

UGHE SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT REPORT



2023-2024



UGHE Through a Sustainability Lens

The University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) is a pioneering global health institution established by Partners In Health (PIH) to reimagine health education and re-engineer health systems by placing equity, social justice, and community partnership at the center of all academic and operational work. Situated in Butaro, Burera District, UGHE is intentionally located in a rural underserved region transforming the way universities contribute to society by operating as an engine for sustainable development, human capital growth, and community empowerment.

UGHE's Vision

To be a global health sciences university that advances equitable and quality health care delivery for all, especially underserved populations.

Our vision aligns directly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring that high-quality education and health systems leadership accelerate progress toward a healthier, more equitable, and more sustainable world.

UGHE's Mission

To educate and inspire the next generation of equitable, ethical, and accountable health professionals and global health leaders who deliver high-quality care and drive systems transformation rooted in equity.

UGHE's mission operationalizes sustainability through:

- Human capital development in rural and underserved areas
- Community-integrated education that strengthens local systems
- Equity-first admissions and student support policies
- Socially accountable health workforce development
- Context-relevant innovation, research, and policy leadership

UGHE's Core Values

Core Value	Link to Sustainability & SDGs		
Equity	Equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and resources; eliminating systemic barriers for underserved populations (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 10)		
Inclusion & Diversity	Diversity in admissions, hiring, and leadership; disability inclusion; refugee pathways; gender equity; first-gen and rural learner support (SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10, 16)		
Respect	Human dignity, cultural respect, ethical partnerships, and compassionate service to communities (SDGs 3, 16)		
Social Justice	Addressing social determinants of health, structural inequity, and health disparities; strengthening legal and health systems that protect rights (SDGs 1, 3, 5, 10, 16)		



Universal Healthcare	Commitment to Universal Health Coverage, strengthening primary health care, community-based health delivery, and health equity systems (SDGs 3, 10)		
Community- Based Education & Healthcare	Immersive rural and community learning; CHW engagement; service-learning and health system strengthening in district hospitals and communities (SDGs 3, 4, 11, 17)		
Sustainability	Environmentally responsible campus development, sustainable procurement, renewable systems planning, One Health approach, climate action (SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)		
Cultural Humility	Learner self-reflection, respectful engagement with local knowledge systems, indigenous and community voices in education (SDGs 4, 10, 16)		
Integrity	Ethical leadership, transparency, governance, accountability, responsible research, and compliance systems (SDG 16)		
Innovation	Digital health, simulation, MedTech, Al in education, entrepreneurship and cooperative development, community innovation (SDGs 8, 9, 4)		

In 2023–2024, UGHE advanced its mission through integrated action across academics, research, innovation, community empowerment, and sustainable development. We strengthened community health systems, empowered women and youth, expanded rural education access, generated employment, and fostered innovation ecosystems across East Africa. Our sustainability model is grounded in co-creation with communities, equitable workforce development, gender empowerment, rural infrastructure investment, climate-linked One Health leadership, and global partnerships for social impact.

Key Impact Highlights (2023-2024)

Theme	Achievements	
Economic empowerment	366 rural jobs created; incomes ↑ 275% (\$16→\$60/month); 69% savings uptake	
Education for all	120+ primary learners & 3 high schools supported weekly; science days; public workshops	
Gender equity	600+ girls trained in pad production; 5,000+ SRHR beneficiaries; 15 sewing machines distributed	
Health equity	1,500+ community members reached; 220 households screened; >70 referred to surgery	
One Health & environment	27-village WASH outreach; 173 participants at environmental summit; zoonotic disease education	
Research & Development / Innovation	Peer-reviewed publications on rural employment, health equity, and implementation science; Stanford Biodesign Fellowship partnership; Simulation-based education advancements; community-driven innovation incubation and student research across One Health, NCDs, and primary care systems	



Entrepreneurship	128 entrepreneurs trained, generating 154 new jobs; small business incubation; local cooperative strengthening; pipeline programs for youth and community innovators	
Community faculty & leadership	249 community faculty trained; 42 refresher-trained	
Infrastructure	New housing cluster; rural digital learning expansion; improved energy & hygiene systems	

Education for Sustainable Futures

Curriculum

- Planetary health integrated across MBBS and MGHD
- Competency-based learning on climate-resilient health systems
- Required environmental health components in preclinical and clinical stages
- Student One Health field experiences and community service learning

Student Engagement

- Climate debate series
- Monthly Umuganda engagement
- Peer-led environmental awareness campaigns
- Leadership in local climate health dialogues

Research & Innovation

Focus areas include:

- Planetary health & climate-resilient care
- · Equity and health systems strengthening
- One Health and zoonoses prevention
- Environmental determinants of health
- Food security and nutrition in rural settings

Student and faculty research informs national and continental initiatives on climate-health and medical education.

Campus Sustainability

Area	Impact		
Energy	Hydroelectric power, solar, reduced generator reliance		
Water & Waste	Water conservation, composting, recycling		
Food	Sustainable campus dining, reduced food waste		
Buildings	Passive cooling, natural lighting, local materials		
Transportation	Shared transport system to reduce emissions		



Community Partnerships & Social Impact

- Monthly Umuganda participation
- Hospital-based environmental education
- Community workshops on soil health, water safety, waste management
- Environmental health comic book project with Rwandan hospitals
- Support to vulnerable families through local health programs

Detailed Sustainability Impact (2023-2024)

SDG 1: No Poverty

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE is strategically positioned in rural Rwanda to contribute to the eradication of poverty through a holistic approach that integrates education, employment, healthcare, and infrastructure development. UGHE operationalizes SDG 1 through inclusive scholarship models, community job creation, local procurement, economic empowerment programs, and research on poverty alleviation, especially in underserved communities across Rwanda.

