

MATERNAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

ACTION & IMPACT REPORT

For more than a decade, Partners In Health and Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health have worked side by side to strengthen maternal care at Koidu Government Hospital (KGH) in Kono District. This partnership took a bold step forward in 2017, as the vision for the Paul E. Farmer Maternal Center of Excellence (MCOE) came to

life. Today, this state-of-the-art facility and its training programs stand as powerful proof that, with the right investment and sustained commitment, most maternal deaths are preventable—raising the standard of maternal health in Sierra Leone, ensuring that every mother and baby has access to safe, dignified, and high-quality care.

FIRST BIRTH AT MCOE

On February 14, 2026—the first day the MCOE at KGH opened to patients—17-year-old Fanta Jimmy arrived in urgent need of care. After evaluation, the clinical team determined she was experiencing severe pre-eclampsia and that her baby was in distress. An emergency cesarean section was immediately prioritized for her.

At 1:21 p.m., Jimmy delivered a premature baby girl weighing 1.72 kilograms and measuring 41 centimeters—or 3.8 pounds and

16 inches—the first baby born at the MCOE.

Her daughter was transferred to the inborn neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for specialized support. Today, she is stable, gaining strength, and feeding eagerly.

As Jimmy recovers in the mother's dormitory, close to her daughter and supported by her own mother, Yei, their journey reflects the profound and lasting impact of your generosity: safe deliveries, expert care, and brighter, healthier beginnings for families.



On February 14 at 1:21 p.m., the first baby was born at the MCOE via C-section. Photo by Caitlin Kleiboer / PIH

A Center Comes to Life

• **READY FOR CARE:** Before opening, all MCOE clinicians completed extensive, hands-on training in areas from electronic medical records to biomedical equipment. They practiced operating, troubleshooting, and maintaining every machine. Today, with 93% Sierra Leonean clinical staff, the center is prepared to deliver skilled, compassionate, community-centered care.

• **A TRANSFORMATIVE BEGINNING:** After years of preparation, the MCOE is now a hub for lifesaving care. In its first 24 hours, 27 patients were admitted and 13 babies were born. Within one week, 110 patients were

triaged, 72 babies delivered, and 23 babies cared for in the NICU—demonstrating its transformative impact on maternal and newborn health.

• **SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE:** Providing high-quality care for every woman and baby each year will require sustained investment and ongoing training for Sierra Leone's next generation of doctors, nurses, and midwives. Construction is underway for a nearby, dedicated training site and dormitory to support continuous learning, professional development, and future accreditation as a rural teaching hospital.

Your Impact

Thanks to our remarkable partners, the MCOE has been transformed from a dream for families in Sierra Leone into healing spaces, designed with women's safety and dignity at its core.

- **CAPACITY TO CARE:** The innovative facility includes 120 inpatient beds, including 39 NICU beds and 17 dormitory beds for extended stays, and three operating theaters. It also houses the country's first NICU and first piped bedside oxygen system outside Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown—transforming maternal and newborn care nationwide.
- **LIFE-SAVING UPGRADES:** Critical infrastructure upgrades, including on-site clean water systems for patients to bathe and staff to wash medical supplies, as well as a new electrical system connected to the

national grid, with backup generators and voltage regulators, strengthen infection prevention and ensure uninterrupted care.

- **BEYOND MEDICINE:** At PIH facilities, patients receive comprehensive support—from food and transportation to housing and education. At KGH, all patients now receive three nutritious meals per day, while communal kitchens also serve as hubs for nutritional education led by nurses and nutritionists. The facility also allows for extended stays, offering kangaroo mother care spaces that strengthen mother-infant bonding.



The late Dr. Paul Farmer (right) helps lay the first bricks at the MCOE groundbreaking ceremony in 2021. Photo by Maya Brownstein / PIH



Augusta Thomas' baby boy was delivered via C-section on the opening day of the MCOE. Photo by Sean Andrew Bangura / PIH

2017

Planning for the MCOE began at KGH—once short on power and supplies, now equipped with 24/7 electricity, stocked pharmacies, and skilled staff.

2021

Construction began with a groundbreaking ceremony and a promise of transforming maternal health, building a center where mothers and newborns would receive the care and future they deserve.

