

systems have left a lasting legacy. We are proud to have worked closely with her and wish her continued success in her next chapter.

*METS Director Dr. Alice Namale (right) and Finance & Administration Manager Shamim Kuteesa present an art piece from the MakSPH-METS Program to Dr. Lisa Nelson in appreciation of her service to Uganda.*



# Strengthening Doctoral Training and Research Partnerships with the University of Bergen

**Key outcomes of the engagement included the proposal to develop a double PhD degree program and discussions on establishing a Cluster of Excellence at Makerere.**

In September 2024, MakSPH hosted a senior delegation from the University of Bergen (UiB), led by Vice-Rector Prof. Gottfried Greve, to advance strategic academic collaboration. The visit, chaired by Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, focused on deepening ties between the two institutions, with a particular emphasis on doctoral training and joint research initiatives.

Key outcomes of the engagement included the proposal to develop a double PhD degree program and discussions on establishing a Cluster

of Excellence at Makerere. These efforts aim to enhance institutional capacity, foster high-impact research, and expand opportunities for early-career researchers.

The meeting also recognized the strength of existing collaborations, particularly those led by Dr. Victoria Nankabirwa, and explored ways to consolidate and grow joint programs. UiB was represented by Prof. Greve, Senior Adviser Ms. Kristin Svartveit, Head of Section Mr. Are Straume, and Prof. Thorkild Tylleskär from the Centre for International Health.



*A delegation from the University of Bergen (UiB)—Prof. Gottfried Greve, Kristin Svartveit, Are Straume, Thorkild Tylleskar, and Dr. Ronald Semyalo paid a courtesy visit to MakSPH to discuss a potential double PhD program and Cluster of Excellence collaboration. The meeting was attended by the Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, Dr. Isunju John Bosco, Dr. Victoria Nakabirwa, and Ms. Brenda Wagaba.*



## Meeting with Dr Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement, Queen's University

In 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health hosted Dr. Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement at Queen's University. The visit provided an opportunity to share MakSPH's research, training, and

community engagement work in Uganda and beyond, while learning from Dr. Sandra's expertise in global academic partnerships. Discussions also explored potential areas for collaboration between the two institutions.



*Dr. Christine Nalwadda, acting Dean (then) receives Dr. Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement at Queen's University.*



## Courtesy Visit by Unitaids Team Lead for Partnerships, Ms. Eva Nathanson

In 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) was pleased to host Ms. Eva Nathanson, Team Lead for Partnerships at Unitaids, during a courtesy visit to the School. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange insights on Unitaids' ongoing efforts to reduce health service delivery inequities, particularly in low-resource settings.

MakSPH shared its strategic direction and commitment to advancing equitable health outcomes through research, training, and policy engagement. The visit opened promising dialogue around future collaboration, particularly

in strengthening Unitaids' engagement with African institutions. The School looks forward to building a productive partnership that drives innovation and impact in public health across the region.



*Ms. Eva Nathanson and Dr. Phyllis Awor meet with the Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze at her office.*

# MaKSPH Hosts FHI 360 Country Director



*Dr. Otto Nzapfurundi Chabikuli, Regional Director for East and Southern Africa at FHI 360, with Dr. Nathan Tumwesigye, FHI 360's Uganda Country Representative hosted by the Dean, MakSPH.*

On June 25, 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health welcomed Dr. Otto Nzapfurundi Chabikuli, Regional Director for East and Southern Africa at FHI 360, and Dr. Nathan Tumwesigye, FHI 360's Uganda Country Representative. Hosted by MakSPH Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, with faculty members Dr. Simon Kibira and Dr. Doris Kwesiga, the visit was an opportunity to reflect on impactful collaborations and explore new areas for partnership.

The discussions highlighted several successful joint initiatives, including workstreams on gender equity,

family planning, and COVID-19 response. Particular emphasis was placed on the R4S (Research for Scalable Solutions) project, which has supported student-led research and nurtured early-career public health scientists.

MakSPH also showcased collaborative efforts in maternal, newborn, and child health—especially in urban contexts—where the partnership with FHI 360 has contributed to meaningful improvements. Looking ahead, both institutions expressed strong interest in expanding research capacity-building for students and deepening collaboration on climate change and health. Dr.

**The discussions highlighted several successful joint initiatives, including workstreams on gender equity, family planning, and COVID-19 response.**



*MakSPH's Dr. Simon Kibira speaking during the meeting, 2024.*

Chabikuli, who oversees FHI 360's regional portfolio spanning health, education, research, youth development, and more, reaffirmed the organization's commitment to advancing shared public health goals with MakSPH.

# Strengthening Partnership for Family Planning Research in Uganda

On May 3, 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health hosted Mr. Daniel Alemu, Deputy Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Uganda, for a strategic dialogue on advancing reproductive health in Uganda. The engagement reflected on the longstanding partnership between MakSPH and UNFPA, with a focus on strengthening evidence-based family planning policies and programs.

MakSPH presented key achievements from three national Service Delivery Point (SDP) surveys conducted in 2018, 2020, and 2023. These

studies, supported by UNFPA, assessed the availability and quality of reproductive health commodities and services across Uganda, highlighting critical issues such as stock-out trends and client experiences through exit interviews.

Beyond research, the partnership continues to serve as a vital platform for building

**Beyond research, the partnership continues to serve as a vital platform for building local capacity**

local capacity. Graduate students and early-career researchers have gained hands-on experience in fieldwork, data analysis, and policy engagement—ensuring a pipeline of skilled professionals committed to reproductive health.