Indicator	UGHE Contribution	
Eradicate extreme poverty	UGHE's full scholarship model ensures that 70–80% of students come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, including those from refugee camps and rural villages. Students are not required to pay tuition, housing, food, or educational materials, ensuring that financial barriers do not impede access to higher education.	
Multidimensional poverty reduction	A 2024 study published in the Global Scientific and Academic Research Journal documented improved household financial outcomes among community members employed by UGHE. More than 60% reported upward economic mobility within 1–3 years of employment. UGHE also supports income-generating field projects and rural entrepreneurship training.	
Social protection	UGHE students and staff benefit from healthcare, housing, food security, and transport allowances. Local community members employed in construction, catering, cleaning, and landscaping at UGHE receive stable incomes, uniforms, health insurance, and workplace safety support.	
Equal access to resources and services	UGHE's investment in community infrastructure (roads, electricity, water access, school partnerships) directly expands access to basic services in Burera District. UGHE's ICT and library resources are also made available to visiting students and researchers from the local region.	



Resilience building	UGHE engages in health education, WASH initiatives, and community labs focused on climate- and poverty-sensitive issues such as vector-borne diseases, soil erosion, zoonoses, and		
	health system preparedness. Monthly umuganda activities foster		
	collective action for local resilience.		

Actions & Outputs

- 366 local residents employed (cleaning, catering, construction, security, admin, groundskeeping)
- 275% income increase (\$16→\$60/month)
- Savings participation increased from 0%→69%
- Local supply chain strengthening via cooperative contracting
- Entrepreneurship training (Cohorts 1–3): 128 trained, 154 jobs created

UGHE demonstrates income transformation, long-term employment pipeline, and verified economic mobility, aligned to community capability strengthening and poverty reduction frameworks.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

UGHE's Commitment:

As a health sciences institution located in a rural food-insecure area, UGHE integrates food systems, nutrition, and agricultural sustainability into its operations, research, community partnerships, and academic programs. UGHE tackles SDG 2 both indirectly through food security programming and research, and directly through campus-wide sustainable food practices, nutrition curricula, and community outreach in Northern Rwanda.

Teaching & Learning: Food and Nutrition in Curriculum

- MBBS Curriculum: Food systems, maternal/child nutrition, and agriculture-health intersections embedded in pre-clinical and clinical teaching.
- One Health Education: Focus on zoonotic disease, agricultural practices, and nutrition security.
- **Planetary Health Modules:** Climate-smart agriculture, food justice, and the health-environment-agriculture nexus are core content areas.
- Science Day & Community Laboratories: Community participants learn about nutrition, hygiene, soil conservation, and crop resilience.
- Global Climate and Bioethics Education (GCBE) Field School: Provides immersion into agro-ecological systems, traditional food practices, and environmental determinants of food security.

Health Services & Nutrition Outreach

- Healthy Ageing Study: Screened 4,369 individuals in 127 villages for nutrition-related health risks including anemia, underweight, and food access.
- Community Health Camps: Include nutritional assessment, dietary counseling,



- and referral for malnourished individuals.
- Jigger's Disease Campaign: Addressed parasitic infestation tied to hygiene and nutrition vulnerabilities in rural villages.

Research & Innovation

- Student and faculty research explores dietary behaviors, maternal feeding practices, and community-based nutrition programs.
- UGHE faculty contributed to multi-country implementation research on underfive mortality, with strong nutrition-related policy implications (BMC Pediatrics, 2024).
- Evaluation studies track impact of nutrition education, food access, and school-based awareness programs.

Campus Operations: Sustainable & Nutritious Food Environment

- Free Meals Program: All students and staff receive balanced, healthy meals—boosting nutritional equity.
- Sustainable Procurement: UGHE sources fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy from local farmer cooperatives, increasing community income and minimizing carbon footprint.
- Food Waste Minimization: Campus uses portion planning, re-use protocols, and composting to reduce waste.
- Composting & Campus Gardens: Support practical training in organic farming and circular food systems.

Community Partnerships

- Burera District Collaboration: Co-developing community-level food and nutrition initiatives.
- Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI): Collaboration on nutrition-sensitive programming in Burera and neighboring districts.
- COHESA & AFROHUN Networks: Joint projects on food safety, zoonoses, and sustainable agriculture.
- Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program: Supports student-led One Health projects, some of which address food security and nutrition equity in rural Rwanda.

Advocacy, Education & Public Engagement

- One Health Art Competition: Hosted at GS Runaba on themes of agriculture, nutrition, and environment.
- Community Nutrition Talks: Delivered by UGHE students and faculty in primary and secondary schools.
- Science Day for Food Security: Annual open event for youth and families on healthy eating, traditional crops, and the science of nutrition.