2025

Construction of the MCOE was completed for inpatient care, and the team prepared the new spaces and began their training.

2026

The MCOE opened its doors to patients and began expanding lifesaving services and strengthening Sierra Leone's maternal health system for generations.

UNIVERSITY OF GLOBAL HEALTH EQUITY

ACTION & IMPACT REPORT

The University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), based in Butaro, Rwanda, was launched in 2015 under the visionary leadership of the late PIH Co-founder Dr. Paul Farmer, and has become a leading academic institution with support from our incredible community of partners and donors like you. As an extension of PIH's mission, UGHE

is transforming the way health care professionals are trained, how systems are strengthened, and how policies are shaped, ensuring that quality care is a right, not a privilege. Together, UGHE and PIH are building a model where education, care, and equity come together to shape health systems for generations to come.



Marlene Muhongerwa is one of 30 future health care leaders who graduated from UGHE with medical degrees on Jan. 25, 2026. Photo courtesy of UGHE

MEET DR. MARLENE MUHONGERWA

With your support, UGHE is working to advance health equity in many ways—one being through empowering women in medicine. Dr. Marlene Muhongerwa—who graduated with a dual degree in medicine and a Master of Global Health Delivery—successfully led a cesarean section at PIH-supported Butaro Level II Teaching Hospital, the primary site of clinical practice for UGHE students.

“My first feeling was gratitude, to my UGHE mentors for trusting me, and to my patient for allowing me to

be part of such a significant moment in her life,” she said.

During this procedure, the surgical team was entirely women-led, including a dedicated nursing staff, the anesthesia team, fellow assistants, and her mentor and UGHE faculty member, Dr. Birhanu Abera.

“Being part of a female-dominated surgical team was inspiring,” Dr. Muhongerwa shared. “In a field traditionally led by men, it showed that women not only belong in surgery, but can thrive as leaders, decision-makers, and experts.”

Training Future Health Leaders

Since 2014, your accompaniment has helped UGHE grow alongside its students. A top university in sub-Saharan Africa and rooted in PIH's values, UGHE is home to future health professionals who are motivated to serve marginalized communities.

- **TOP-RANKING UNIVERSITY:** In 2025, UGHE was ranked 4th out of 129 universities in sub-Saharan Africa by Times Higher Education, which assesses the impact of universities in addressing the continent's challenges.
- **DUAL-DEGREE MILESTONE:** In January 2026, 30 medical doctors graduated from UGHE's inaugural dual degree Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) - Master of Science in Global Health Delivery (MGHD) program. With this new dual-degree, MBBS/MGHD

graduates are emerging not only as clinicians but as global health leaders.

- **PROGRAM GROWTH:** In February 2026, UGHE announced the launch of its first postgraduate residency program in General Surgery, an important milestone in strengthening Africa's surgical workforce. The inaugural cohort includes five residents from Rwanda, including three graduates of the first MBBS/MGHD class, reflecting the strength of UGHE's educational pathways.

Your Impact

The support of our partners and donors like you has made UGHE a powerful model for health education centered on equity. Here are some exciting feats we accomplished together:

- **CELEBRATING A DECADE:** In 2025, UGHE celebrated 10 years of redefining health education with equity intertwined in every lesson. Over the past decade, your support has helped 903 students who have been enrolled at UGHE, including its 408 graduates who will shape the future of global health.
- **A UNIFYING INSTITUTION:** In March 2025, the Advancing Medical Education in Africa Conference—hosted by the Ministry of Health in Rwanda and UGHE—marked the official launch of the Consortium of Medical Schools in Africa (COMS-A). With UGHE as

its institutional home, COMS-A is a first-of-its-kind, inclusive, and continent-wide platform for health education, committed to ensuring that African-led solutions drive health system transformation for generations to come.

- **TOP SCIENTISTS:** UGHE’s research-driven culture received recognition last year when five scientists linked to UGHE were named in the Stanford-Elsevier list of the world’s top 2% of scientists. This list is one of the most-watched snapshots of scientific influence and highlights the effectiveness of UGHE’s hands-on approach to education.

766

leaders across 61 countries trained in UGHE executive education since 2016

Your support helps leaders learn to address health equity challenges worldwide.