Mr. Alemu's visit reinforced the shared commitment to generating actionable evidence and strengthening Uganda's reproductive health systems. MakSPH remains a trusted academic partner in UNFPA's mission to improve access to quality family planning services nationwide.

*Mr. Daniel Alemu, Deputy Representative of UNFPA Uganda, for a strategic dialogue on advancing reproductive health in Uganda at MakSPH, 2024.*



## Strengthening Mak-KI Academic and Research Ties

In 2024, the partnership between Makerere University and Karolinska Institutet (KI) reached a significant milestone, celebrating over 20 years of collaboration that has transformed public health education and research across continents. This partnership, supported by Sida, the EU, and KI scholarships, has enabled 93 Makerere students and 61 staff to study in Sweden, while 92 KI faculty have participated in exchange programs in Uganda, fostering a robust network of health professionals across disciplines like medicine, midwifery, health informatics, and public health.

### High-Level Visits to Strengthen Ties

KI's leadership made two strategic visits to Makerere University in 2024. In February, Vice President Martin Bergö, also the Chairperson of the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health (CESH) Steering Committee, visited alongside Erika Dabhilkar, Head of International Relations, and co-chair Professor Tobias Alfvén. They held strategic

meetings to assess the impact of the CESH partnership, established in 2021 to strengthen global health research and policy in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The findings of the CESH evaluation were presented, with recommendations set to shape the next collaboration plan for 2026-2030.



*Prof. Martin Bergö, Vice President of Karolinska Institutet accompanied by Monika Berge and MakSPH Dean Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze visiting Makerere University Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs Prof. Umar Kakumba in 2024.*



*Makerere Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe exchanges gifts with Prof. Martin Bergö, Vice President of Karolinska Institutet during his visit to Uganda in 2024.*



In November, Professor Annika Östman Wernerson, President of KI, visited Makerere alongside the Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Maria Håkansson, and senior Swedish diplomats. They engaged with Makerere's Vice Chancellor, Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, Principal of the College of Health Sciences, Professor Damalie Nakanjako, and other key leaders, including Professor Rhoda Wanyenze of MakSPH, reflecting on two decades of shared achievements and charting the future of their collaboration.



*Prof. Annika Östman Wernerson, President of KI meeting the Makerere University leadership with Vice Chancellor Prof. Nawangwe and University Secretary Mr. Yusuf Kiranda along with the CESH team, 2024.*



*KI visiting team meeting Makerere University VC in the Main Building, 2024.*

## Expanding Impact Through CESH

CESH, co-led by Professors Wanyenze and Alfvén, remains a critical pillar of this partnership, driving cutting-edge research, training, and policy engagement to address global health challenges. This enduring collaboration continues to shape the next generation of global health leaders, reinforcing the institutions' joint commitment to advancing public health, research, and innovation.



*The Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Maria Håkansson, and senior Swedish diplomats along with the KI team led by the President, Prof. Annika Östman Wernerson, meet the CESH Working Group at MakSPH, 2024.*



*Professor Freddie Ssenkooba leads a collaborative meeting to co-design the Health Diplomacy Executive Program at Protea Hotel, Kampala, on November 14, 2024.*

## MakSPH's Strategic Role in Advancing Health Diplomacy in Africa

Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) is taking a lead role in shaping the future of health diplomacy on the African continent. Through its collaboration with Karolinska Institutet (KI) under the **Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health (CESH)**, MakSPH is advancing efforts to strengthen political, diplomatic, and strategic leadership capacities for health professionals and policymakers.

This broader agenda is also informed by applied research to assess the demand for global health diplomacy competencies, with a forthcoming **Lancet series on Global Health Diplomacy** expected to shape global discourse. The initiative is further enriched by contributions from the Stockholm School of Economics' House of Governance and Public Policy, helping to embed governance and negotiation insights into health leadership training.

In November 2024, MakSPH hosted a pivotal workshop in Kampala in collaboration

with the **University of Global Health Equity, Amref Health Africa University, Africa CDC, Karolinska Institutet (KI), and the Stockholm School of Economics' House of Governance and Public Policy.** This convening laid the groundwork for the **Africa Health Diplomacy Executive Program (AHDEP)**—a regionally tailored initiative that will deliver strategic training for African health professionals, policymakers, and diplomats. AHDEP aims to build the

continent's capacity to negotiate, align, and lead within increasingly complex global and regional health governance spaces.

The initiative is championed at MakSPH by **Professor Rhoda Wanyenze**, and **Dr. Aloysius Ssenyonjo**, reinforcing the School's commitment to positioning Africa as an active and influential voice in global health diplomacy.

*Members from partner countries during a co-design workshop of the Health Diplomacy Executive Program at Protea Hotel, Kampala, on November 14, 2024.*



# MakSPH Staff Participate in NTU Exchange Visit

In July 2024, a team of staff from Makerere University School of Public Health and collaborators participated in a three-week exchange visit to the United Kingdom, hosted by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) under the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship (CwPAMS) programme, Global Capacity Building (GCB) programme, and NTU International Partnership Fund (IPF).