Impact Area	UGHE Contribution		
Universal food access	All students and staff receive free, nutritious meals prepared on campus. Local community members employed by UGHE benefit from daily meal provisions and are referred to food assistance as needed.		
Malnutrition reduction	UGHE's health sciences curriculum integrates maternal and child nutrition, anemia, stunting, and obesity education. Public health student projects target undernutrition (e.g., Jigger's Disease Awareness Campaign and nutrition outreach).		
Nutritional screening & care	4,369 individuals screened for nutrition indicators across 127 villages through community health and student outreach; integrated into clinical teaching and campus clinic health assessments.		
Nutrition & hygiene education	249 community educators trained on food safety, maternal/child nutrition, and hygiene. Campus and field practicum sessions emphasize safe food handling and dietary diversity.		
Student learning engagement	Over 40 UGHE students participated in nutrition-focused practicums, community-based education modules, and foodsystem interventions in partnership with rural stakeholders.		
Smallholder farmer support	UGHE collaborates with 6+ local farming cooperatives in Burera District to source food staples and stimulate local agri-economies. Farmer engagement includes education on agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture.		
Sustainable food production	UGHE campus includes student-run vegetable gardens, a composting facility for ~100% of biodegradable food waste, and active food supply chain sustainability efforts (minimized packaging and local sourcing).		
Food sourcing & circular economy	Over 80% of food served on campus is locally sourced. All biodegradable kitchen waste is composted and used to enrich UGHE's gardens and community agriculture demonstrations.		
Agricultural biodiversity education	The UGHE One Health and Social Medicine Field School includes farm visits, ecopark exploration, and biodiversity mapping. Students engage in research on indigenous crops and food systems sustainability.		





Figure 1: Could we caption this photo?

Exemplary: The Inclusive Nutrition and Early Childhood Development (INECD) Program

The Inclusive Nutrition and Early Childhood Development (INECD) program was a transformative, multi-sectoral effort aimed at improving maternal and child health, nutrition, and development outcomes in Rwanda. Led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), with technical leadership from the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), and in collaboration with USAID, the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), and local stakeholders, the program operated across ten districts, and two additional for control purpose. And was targeting women of reproductive age and children under five. Since its launch in October 2021, INECD has addressed critical challenges in early childhood development, nutrition, and disability inclusion through community-based strategies, evidence-driven interventions, and capacity building. UGHE played a pivotal role in research, with key achievements including the completion of ten research projects and community activities in targeted districts.



UGHE research team and laboratory technicians after data collection training for the "Rethinking childhood stunting and its associated factors in Rwanda' research project".







Conducted training for laboratory technicians who supported data collection and analysis, with a focus on data quality, reporting standards, and community-based data handling.





Maternal Nutrition Data and Blood Sample Collection at Gahanga Health Center, Kicukiro District.





Maternal Nutrition Data Collection and Nutrition Counseling at Bigogwe Health Center, Nyabihu District.





Engaging GCBE Students in the Implementation of Community Nutrition Programs: Methods and Lessons Learned.



The photo captures an interactive session with international students from the Global Community-Based Education (GCBE) program as they engaged in a knowledge exchange on the implementation of community-based nutrition programs in Rwanda.



SDG 3: Good Health & Well-Being

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE was founded with the mission of delivering equitable health systems by transforming how health professionals are educated, how communities are engaged, and how care is delivered. Anchored in Rwanda's national health priorities and Vision 2050, UGHE promotes universal health coverage (UHC), resilient primary healthcare systems, and cross-sectoral health determinants across its institutional strategy.

UGHE's core values, equity, compassion, community, and social justice—place SDG 3 at the heart of its operations. Its medical education, community health programs, faculty research, and staff/student well-being initiatives all contribute to holistic health outcomes at local, national, and global levels.

Indicator / Target Area	UGHE Contributions & Results	
Individuals screened in rural villages	4,369 individuals screened across 127 villages through the Healthy Ageing Project	
Clinical encounters at UGHE campus clinic	7,210 patient visits providing free, quality care	
Faculty and students in service-learning activities	125+ engaged in health promotion, primary care delivery, and field-based practicum	
Community educators trained	249 individuals trained on key health topics including nutrition, hygiene, and NCDs	
Health-focused thematic outreach campaigns	8+ major community campaigns (e.g., palliative care, diabetes, substance abuse, jigger disease, mental health)	
Mental health support sessions provided	220+ sessions delivered for students, faculty, and community	
Research papers on health topics	12+ student and faculty publications on maternal health, UHC, ageing, One Health, under-five mortality, and health systems	
Reduce maternal mortality	Community-based maternal health education; obstetric skills training in MBBS and PMLS curricula	
End preventable child deaths	Multi-country research on under-five mortality; child-focused outreach; early childhood nutrition screening	



Reduce NCD mortality & improve mental health	NCD screening campaigns; Healthy Ageing Initiative; on-campus and community mental health services	
Prevent and treat substance abuse	Community sessions and MBBS curriculum content on substance abuse and behavior change	
Achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC)	Campus-based free clinic; outreach to remote areas; early-stage palliative care integration	
Health workforce development	Pre-service and in-service training across MBBS, MSc-HPE, nursing, surgery, and CPD programs; curriculum aligned with national HRH priorities	

Academic Programs & Health Education

- MBBS Curriculum: Competency-based, equity-oriented training for future physicians emphasizing primary care, public health, and rural service.
- MSc in Global Health Delivery (MGHD): Trains professionals in system-based health delivery and policy innovation.
- MSc in Health Professions Education (MHPE): Builds teaching and leadership capacity in health education.
- **Postgraduate Surgical Training:** In partnership with COSECSA and RMDC, UGHE hosts advanced surgical residents.
- Short Courses & CPD: Offered in palliative care, mental health, teaching with simulation, and One Health.

Enrolment Highlights 2023-2024:

- 121 MBBS students enrolled
- 29 MGHD students
- 28 MSc HPE learners
- 64 postgraduate surgery residents trained on-site

Community-Based Health Services

UGHE is embedded within a rural health ecosystem in Burera District. Through its health outreach and clinical engagement, it has advanced local health equity.