Photo courtesy of UGHE



330

master's-level global health professionals have graduated since 2015

UGHE is training future health care leaders who pair science with solidarity.

Photo courtesy of UGHE

ADVOCACY

ACTION & IMPACT REPORT

To build sustainable health systems, PIH—alongside strong networks of partners and supporters like you—advocates every day, both in the halls of power and by the bedside, to advance global health equity. We advocate for the populations we serve, generating more resources or changing policy for the issues most important to those

communities. Historically, PIH programs on the ground have influenced policy by example. Today, PIH has a dedicated advocacy team with a strong network of grass-roots supporters—informed by evidence from our lived experience working side-by-side in global communities to influence policy and advance global health equity.

PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Kavita Doobay, a summer intern with PIH Engage, a grassroots network of volunteers, helped plan and execute Engage's annual Training Institute (TI) last year. This event brings together hundreds of Engage leaders from across the country for a weekend of education and community building, with a day spent advocating to congresspeople on Capitol Hill.

"[2024's TI] was my introduction to organizing and the first time in my life that I found myself in community with people who were so adamant

in their belief that our collective actions could truly shape a fairer and more just world," Doobay said.

Throughout the event last year, Doobay found renewed energy and hope for the future in each presentation and conversation, feeling Engage's collective power.

"That's the role that TI and Engage play for us: they're reminders that we are not alone," she shared.

"That we are part of something bigger: a movement that listens, stays, and fights together...refusing to turn away."



Kavita Doobay, PIH Engage intern, advocates for global health funding in a meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Photo by Kathrine Kuhlmann / PIH

Advocacy in Action

Advocacy is a powerful tool PIH uses to advance health care as a human right. Alongside the efforts of hundreds of grassroots advocates like you, our advocacy team meets with local government leaders to share lessons, stories, and results from PIH's work around the world.

• **HELPING END TUBERCULOSIS:** On April 9, 2025, PIH's advocacy team mobilized over 200 tuberculosis (TB) advocates, experts, and survivors at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., for one of the largest TB Hill Days. Organized by PIH, We Are TB, the TB Roundtable, and TBFighters, this annual advocacy day brought the fight against TB—and its ongoing toll—directly to Congress. The group attended 210 congressional meetings, a sixfold increase over the previous year, and continues to grow the movement to eliminate TB.

• **A POWERFUL LEGACY:** In July 2025, a coalition in congress announced the reintroduction of the Paul Farmer Memorial Resolution (PFMR), first introduced in 2022. This resolution aims to provide an ambitious roadmap toward global health equity and universal health coverage to prevent needless deaths in the future. The PFMR has been dubbed a "north star" for global health politics that can guide policy and practice for decades to come—a powerful and fitting legacy for PIH's Co-founder, the late Dr. Paul Farmer.

Your Impact

Members of the PIH community and supporters like you have been an essential component of our advocacy efforts. Here are a few examples of the transformative work we've accomplished together:

- **ON CAPITOL HILL:** Throughout the year, PIH Advocacy hosts Hill Days, at the Capitol in D.C., at state Capitols, and virtually, to connect advocates in the U.S. with their congressional offices. In 2025, Hill Days have led to over 500 meetings between constituents and lawmakers and staff to push for legislation and funding that advance health equity.
- **GLOBAL HEALTH FUNDING:** With consistent pressure through calls and emails from constituents like you, Congress passed a \$50 billion foreign aid spending package for 2026. With support from both sides of

the aisle, this bill signifies Congress's desire to continue providing significant funding to global health, despite the executive branch's divergence.

- **GRASSROOTS ADVOCATES:** Engage is a network of high schoolers, college students, and professionals across the U.S. that equip dedicated teams of volunteer community organizers who mobilize their regions in the fight for health equity. Last year, there were over 700 Engagers across 33 states—almost 300 of whom attended the annual TI in August. As part of TI, Engagers held over 170 meetings with congressional offices.



81,140
calls and emails sent
to Congress through
advocacy efforts

PIH provides resources and education that make reaching out to senators and representatives easy.

Photo by Jessey Dearing / PIH

1,350
advocates trained on
organizing legislative
engagement

With your support, PIH is training global health activists to advocate for legislation that advances health equity.

Photo by Kathrine Kuhlmann / PIH