The delegation included Dr. David Musoke and Ms. Grace Biyinzika Lubega (MakSPH), Dr. Samuel Kyobe and Dr. Margaret Lubwama (Lecturers, Mak School of Biomedical Sciences), Mrs. Flavia Iyaa Kibuuka (Pharmacist, Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital), Geoffrey Musanje (Pharmacist, Nakaseke Hospital), and Dr. Mathias Lugoloobi (Wakiso District Local Government).

The team engaged in intensive



*NTU - MAK team at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Public Health 2024 in Manchester, UK.*

capacity-building activities, including joint grant writing workshops, conference presentations, as well as strategic meetings with colleagues at NTU, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, and Nottingham University Hospitals. This visit aimed to enhance skills in antimicrobial stewardship,

leadership, microbiology, and foster collaborative research.

Key outcomes included improved grant development capabilities, stronger institutional links, and plans for follow-up projects and reciprocal visits to Uganda, reinforcing long-term partnerships for tackling global health challenges.



*NTU - MAK team during an exchange visit in the UK, 2024.*



## Empowering Wakiso's Health In-Charges

*Dr. Sarah Byakika, MoH Commissioner for Planning, Financing and Policy speaking during the workshop in Kampala, 2024.*

**This initiative, part of a six-month hybrid fellowship, addresses capacity gaps identified in a baseline study where only 40% and 33% met core leadership and management competencies, respectively.**

In June 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), in partnership with Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and supported by NHS England through THET, launched a transformative leadership and management training for over 50 health facility in-charges across Wakiso District.

This initiative, part of a six-month hybrid fellowship, addresses capacity gaps identified in a baseline study where only 40% and 33% met core leadership and management competencies, respectively. Through practical sessions on ethical leadership, data use, decision-making, supervision, and gender inclusion, the programme equips frontline leaders to improve service delivery in health centres I–IV.

The training implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wakiso District Local Government, empowers in-charges with tools for team management and community-responsive care. Dr. Sarah Byakika of the Ministry of Health emphasized that leadership is foundational to strengthening health services. Participants echoed this sentiment, leaving the training with renewed purpose.

This effort builds on more than a decade of NTU-MAK collaboration focused on sustainable, evidence-based capacity building, a demonstration of how global partnerships and local leadership can drive systemic change at the grassroots. The work is headed by Dr. David Musoke, MakSPH, Uganda and Prof. Linda Gibson, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

*Richard Holder (Nottingham University Hospitals), Dr. Sarah Byakika (Ministry of Health) and Dr. Sheba Gitta (Global Health Partnerships, formerly Tropical Health and Education Trust) share a light moment during the workshop, 2024.*



*The project Leads Dr. David Musoke (MakSPH) and Prof. Linda Gibson (NTU) during the workshop.*

# ReLAB-HS at MakSPH Hosts Strategic Visit with National and International Partners



*Representatives from MakSPH, USAID, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and ReLAB-HS engage in a strategic discussion on strengthening rehabilitation and assistive technology systems in Uganda.*

In 2024, MakSPH, through the ReLAB-HS project, convened a strategic engagement with national and global partners to assess progress and define next steps in strengthening rehabilitation and assistive technology (AT) systems in Uganda. The high-level visit brought together representatives from USAID Washington and Uganda, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the ReLAB-HS Uganda team.

Discussions centered on transforming pilot districts into Centers of Excellence, embedding rehabilitation content into health training curricula, operationalizing Uganda's National Rehabilitation and AT Strategic Plan, and integrating rehabilitation data into the national Health

Management Information System. These efforts aim to position rehabilitation and AT as essential pillars of Uganda's primary health care system.

The visit reinforced MakSPH's commitment to driving systems-level innovation in rehabilitation through strong, multisectoral partnerships. It also spotlighted the importance of advocacy, knowledge translation, and workforce development in achieving long-term, sustainable impact. This collaboration marks a critical step toward equitable access to quality rehabilitation services for all Ugandans.

In Attendance: Kirsten Lentz – Rehabilitation Advisor, USAID Washington; Dr. Abdul Bachani – Professor, Johns Hopkins

University & Programs Director, ReLAB-HS; Mr. Santo Ojara – Project Management Specialist (Local Partner/Organizational Development), USAID Uganda; Mr. Sam Tukei Ojulo – Country Director, ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Gerald Okello – Technical Advisor, ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Omaren Abraham – MEAL Manager, ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Lameck Emoru – Assistive Technology Coordinator, ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Echekeu Fredrick – Communications Officer, ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Albert Erongu – Regional Coordinator (Northern Uganda), ReLAB-HS Uganda; Mr. Herbert Omoding – Education & Workforce Development Consultant, ReLAB-HS Uganda.

*Dr. Abdul Bachani from Johns Hopkins University and Kirsten Lentz interact with Dr. Christine Nalwadda, the Head, Community Health and Behavioral Sciences.*



*Kirsten Lentz during the engagement.*



Global Fund and MakSPH PERSuADE project team interacting with the Kiboga District Local Government leadership during a learning visit in 2024.

## Global Fund Applauds MakSPH's Impact Through PERSuADE



Dr. Estifanos Biru Shargie, a Senior Specialist, Public Health Impact Evaluation at The Global Fund speaking during his visit to MakSPH

In September 2024, the Global Fund's Dr. Estifanos Biru Shargie visited Uganda to assess the impact of the six-year Partnership to enhance technical support for analytical capacity and data use for HIV, TB and Malaria (Southern and Eastern Africa)- (PERSuADE) project, led by Makerere University School of Public Health. It was implemented in 12 African countries and focused on enhancing analytical capacity and data use to improve health systems.