Key Interventions

- **Healthy Ageing Study:** Screened 4,369 individuals across 127 villages for NCDs, functional capacity, nutrition, and cognitive health.
- Palliative Care Initiative: Rolled out in Burera and Gasabo Districts in partnership with Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) and MoH, increasing access to community-based end-of-life care.
- **Jigger's Disease Campaign:** Addressed neglected tropical disease through health promotion in Butaro and neighboring communities.
- Science Day & Community Labs: Hosted annually, providing health screenings, health literacy training, and lab demonstrations.



• Adolescent Reproductive Health: Embedded in school outreach, delivered by medical students and community educators.

Community Health Impact (2023–24):

- 249 community educators trained
- 120+ primary school scholars supported with nutrition and hygiene services
- 12 rural health centers engaged through practicum sites
- 8+ thematic health campaigns delivered

Research on Health Outcomes

UGHE's research portfolio aligns with national and global health priorities, focusing on applied, implementation, and equity-based research.

Examples of Research Outputs

- Under-Five Mortality Research (BMC Pediatrics, 2024): Multi-country implementation research informing community health worker programs and child survival strategies.
- Employment & Health Study: Quantified positive changes in household economic and health access outcomes resulting from employment at UGHE (GSARJEBM, 2024).
- Palliative Care Pilot Study: Demonstrating increased community awareness and early adoption in Burera and Gasabo.
- Student Thesis Topics: Include maternal health, mental well-being in post-conflict zones, stigma in adolescents with NCDs, and barriers to UHC in East Africa.

Campus Health & Safety Operations

- 24/7 On-Campus Clinic: Provides primary and urgent care to students, staff, and faculty.
- Wellness Program: Includes mental health counseling, mindfulness training, yoga, and sports.
- Food & Nutrition Services: Free, healthy meals promote physical and cognitive wellness across campus.

Partnerships

- Ministry of Health Rwanda: Alignment on HRH strategy, UHC planning, and district-level service delivery.
- RMDC (Rwanda Medical and Dental Council): Licensure training and faculty standards support.
- COSECSA: Advanced surgical training and faculty certification.
- Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program: Embeds wellness, leadership, and social responsibility into learner experience.

Exemplars: Snakebite awareness campaign & Comic books Distribution, August 31, 2024.



The Center for One Health at UGHE, in collaboration with Health Action International (HAI), launched an initiative combining comic book distribution and live snake demonstrations to increase awareness and prevention. The objective is to educate students on snakebite risks, first aid, and prevention, while also equipping community health workers and educators with knowledge on snake species and safety. As part of the implementation, we visited four schools in the Rweru Sector of Bugesera District, distributing approximately 800 comic books — about 200 per school — and engaging students in interactive sessions to debunk myths and encourage practical prevention.









2 outreach surgical camps with 133 surgeries done in the first camp and 90 in the other, wiht a total of more than 200 cataract surgeries done in Butaro in 2024.



Establishment of an ENT specialized clinic at Butaro Level II Teaching and Referral Hospital





Capacity building of GPs in ENT services



Medical outreach that took place on 23rd to 25th August 2024, at Ngeruka Health Center in Bugesera District in collaboration with Rwanda Christian Medical and Dental Organisation (RCMDO). More than 1000 patients received free consultation and treatment in various subspecialties.



Exemplars: 1st African Diabetes Workshop Held in Butaro

In April 2024, Institute of Global Health Equity Research (IGHER) proudly hosted the first African Diabetes Workshop in collaboration with the University of Rwanda, NIH, and the University of Washington. Held at our Butaro campus, the workshop brought together researchers and clinicians to exchange knowledge and develop collaborative grant proposals aimed at building research capacity and training more Rwandan scientists in diabetes care.



Exemplars: IGHER has launched a community-based palliative care project in Burera and Gasabo Districts.

Now in its early phase, the project has completed gender and stakeholder analyses. A



successful dissemination event was held in Kigali with the participation of the Rwanda Biomedical Centre and Ministry of Health representatives.

Exemplars: Healthy ageing and reduction of multimorbidity in Rwanda

On June 14, 2024, the research team of the healthy ageing project engaged Butaro and Kigali communities through data collection for healthy ageing. The team completed a large household survey on 4,369 individuals covering 127 villages in Burera district in the Northern province and in Gasabo, Nyarugenge and Kicukiro districts in the city of Kigali. During this data collection exercise, participants underwent various health assessments, including measurements of blood pressure, blood glucose levels, and grip strength, among others. Individuals found to have elevated measurements were provided with referral slips and had their transportation costs covered to facilitate access to the nearest health facilities for further diagnosis and appropriate treatment. The project's second work package aimed to assess the readiness of the primary healthcare facilities to provide health services to older people and practice of the healthcare providers at 24 randomly selected facilities, nationwide covering 12 primary healthcare facilities across three districts of the Kigali city and 12 in Burera district.



Healthy ageing data collectors interviewing participants in the city of Kigali



SDG 4: Quality Education

UGHE's Commitment:

At UGHE, education is a transformative tool to dismantle global inequities in health, opportunity, and leadership. UGHE's mission—to radically transform health education and delivery through equity-centered teaching, research, and community partnership—directly advances SDG 4: Quality Education. The university is a global leader in competency-based, socially accountable education rooted in the principles of inclusivity, equity, and sustainability.UGHE contributes substantively to six SDG 4 targets, integrating classroom and community learning, health education, research capacity building, and rural talent development.

Target	UGHE Contributions
Universal access to quality primary and secondary education	Butaro Scholars Program supports 120+ students from low-income families with school fees, supplies, and wraparound support.
Equal access to affordable and quality tertiary education	100% of UGHE students receive full scholarships or financial aid; inclusive recruitment strategies target refugees, rural learners, and underrepresented groups.
Relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship	Programs integrate system thinking, leadership, social entrepreneurship, and field practicums to build realworld skills.
Eliminate gender and social disparities	Eliminate gender parity in enrolment; ensure access for disadvantaged, displaced, and students with disabilities.
Education for sustainable development, global citizenship, and health	UGHE's curricula embed One Health, planetary health, ethics, human rights, and social accountability across all programs.
Supply of qualified teachers and health educators	UGHE train health faculty, examiners, mentors, and clinical supervisors across Rwanda and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Academic Programs & Learners (2023–2024)

Program	Number of Learners	Scholarship Coverage
MBBS	121	100%
MSc in Global Health Delivery	29	100%
Nursing Education (via CNM)	80	Partial support

Community Engagement

Program / Initiative	Output / Reach	
Butaro Scholars Program	120+ rural primary students supported with ongoing educational aid	
Secondary STEM Tutoring (3 schools)	Science and math support in local secondary schools	
Annual Science Day & Community Laboratories	Public science learning day and lab demonstrations for youth & families	



Community Educator Training	249 community health educators trained
COSECSA Surgical Education Series	3,982 learners across 67 countries participated in live/virtual sessions
Global Case-Based Education (GCBE) Field School	Multi-day immersion in social medicine and community health
Jigger's Disease Awareness Campaign – Butaro	Community mobilization and prevention campaign
One Health Art Competition – GS Runaba	Youth-led art contest on zoonoses and environment
African Diabetes Workshop at UGHE	Health professionals trained in chronic disease prevention
Palliative Care Initiative — Burera & Gasabo	Multi-level community engagement and service training

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Indicator	2023-2024 Outcome
Students with full scholarships	100%
Gender parity across programs	~50/50
Community educators trained	249
External faculty trained	122
High school students reached	300+
Education research studies initiated	5
Digital learning sessions delivered	65+

Recognition & Policy Engagement

UGHE is recognized nationally and globally for its contributions to equitable education:

- **Rwanda Higher Education Council (HEC):** Endorses UGHE programs as part of national HRH and digital transformation strategies.
- **Ministry of Health:** Collaborates on curriculum standards, licensure reform, and community-based education.
- RMDC: Endorses UGHE's Faculty Development programs and CPD delivery.
- **COSECSA**: Academic host for global surgical webinars and examiner capacity building.
- Planetary Health Alliance & AFROHUN: UGHE serves as a regional hub for education in planetary health and One Health.





Founding members of Butaro Scholars Program at its launch in November 2023.



Water, sanitation, and hygiene findings dissemination and community health education. Mubuga cell office, attendees from 27 villages.





CEGS-COSECSA Surgical Education Series (in collaboration with COSECSA) as part of our community service-19 lectures, 3,982 attendees from 67 countries including Rwanda since 2022-2024. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-07059-0



Community Engagement in Global Surgery Field School- with social medicine components in May 2024, Involved connections with the community via community visits to 2 surgical patients





Baselining of surgical readiness at 3 district facilities in Rwanda as part of community service and support to the hospitals in 2024





Building capacity among health professionals and data modelers to apply spatial and spatio-temporal analytical methods in public health



Exemplars: Jigger's Disease awareness in Rusumo Butaro, August 31, 2024

SOHIC conducted Jigger's Disease awareness in Rusumo, Butaro. It was done after Umuganda, in collaboration with the UGHE Community Health and Social Medicine Department, to educate the community about Jigger's disease.



Exemplars: One Health Art Competition in GS. Runaba, November 16, 2024



SOHIC organized an art competition at G.S Runaba where students presented what One Health means to them through arts. This included poems, crafts, sketches, and drawings.



SDG 5: Gender Equality

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE is deeply committed to advancing gender equity across all domains of health education, research, and leadership. As a women-led institution—with senior leadership, academic chairs, and program directors who are women—UGHE intentionally creates equitable pathways for women and girls in education, employment, and decision—making. This commitment is embedded in UGHE's admissions policies, curricular design, leadership development tracks, research priorities, and community engagement.

UGHE's actions align with the following SDG 5 targets:

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Target Area	UGHE Contributions & Outcomes	
End all forms of discrimination against women and girls	Gender-sensitive policies integrated into student admissions, faculty/staff recruitment, anti-harassment protocols, and academic support systems.	
Ensure full and effective participation and equal leadership opportunities	60% of UGHE leadership and 50% of students are women; female students serve in top academic, clinical, and governance roles.	
Enhance use of technology to empower women and girls	Digital learning platforms enable remote access to education for women in rural, displaced, and underserved communities.	
Menstrual Health & SRHR Education	Over 600 girls trained in menstrual pad production and SRHR skills; more than 5,000 girls sensitized on menstrual dignity and reproductive health.	
Women's Economic Empowerment	15 sewing machines provided to women-led cooperatives to generate income and support health initiatives.	
Leadership in Scholarship	Women in UGHE benefit from targeted scholarships and mentorship programs supporting academic excellence and leadership development.	
Cross-cutting Impact	UGHE improves health, education, dignity, and income outcomes for women and girls across campus, curriculum, and community outreach.	

Gender Parity in Education

UGHE prioritizes equitable access to education and leadership pathways through:

- Inclusive Admissions: Actively recruiting women from underrepresented regions, low-income backgrounds, and conflict-affected contexts.
- 100% Tuition Support: Ensuring that women are not excluded due to financial barriers.