Dr. Shargie praised the project's tangible contributions, particularly in Uganda's Kiboga District, where local teams used data to close service gaps and improve access to care. He described MakSPH as *"a unique blend of academic rigour and practical implementation, with strong coordination, accountability, and ties to the Ministry of Health."*

The Global Fund funded PERSuADE project to train hundreds in analytical tools,

boosted reporting to DHIS2, and produced over 80 data outputs in HIV, TB, and malaria. It also influenced national strategies and strengthened collaborations between public health schools and ministries of health.

As Phase Two closed in 2023, the project left behind a strong legacy of empowered health workers, stronger district planning capacity, and embedded data-driven decision-making across the region.

**Dr. Shargie praised the project's tangible contributions, particularly in Uganda's Kiboga District, where local teams used data to close service gaps and improve access to care.**

## MakSPH, DUT Moot Talks to Strengthen Ties

In April 2024, MakSPH had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Moeti Kgware, an Environmental Health Professional and Head of Department at Durban University of Technology (DUT), South Africa. The discussions centred on deepening collaboration in public health training, including potential faculty exchanges, joint research, and shared academic resources.

Dr. Kgware, who delivered a keynote address at the 2024 MUEHSA scientific conference and gave guest lectures to BEHS students on the invitation of Dr. David Musoke, has since worked closely with MakSPH on several joint grant proposals.



*L-R: Dr. Moeti Kgware had community walkthrough in a Mulago II ward. Dr. Moeti is a Head of Community Health Studies at Durban University of Technology, South Africa. Dr. Moeti Kgware hands a gift to Professor Wanyenze during his visit to Uganda.*



This ongoing collaboration also includes exploring faculty from DUT as potential external examiners for MakSPH programmes. With an MOU between the two institutions set

to be signed soon, this partnership promises to enhance academic and research opportunities for both universities, strengthening their impact in the field of environmental and public health.

## Makerere, The Guild Strategise on Global Health Governance

On May 9, 2024, Professor Ole Petter Ottersen, acting Secretary-General of The Guild and Chair of the Lancet Commission on Global Governance for Health, visited Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Professor Barnabas Nawangwe. Their discussions focused on the commission's ongoing work to address the challenges of global health governance, including the concept of "sticky institutions"

first highlighted in the 2014 Lancet report.

Professor Ottersen, a distinguished medical doctor, brain researcher, and former Rector of the University of Oslo and President of Karolinska Institutet, emphasized the need for more adaptable institutions to tackle climate change and global health inequities.

The commission also convened at Makerere that week, co-chaired by Professor Rhoda Wanyenze and Professor Stefan Swartling Peterson, to refine recommendations for addressing health disparities and adapting to shifting geopolitical dynamics, drawing lessons from the recent pandemic.

*L-R: Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze and Prof. Stefan Swartling Peterson, Prof. Ole Petter Ottersen and Makerere University VC Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe in a conversation.*

**Professor Ottersen emphasized the need for more adaptable institutions to tackle climate change and global health inequities.**



## Advancing Regional Health Collaboration with University of Rwanda

On August 8, 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) hosted a delegation from the University of Rwanda's East African Community Regional Centre of Excellence for Vaccines, Immunization, and Health Supply Chain Management (EAC RCE-VIHSCM). The visit, led by Dr. Stephen Karengera, Dr. Jean Baptiste Nyandwi, and Dr. Eugene Rutungwa, included discussions with Deputy Dean Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa, Dr. Chrispus Mayora, and Mr. Perez Nicholas Ochanda. The meeting focused on potential collaborations in student exchange, joint research, training, and community health impact, reinforcing MakSPH's commitment to advancing public health in the region.



*MakSPH Deputy Dean, Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa meeting the delegation from University of Rwanda in August 2024.*

## WHO & MakSPH Explore WHO Collaborating Centre Status to Strengthen Research & Partnership

The World Health Organization (WHO) and MakSPH are exploring the designation of MakSPH as a WHO Collaborating Centre (WHOCC) in Uganda, following a successful five-year partnership. This move aims to institutionalize their collaboration for sustainable health impact, unlocking new research and funding opportunities.

Since 2019, WHO and MakSPH have jointly implemented over 46 high-impact projects, including the 2023 Uganda

Non-Communicable Diseases Risk Factors STEPS Survey, the Expanded Programme on Immunization Assessment, and the National Immunization Strategy 2022-2026. These projects have generated critical data, informed national health policies, and strengthened health systems.

Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative to Uganda, emphasized the need to formalize this collaboration, noting that only 27 of the 829 WHOCCs globally are in

Africa. He highlighted the potential for MakSPH to lead regional health research and policy.

MakSPH Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, expressed optimism about the centre's potential to shape global health discourse through evidence-based

policy and innovative research.

This technical collaboration reflects a shared commitment to advancing public health, capacity building, and community health services in Uganda and beyond.



*Team from World Health Organization and Makerere School of Public Health discussing Health research development in Uganda.*

*PROMISE Consortium partners during the Inaugural workshop in Kampala, July 2024.*

# MakSPH Hosts Inaugural PROMISE Consortium Workshop on Evidence-Based Sanitation for Health & Equity

In July 2024, MakSPH and the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) hosted the inaugural PROMISE Consortium workshop in Kampala, bringing together global partners to advance public health-led approaches to sanitation and environmental health. The workshop focused on building capacity and promoting the use of public health tools for evidence-based planning in Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS), climate-resilient solutions, and gender-sensitive WASH interventions.