- On-Campus Safety & Dignity Infrastructure:
 - Gender-responsive housing
 - · Sexual harassment reporting mechanisms
 - Onsite psychosocial and counseling services

Recognition, Partnerships, and Policy Alignment

- National Gender Policy Alignment: UGHE's equity measures mirror Rwanda's gender mainstreaming mandates.
- Planetary Health Report Card (2023–2024): UGHE scored high in the gender equity domain—one of only two institutions in Africa ranked.

Exemplars: Community-Centered Events

March 2024 – International Women's Day Celebrations with Butaro teen mothers and local gov't representatives as guests of honor. The guests were invited to a panel to share food and drinks, and the event concluded with a dance party. (*link*)



Photo: Dr. Akiiki, chair for the Godley-St. Goar Department of Community Health and Social Medicine interacting with teen mothers at the Butaro Health Center.

SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation

UGHE's Commitment:

At UGHE access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is not only a facility standard—it is a foundational right embedded in our campus design, health education curricula, and community engagement. As a rural-based academic institution committed to social justice and public health, UGHE recognizes that equitable access to WASH services is critical to achieving health equity, gender dignity, and sustainable



development. UGHE's institutional operations, student training, and community outreach directly align with SDG 6 Targets and national WASH priorities.

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Indicator	Value
Clean water access for UGHE students and staff	100%
Toilets on campus (gender-inclusive and disability-accessible)	90+
Rainwater harvested annually (Butaro Campus)	30,000+ liters
Greywater reused for irrigation	Yes
Water safety testing frequency	Monthly
Households reached via WASH awareness campaigns	2,000+
Schoolchildren reached through hygiene education	450+
Participants in Butaro WASH leadership training workshop	173
Villages reached through Mubuga water hygiene outreach	27
Sanitation and WASH topics integrated into school curriculum	Yes
Community sanitation campaigns through Umuganda	Ongoing (monthly)





Exemplars: Supporting the Establishment of Community-Based Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services in Burera District in Collaboration with the CRS Team.

In collaboration with the CRS (Catholic Relief Services) team, we supported the establishment of community-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) services in Burera District to promote the holistic growth and well-being of children under five. This initiative focused on integrating key components of ECD, including nutrition education and screening, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) promotion, responsive caregiving, and positive parenting practices. Activities included training community health workers and caregivers on age-appropriate stimulation, meal preparation using locally available nutritious foods, and hygiene practices such as handwashing and safe water use. Parenting sessions emphasized nurturing relationships, emotional support, and consistent engagement in children's learning and play. The program also facilitated the setup of child-friendly spaces in selected communities, where children could



benefit from early learning activities while parents received ongoing guidance and support. This multi-sectoral approach aimed to empower families, improve child health and development outcomes, and strengthen community systems for sustainable ECD service delivery in Burera District.



BMS team providing clean drinking water to communities in Butaro

SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE's approach to campus design and operations reflects a deep institutional commitment to environmental sustainability and energy equity. The university is situated in rural Butaro—a setting that presents significant infrastructure challenges—yet it has become a national model for energy-conscious academic development. Through strategic investment in renewable energy, reduced reliance on fossil fuels, and sustainability education embedded in curriculum and operations, UGHE contributes directly to SDG 7 targets.

Indicator	Value/Description
Primary electricity source	Hydroelectric (national grid)
Backup fossil fuel use	Minimal diesel use (<5% energy mix)
Campus building design energy optimization	Passive heating/cooling integrated
Planning for adding Renewable energy capacity added in 2025	15% increase in solar power coverage
Student/staff energy conservation orientation sessions	Conducted each semester



SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE actively contributes to building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economic systems through rural employment, social enterprise development, local procurement, and workforce training. Its campus in Butaro has become a rural economic engine—not only generating jobs but also enhancing livelihoods and advancing national goals.

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Indicator	Value
Community members employed through UGHE (staff/co-ops)	366
Entrepreneurs trained through UGHE-led programs	128
New jobs created through entrepreneurship support	154
Structured work-study positions for students	Available and funded equitably
Female representation in UGHE workforce	50%+
Local procurement initiatives supporting rural businesses	Active (food, construction, supplies)
Living wage standards for all UGHE-employed workers	Met

SDG 9: Innovation & Infrastructure

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE invests in resilient infrastructure and health innovation ecosystems that strengthen human capital, digital connectivity, and local research capacity in underserved regions. The Butaro campus, designed as a low-environmental-impact academic health science hub, anchors regional health and education systems through sustainable buildings, digital technologies, and community-linked laboratories.

Indicator	Value / Description
Solar & hydroelectric energy powering Butaro campus	Yes (Primary source, minimal generator usage)
Smart classrooms & simulation labs	12+ across health professions education programs
Faculty trained in digital pedagogy & simulation-based teaching	85+ trained in 2023–2024
Innovation-focused academic courses offered	4 (Digital Health, Planetary Health, Simulation & Technology in Teaching)
Student/faculty innovation projects funded	24 funded internally and externally
National & regional innovation partnerships formed	8+ (Africa CDC, HealthTech Hub, Stanford, AfroCloud, etc.)