The PROMISE Consortium—Promoting Evidence-Based Investments in Sanitation for Health and Equity brings together leading academic and public health institutions, including Makerere University (Uganda), Emory University and the University of North Carolina (USA), icddr,b and ITN-BUET (Bangladesh), APHRC (Kenya), TREND Group (Ghana), the

**participants explored tools such as SaniPath, WASH FIT, and the Community Hazard Identification Tool, alongside field visits and knowledge exchange...**

Zambia Institute of Environmental Health, University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and Pan African Consortium of Experts (PACE), Senegal. The consortium aims to foster equitable collaboration both south-south and north-south to apply scientific evidence in reducing pathogen exposure and improving public health in low- and middle-income countries.

Throughout the week-long convening, participants explored tools such as SaniPath, WASH

FIT, and the Community Hazard Identification Tool, alongside field visits and knowledge exchange. Country teams also presented national strategies to integrate these tools into local systems and enhance environmental health monitoring.

This partnership aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 and 3—clean water and sanitation, and good health and well-being. Through the PROMISE Consortium, MakSPH and its partners reaffirm their shared commitment to evidence-based action, institutional capacity-building, and inclusive sanitation systems as a foundation for health equity and sustainable development.



*PROMISE Consortium's Dr. Richard Mugambe and Prof. Christine Moe engaging with the team during a meeting in Kampala, 2024.*

# Makerere Advancing Research through CARTA



*Participants engaging an activity during CARTA's Academic, Professional, and Administration Staff (APAS) Workshop in Kampala, 2024.*

Makerere University, as a member of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA), has seen transformative growth through this partnership. Since 2012, CARTA's innovative approach to doctoral training has significantly strengthened the University's research capacity, inspired institutional reforms, and fostered a vibrant academic environment. This collaboration has been a game-changer, propelling both the University and its School of Public Health (MakSPH) to new global heights.

Dr. John Bosco Isunju from MakSPH and Associate Professor Robert Wamala from the School of Statistics and Planning, and the Chief, Directorate of Research, Innovations and Partnerships at Makerere University our dedicated CARTA Focal Persons are at the center of this effort. Their leadership has been key in coordinating activities, mentoring fellows, and embedding CARTA's best

practices into Makerere's systems, to help nurture a new generation of African research leaders.

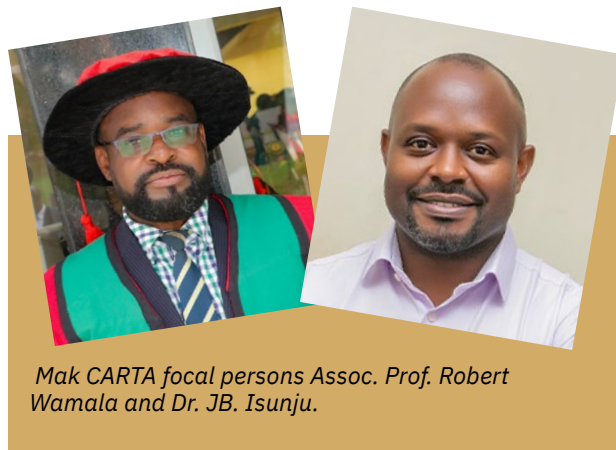
Through CARTA, over 25 junior faculty at Makerere (10 women and 15 men) have earned PhDs, stepping into leadership roles, winning major grants, and influencing health policies. From ground-breaking COVID-19 research to maternal and child health reforms, CARTA fellows are leaving a visible impact.

**Through CARTA, over 25 junior faculty at Makerere (10 women and 15 men) have earned PhDs, stepping into leadership roles, winning major grants...**

MakSPH hosts CARTA's Joint Advanced Seminars (JAS 1 and 4), providing early-career researchers with critical skills in research, ethics, writing, and knowledge translation—frameworks that have strengthened Makerere University's broader PhD training. The newly launched taught PhD in Public Health at MakSPH, introduced in 2024, draws heavily from CARTA's spirit of excellence, preparing the next generation of

researchers and health leaders across Africa.

From August 12-16, 2024, MakSPH hosted CARTA's Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) Workshop and the APAS Trainers of Trainers Workshop. The goal was to equip participants to better support researchers and foster a more supportive environment for early-career researchers, helping them advance their work and strengthen their skills. The training was graced by Dr. Joseph Gichuru Wang'ombe, Deputy Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC). CARTA is also currently supporting capacity building in other universities in the East African region including Somali National University.



*Mak CARTA focal persons Assoc. Prof. Robert Wamala and Dr. JB. Isunju.*

Makerere University is one of the two CARTA partner institutions where CARTA research hubs are being established.



*Participants in the CARTA Africa's Academic, Professional, and Administration Staff (APAS) Workshop, and the APAS ToT Workshop in a role-play tasks.*



*Seated, L-R: Dr. JB. Isunju, the Mak CARTA focal person, the Dean of MakSPH Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze and Dr. Joseph Gichuru Wang'ombe, Deputy Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) along with the CARTA secretariat and facilitators at the APAS workshop in Kololo.*



# Institutional Capacity Enhancement



This pillar centers on our commitment to operational excellence, ensuring our capacity to deliver top-tier teaching, research, and community service, while proactively tackling operational challenges. We will prioritize human resources, resource mobilization, and infrastructure. Here are the highlights for 2024.

## MakSPH State-of-the-Art Auditorium Launched

On March 15, 2024, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) unveiled its new state-of-the-art auditorium— a major milestone in Uganda’s health education infrastructure. The event was officiated by H.E. Karin Boven, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Uganda, and featured a keynote address by Prof. David Peters of York University, who underscored the critical role of infrastructure in strengthening public health research, training, and driving socio-economic transformation.

The facility located at the Eastern Gate of Makerere University main campus is equipped with advanced digital audio-visual technology. The

multipurpose auditorium today is among the finest in Uganda for hosting seminars, conferences, theatre, and cultural events. It is part of MakSPH’s broader \$10 million infrastructure expansion to meet the growing demand for public health education across Africa.

The launch was attended by a distinguished delegation, including H.E. Lulu Xingwana (South African High Commissioner), Mr. Gerishom Gimaiyo (Rockefeller Foundation), Ms. Lorna Magara (Chairperson, Makerere University Council), the Vice

*Dignitaries led by Ambassador Karin Boven during the launch of the Auditorium on March 15, 2024. Prof. Josephine Nambooze, the first woman to qualify as medical doctor in East Africa, and the former Director, Institute of Public Health 1978-1988.*



**It is part of MakSPH’s broader \$10 million infrastructure expansion to meet the growing demand for public health education across Africa...**

*Ambassador Boven (Centre) takes a guided tour of the MakSPH exhibitions accompanied by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Banarbas Nawangwe, his Deputy Prof. Umar Kakumba and Prof. Lynn Atuyambe, the Head of Infrastructure Committee at MakSPH, Dr. Rawlance Ndejjo.*



Chancellor, Professor Barnabas Nawangwe and several current and past MakSPH leaders, partners, and students.

The project has so far mobilized \$4.8 million, with key contributions including \$420,000 from the Dutch government through NUFFIC and the SET-SRHR project, significant support from the Rockefeller Foundation, and internal funding from MakSPH—including staff contributions. An additional \$1.1 million was secured from USAID's ASHA program to



integrate augmented reality technology on two floors of the expansion. A funding gap of \$5.2 million remains to fully complete the project.

Over the past 70 years, MakSPH has established itself as a regional leader in public health, shaping national and global responses to complex health challenges. As its mandate and impact have expanded, so too has its student and staff population—driving the urgent need for infrastructure investment to support advanced training, research, and innovation.

## About the Auditorium



On March 15, 2024, MakSPH officially launched its state-of-the-art auditorium—an iconic addition to Uganda's health education infrastructure and a key milestone in the School's expansion journey. Nestled on the eastern side of Makerere University's Main Campus, the facility positions MakSPH as a premier venue for high-level conferences, academic events, and multi-disciplinary engagement across the region.

This modern auditorium features a 500-seat capacity with flexible, ergonomic seating and world-class audio-visual and broadcast technology. Designed by architect Dolores Nankya Collins and executed by M/s ROKO Construction Ltd, the space blends architectural elegance with functionality, allowing for diverse event formats including seminars, panel discussions, theater, and cultural exhibitions. An outdoor terrace and gallery spaces further enhance its utility for both academic and social functions.

This infrastructure marks a turning point in resolving long-standing space constraints at the School. It not only provides a home for scientific dialogue but also reflects MakSPH's broader commitment to creating environments that support learning, innovation, and professional growth. The auditorium serves as both a functional asset and a symbolic statement of MakSPH's leadership in shaping the future of public health in Uganda and beyond.

Our new auditorium sets a new standard for health education infrastructure. It is a testament to MakSPH's commitment to excellence and a bold step forward in shaping the future of public health education, research, and leadership in the region.

*Inside the beautifully furnished Auditorium for MakSPH*

Amos Dembe, the MakSPH Internal Auditor, Dean, Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze, The Rockefeller Foundation Vice President-Africa Mr. William Asiko, Gerry Gimaiyo, Director of Health in the Africa Regional Office and Dr. JB Isunju during their tour of the new infrastructure at Main Campus.

MakSPH management team, dignitaries and the University Management join Council Chairperson, The Rockefeller, Ambassador Boven, the current and past Deans Prof. Josephine Namboozie, Prof. David Serwadda and Prof. William Bazeyo in a group photo at the launch of the Auditorium.



*Students from the School of Liberals and Performing Arts entertaining guests at the Launch.*

*Dr. Jonathan M. Samet, a renowned pulmonary physician and epidemiologist from the Colorado School of Public Health, and Dr. Darby W. Jack, an expert in Environmental Health Sciences, joined by Sam Etajak and Professor Lynn Atuyambe, inspecting the BAM air monitoring equipment at MakSPH.*

## GEOHealth Hub Collaboration with Makerere University

In 2024, Makerere University welcomed a distinguished delegation from the Global Environmental and Occupational Health (GEOHealth) Hub for Eastern Africa, including Dr. Kiros Berhane, Chair of Biostatistics at Columbia University, Dr. Jonathan M. Samet, a leading pulmonary physician and epidemiologist, at Colorado School of Public Health and Dr. Darby W. Jack, an Environmental Health Sciences expert.

As part of their visit, the GEOHealth Uganda team organized two key workshops to prepare for Year 4 of the project. The first, led by Dr. Berhane in June, focused on designing the Children's/Mother's Health Study and Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring

Study. This four-day workshop included protocol development, site visits to primary schools, and training on study design.