Community science infrastructure (labs, youth events)	Active in 3 districts with Science Day & local laboratory setups
Stanford Biodesign Fellowship	UGHE faculty selected as regional fellows
Simulation Center (UGHE Butaro)	Recognized as one of the most advanced in East Africa

Exemplars: Spin-Off Innovation Ecosystem Impact: Innoheza Ltd

UGHE's innovation pipeline produced Innoheza Ltd, an early-stage medical technology company focused on developing life-saving maternal health devices for East Africa. Innoheza originated from the East Africa Biodesign (EAB) Fellowship. Built through need-driven innovation principles and human-centered design, Innoheza addresses the urgent burden of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) a leading cause of maternal mortality in Africa. The company is currently transitioning from functional prototype development to production and regulatory pathways, demonstrating a successful model of university-to-industry translation, and is recruiting specialized talent to support commercialization and strategic growth.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE was founded with the explicit mission of reversing global health inequities and training the next generation of health leaders from underserved communities. In alignment with SDG 10, UGHE operationalizes equity through inclusive admissions, targeted scholarships, disability access, refugee inclusion, and rural development. UGHE not only empowers individuals from vulnerable backgrounds but also works to dismantle systemic barriers through structural reforms in education, employment, and service delivery.

Indicator	2023-2024 Outcome	
Scholarships awarded to low-income and refugee students	96% of students receiving full or partial scholarships	
Mental health & wellbeing support	89 students accessed counseling and psychosocial services	
Secondary school students reached via free tutoring	300+ learners from underserved rural schools	
Community educators trained in inclusive teaching	249 trained as community-based faculty partners	
Local jobs created & sustained	366+ rural community members employed across campus operations and services	
Income growth for rural households	Average income increased 275% (\$16 🛭 \$60) month) among employees	
Employees with savings post- employment	69% rural staff now maintaining savings (0% baseline)	



	I	
Secure employment & fair contracts	Majority of staff on renewable, multi-year contracts with benefits (per HR policy)	
Gender-inclusive workforce development	Targeted recruitment for women and youth; cooperatives supported with skills and tools	
Anti-discrimination & equity policies enforced	UGHE maintains policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, race, disability, nationality, religion or socioeconomic status; annual training and reporting mechanisms active	
Safeguarding, harassment prevention & reporting systems	Zero-tolerance policies; confidential reporting channels; student & staff orientation delivered annually	
Female empowerment & inclusive learning	5,000+ women and girls engaged in Gender and Sexual Reproductive Helath programs; 600 trained in pad making; 15 sewing machines distributed	
Inclusive campus & disability support	Accessible campus infrastructure; individual accommodations provided per student/staff needs; disability-inclusion support integrated	



Research Team Activities in Ngoma District: Assessing Factors Affecting the Uptake of Social and Economic Services Among Persons with Disabilities.



SDG 11: Sustainable Communities

UGHE's Commitment:

Through active participation in Rwanda's monthly Umuganda program and continuous community engagement, UGHE students and faculty support local environmental stewardship, including soil erosion control, waste management, and zoonoses education within neighboring communities (5)

- Monthly Umuganda participation roads, housing, gardens, elder support
- Community resource sharing & public access to campus learning events
- · Housing cluster development supports equitable campus life



UGHE alongside community members in Kamiranzovu Marshland August 2024 Umuganda. Photo by Communications

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption

UGHE's Commitment:

Though SDG 11 emphasizes urban sustainability, UGHE uniquely contributes by transforming rural settings—specifically in Burera District, Rwanda—into models of inclusive and resilient development. As the only higher education institution embedded in this remote rural area, UGHE acts as a catalyst for regional transformation, integrating sustainability in campus design, housing, health systems strengthening, heritage preservation, and participatory planning. UGHE's vision of "equity in health begins with equity in education" extends to equitable living environments, sustainable community engagement, and dignified rural futures. UGHE demonstrates how a university can



foster sustainable, inclusive growth beyond cities.

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Indicator	2023-2024 Outcome
Staff & faculty housing units constructed	37 units on Butaro campus
Rainwater harvested for community use	30,000+ liters annually
Public toilets maintained (gender/disability-inclusive)	90+ units
Trees planted on campus and in local villages	2,300+
Community events hosted on campus	45+
Villages reached via participatory planning workshops	12 in Burera District
Community members accessing UGHE green/public spaces	>1,000 annually
WASH awareness campaigns held in nearby communities	27 villages reached
Art/cultural events co-organized with local schools	4 (incl. One Health & Anti-Jiggers Campaign)

SDG 13: Climate Action

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE integrates climate action as a core pillar of its educational model, research agenda, and community engagement mandate. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change on low-resource settings, UGHE leverages its rural, off-grid campus as a living laboratory for sustainability and climate resilience. Through its Planetary Health Curriculum, operational policies, student-led activism, and rural outreach, UGHE demonstrates a multi-layered commitment to SDG 13.

Indicator	Value / Description
Climate & planetary health integrated across all degree programs	Yes
Student-led climate debates & advocacy events	5+
Environmental health comic books distributed in hospitals	1,000+
Community climate-health education sessions	15+
Rainwater harvested annually (Butaro campus)	30,000+ liters
Greywater reused for irrigation	Yes
Climate-focused youth competitions	One Health Art & Debate Competitions



WASH + climate-sensitive	disease	Included	in	school	outreach	and
education (schisto, AMR, RVF)	community health trainings					
Environmental stewardship in monthly Land care, waste cleanup, erosion control			ontrol			
Umuganda events	in 3+ rural	sect	ors			

SDG 14 & 15: Life Below Water & on Land

UGHE's Commitment:

While UGHE is based in a landlocked country, it actively contributes to the protection and restoration of local aquatic ecosystems (SDG 14) and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) through its education, research, infrastructure planning, and community engagement initiatives. UGHE's approach is deeply rooted in planetary health principles that prioritize biodiversity, ecosystem stewardship, and the interdependence between environmental and human health.