In July, Dr. Jack and Dr. Samet led a second workshop on air pollution exposure monitoring, respiratory health, and ambulatory blood pressure monitoring. This session emphasized hands-on training in spirometry and exposure assessment, ensuring the team is equipped to conduct high-impact research.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lynn Atuyambe of MakSPH had a research paper featured in the Daily Monitor, highlighting four years of PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality monitoring in Kampala, reflecting the broader impact of the GEOHealth initiative.



*Kiros Berhane, Eastern Africa GEOHealth Hub co-principal investigator, joined the Ugandan hub team at Piato Restaurant Kampala.*

## Dr. Musinguzi Launches Memoir on Beating Cancer

### A Story of Hope and Healing

On August 16, 2024, MakSPH hosted the launch of “*My Journey with Rectal Cancer: From Diagnosis to Recovery*”, a memoir by Dr. Geoffrey Musinguzi, a Public Health Researcher. The event, held at the MakSPH Auditorium, brought together cancer survivors, health professionals, and members of the university community for an inspiring celebration of resilience and recovery.

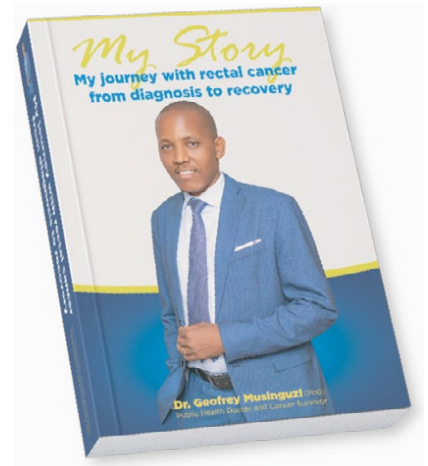
Dr. Musinguzi was diagnosed with rectal cancer in 2022 at just 44, and in the book, he shares his intense battle with the disease, including chemotherapy, radiotherapy, multiple surgeries, and a year living with a colostomy. His deeply personal account captures the physical and emotional challenges of cancer, as well as the unwavering support from family, friends, and the medical community.

More than a survival story, his book seeks to break the silence and stigma surrounding cancer, particularly in African communities, emphasizing

that early detection can save lives. It also serves as a powerful public health message on the importance of awareness, patient-centered care, and timely diagnosis.

MakSPH stands behind voices like Dr. Musinguzi’s, blending science and lived experience to drive meaningful change.

Copies of this book are available at Makerere University Press (MakPress), located at Edge House No. 52, next to the Directorate of Legal Affairs, Main Campus.



Attendees during the book launch at the MakSPH Auditorium.





## Isunju Among TIME100's Most Influential Climate Leaders

In November 2024, Dr. JB Isunju, a Senior Lecturer at Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), was named to the prestigious TIME100 Climate list, recognizing influential leaders driving meaningful climate action. He led the development of the groundbreaking Health National Adaptation Plan (H-NAP), which integrates climate training for healthcare workers and climate-proofing of health infrastructure.



## Dr. David Musoke Elected President-Elect of IFEH

Congratulations to Dr. David Musoke on his election as President-Elect of the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH). He will assume the presidency from Dr. Bruno Cvetkovic of Croatia in 2026. Founded in 1986, IFEH represents national associations of environmental health professionals globally, promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange to advance public health. Dr. Musoke's leadership is expected to strengthen global efforts to protect the environment and improve public health outcomes, and reinforce the critical role of environmental health professionals in addressing global health challenges.



# Finance Management Unit

## A year of Growth and Resilience for MakSPH's Finance and grants support team



February 2024 at a farewell meeting for one of the team members. It has one academic staff and two interns on top of the Finance and Grants management team. Later, in the year two other members joined the team.

The finance and grants support team at Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) delivered strong performance in 2024, maintaining high standards in financial oversight, grant management, and institutional sustainability. The team achieved clean audit reports, ensured timely stakeholder deliverables, and strengthened systems to enhance MakSPH's grant management capacity

### A Team in Motion

This year, we bid farewell to a valued colleague, Ms. Jackie Norah Nanteza, who, after 8 years as a grants officer, decided it was time for a new challenge. We also welcomed three new professionals to our ranks, growing the team to 18 members, a 20% increase. This infusion of talent

bolstered our ability to manage an increasingly complex grants portfolio. Despite the expiration of several grants, strategic acquisitions ensured growth: 31 new awards brought an 18% surge in donor funding, culminating in a 4% net increase in our active portfolio. The Unit also drove an 8% rise in non-grant revenue, demonstrating our focus on diversifying MakSPH's financial resilience beyond grants.

### Catalyzing Research Opportunity

This year, we actively supported faculty in securing research funding, reviewing and strengthening 94 competitive proposals from 146 opportunities identified. Behind each submission lies our commitment to transforming promising ideas into fundable research. We strongly believe

that excellence begins with rigorous preparation.