Impact Metrics (2023–2024)

Indicator	Value / Description
Rainwater harvested annually	30,000+ liters
Trees planted for reforestation and agroecological restoration	1,500+ native and fruit-bearing trees planted
Freshwater sanitation outreach	2,000+ households in Burera & surrounding areas
Villages engaged in Umuganda environmental clean-up	25+
Community climate + biodiversity education sessions	12+ events across schools and villages
Organic waste composting implemented	Yes (central campus system, school gardens)
Teaching on safe water storage & contamination prevention	Delivered in schools and community WASH campaigns
School One Health demonstrations on animal-human-environment safety	Implemented in 3 schools with 600+ students and teachers engaged

SDG 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE advances SDG 16 through its commitment to building strong, equitable, and transparent systems—within its institution and in its partnerships with government, academia, and civil society.

Key Impact Areas (2023-2024)

Indicator / Initia-	Description
tive	



Joint Governance with Local Leaders	UGHE co-develops strategic initiatives and implementation plans with local district officials, village leaders, and community representatives to ensure alignment with local needs and promote shared ownership.
Equity and Ethics Integrated into Curriculum	All degree programs at UGHE embed ethics, health equity, social justice, and anti-corruption education into their core courses. This creates health professionals prepared to challenge systemic injustices.
Governance & Transparency	UGHE upholds international standards in governance, with oversight from an independent Board, inclusive strategic planning, annual financial audits, and transparent reporting.
Academic Integrity & Ethics	Comprehensive training in research ethics, responsible conduct of research, and institutional review board oversight for all human subject research.
Access to Justice via Education	Curriculum includes modules on health law, medical ethics, human rights, and legal frameworks related to health, creating future leaders in justice-centered health reform.
Peacebuilding Research & Teaching	Faculty and students engage in applied research on health system strengthening in post-conflict settings and the role of education in promoting social cohesion.
Safeguarding & Whistleblower Protection	Strong internal policies ensure zero tolerance for harassment, abuse, or corruption, with anonymous reporting and survivorcentered response systems.

Exemplars: Rwanda 912 Musanze Community Service:

On 3 August, 2023, We brought together stakeholders and launched the Injured Persons Community Group. The launch of the RIGHT Call rural Community Engagement Initiative group (called the Injured Persons Community Group) was achieved at a stakeholder's community engagement meeting in Musanze on Friday the 3rd of August 2023 with 33 participants in attendance. These included National Committee of People with Disability representatives, trauma patients, Motor Cyclist Association Representatives, bicycle riders representatives, community leaders, community based health insurance officer, Musanze District Health Unit community health officers, a Nurse, Ruhengeri Hospital Surgeon, a Clinical Director, CHW Supervisor, Health Centre leads, Service d'Aide Médicale d'Urgence representative etc. The Musanze District Police were also invited. The meeting was a 1-day workshop and inauguration that involved an introduction to the NIHR RIGHT Call project using visual aids, pictorial flyers interpreted into Kinyarwanda for adequate comprehension, and a call for members to form the core CEI group. A gender balanced, 15 person CEI Group (Injured Persons Community Group) was subsequently formed for the rural district. They will meet once in 6 months.







SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

UGHE's Commitment:

UGHE recognizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved in isolation. Our commitment to SDG 17 reflects a deeply rooted belief in collaboration, mutual accountability, and transformative partnerships that extend across sectors, disciplines, and borders. UGHE acts as a catalytic hub, convening governments, NGOs, academia, local communities, and global networks to accelerate progress on shared goals.

















































































































Key Impact Areas (2023-2024)

Category	Description
Strategic Government Partnerships	Strong collaboration with the Government of Rwanda supports national health workforce strategies, education reform, and district-level planning. UGHE contributes to implementation of Vision 2050, NST-2, HSSP V, and the National Health Workforce 4x4 Reform.
Global Academic Partnerships	Longstanding partnerships with global institutions advance academic excellence, joint research, faculty development, and digital learning innovation.
Multilateral & UN Agency Engagement	Ongoing collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and participation in regional policy dialogue place UGHE at the heart of global education reform.



NGO & Implementation Partners	Partners such as Partners In Health (PIH) and WaterAid co-deliver public health programming, WASH initiatives, and integrated community development in Burera and beyond.
Private & Philanthropic Sector	Collaborations with Inkomoko, Rotary Club, and international donors support social entrepreneurship training, community education, and small business resilience in rural economies.
Community- Based Partnerships	Local Community Health Workers (CHWs), cooperatives, and district-level stakeholders co-design and deliver education, outreach, and research activities.
Veterinary & One Health Networks	Work with Veterinarians Without Borders and Rwandan veterinary schools enhances One Health and planetary health efforts across human-animal-environment intersections.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

UGHE uses structured MEL frameworks to track impact:

- Community participation logs
- Beneficiary surveys
- Employment & wage tracking
- Referral tracking with Butaro Hospital
- Academic performance dashboards
- Gender & equity indicators

Priorities for 2025

Priority	Action
Solar Expansion	Expand solar capacity and battery storage
Sustainability Metrics	Establish measurable annual reporting indicators
Waste Reduction	Increase recycling capacity; reduce plastic consumption
Green Procurement	Formal Sustainable Procurement Policy
Research Growth	Expand African climate-health research consortium

Conclusion

UGHE demonstrates policy-driven, community-verified, and equity-centered sustainability impact that:

- Expands rural access to world-class education
- Reduces poverty and gender inequity
- Strengthens health systems and climate resilience
- Builds regional innovation ecosystems
- Operates with transparency, accountability, and long-term community partnership



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