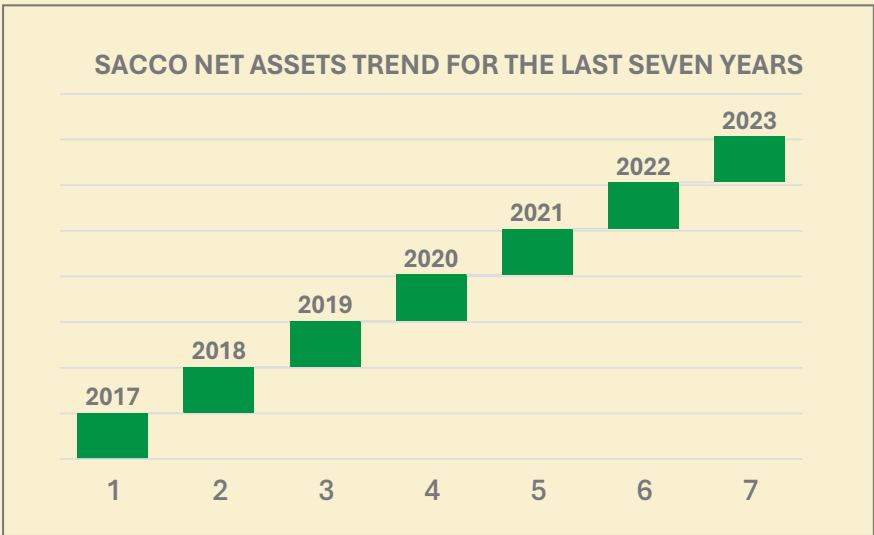
## Building Capacity, Forging Connections

Capacity development remains at the heart of what we do. This year, we guided Cohort 6 of the MakSPH Seed Grants Program, delivered four Early Career Researchers' workshops, and proudly represented MakSPH on global platforms, from the British Academy meeting in Nairobi to sharing key lessons on NIH policy at the SRAI conference in Chicago. We also deepened our technical partnerships in Addis Ababa, contributed thought leadership at EARIMA in Zanzibar, and mentored

emerging grant writers in Dakar, cementing our place as a regional leader in research administration.

At home, we held four Grants Committee meetings, shared over 80 funding opportunities, updated three key SOPs, and worked closely with Makerere University's GAMSU unit to uphold strong institutional compliance and coordination.

Graph showing growth in SACCO net assets over years.



Finance Manager CPA Elizabeth Nambi and her team host a delegation from the Kenya Medical Research Institute for a finance management benchmarking visit, 18th October 2024.



## The MakSPH SACCO: A Story of Steady Growth

The MakSPH Cooperative Society, now in its eighth year, continues to empower staff financially. Membership reached 313, while share capital grew by an impressive 24%, a reflection of collective trust and prudent management. We are growing and investing in dreams together.



# MakSPH Infrastructure Development Project

## Makerere University School of Public Health Building Project Progress Update

MakSPH is constructing an 8-storey building to address space constraints, reduce high rental costs, and provide a more conducive environment for students, faculty, and researchers. This facility will support training public health professionals to tackle complex challenges of epidemics, pandemics, climate change, and rapid urbanization.

The project engineering firm is ROKO Construction Ltd, and is making steady progress.

On November 8, 2024, the project team hosted the ASHA Grant team, led by Azara Turaki, Program Officer/Analyst at USAID, following their generous USD 1.2 million contribution through the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Earlier, on June 24, 2024, members of the Legal and Estates Committee visited the construction site to assess the state of ongoing infrastructure projects at Makerere University including the MakSPH site. Other visitors were the auditors from the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA).

Overall, the project is at 70% completion for Phase 2A and 55% for Phase 2B, against planned targets of 98% and 82%, respectively. The contractor is addressing the contextual delays resulting from design modifications and the alignment of finishing works for the entire structure.

ROKO Construction Ltd has also been awarded the contract for Phase 2C, which includes the finishing works for the remaining four floors. The new projected completion date for the building is February 24, 2026.

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*“What we find at the School of Public Health building is that it is in very advanced stages of the construction. We have been able to visit and look at the Auditorium and this is the state of the art. It is just overwhelming. We think that there has been very good use of the money, value for money. We like the pace; the plans and this project actually answers many questions for the university. It is providing lecture rooms, facilities for the public, laboratories, restaurants and that is really an all-round infrastructure and to me this is a very big vision that should be supported. The most fascinating thing is that the money used for the construction of this building is coming from staff and well-wishers and the progress has been immense. I think with this project, we commend government for the projects its doing, here we need a lot more support to make sure that the project is completed within time and within budget because there is evidence that work is on-going.”*

**George Bamugemereire,**  
the Chairperson of Makerere University Council Committee on Legal Rules and Estates Committee.



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# Human Resources

## Faculty Promotions 2024

In 2024, Makerere University appointments Board received and considered promotions of three faculty from the Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH). We congratulate the following on their well-deserved promotions:



**Dr. Freddie Peter Ssengooba**  
Promoted to Professor



**Dr. Richard Mugambe**  
Promoted to Senior Lecturer



**Dr. John Bosco Isunju**  
Promoted to Senior Lecturer

Additionally, we are pleased to share that Professor

**David Yawe Guwatudde** received a **post-retirement contract** renewal, allowing him to continue his impactful work.

Congratulations to our revered colleagues on this recognition of their dedication and exceptional contributions to public health research, teaching, and mentorship.



## New MakSPH Staff



**Johnson Ayikirize Kayi**  
joined MakSPH as an Accountant



**Brenda Wagaba**  
Joined MakSPH as Partnerships Officer



**John Okeya**  
Joined MakSPH as an Assistant Communications Officer



**Nakiyaga Melissa**  
Joined MakSPH as a Grants Officer

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