

**SOCIAL  
INNOVATION  
IN HEALTH  
INITIATIVE**

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

*Towards institutionalising  
social innovation in health*

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# SIHI GLOBAL NETWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2025



## SIHI Global Network Annual Report 2025: Towards Institutionalising Social Innovation in Health.

The Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) Network is supported by TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, co-sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, and WHO. TDR is able to conduct its work thanks to the commitment of and support from a variety of funders. For the full list of TDR donors, please see: <https://www.who.int/tdr/about/funding/en/>. TDR receives additional funding from Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, to support SIHI.

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# ABOUT SIHI

SIHI is a **vibrant country-led network** dedicated to **accelerating universal health coverage** through **social innovation research, community engagement**, and **social justice** in low- and middle-income countries.

The SIHI Network is made possible with the support of **TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases**, co-sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, and WHO.



## SIHI APPROACHES AND UNIQUE VALUE



Supporting bottom-up solutions to global and national health security challenges



Amplifying the impact of social innovations through research



Nurturing innovation ecosystems



Creating synergy across the global network of partners



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) Network continued to expand as a global community committed to advancing social innovation for health.

All hubs have contributed to SIHI's vision and mission in various significant ways, such as releasing publications centred on gender and health equity, convening stakeholders in local and national events, and building pathways and partnerships for innovation to be embedded into their institutions. Moreover, the network expanded into more countries and regions.

This report contains highlights across the network, showing deeper roots and growing branches towards SIHI's goal of mainstreaming social innovation within institutions and health systems.

# 2025 AT A GLANCE

4



Crowdsourcing Calls

15



Identified Innovations

10



Documented Innovation Case Studies

14



Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

2



General Publications

2



Practical/Implementation Guides

1



PhD-level Course on Social Innovation

2



Massive Open Online Courses

6



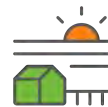
Fellowship and Training Programmes

1



International Conference

1



Community of Practice

10



Hub-Led Multistakeholder Events

4



Series of Webinars

14

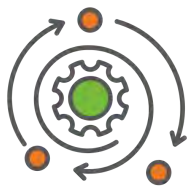


SIHI Hubs

3



New Hubs Onboarded



## RESEARCH

Amplifying the impact of social innovations through research

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Across regions, more tools and evidence were generated to support community-driven innovations.

Hubs conducted research and published the results in **14 peer-reviewed articles** and **5 major knowledge products**, with a strong emphasis on gender intersectionality, equity, and community health, and multi-country and cross-context research.

### Key publications:

- [BMJ Innovations Collection on Gender and Social Innovation](#), featuring pioneering research from our hubs in **Uganda, the Philippines, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**.
- [Social Innovation in Health: Lessons for Advancing Equity](#) by **SIHI LAC**, in collaboration with regional innovators and with the support of PAHO, featuring 17 community-driven experiences across Latin America.
- [South African Health Ecosystem Review](#) mapping the social innovation landscape across the nation, put together by **SIHI South Africa**.

### Practical guides:

- A [Community Skin Health Implementation Guide](#) released by **SIHI Philippines** to support local government units in managing neglected tropical diseases.
- Gender Assessment and Monitoring Guide developed by **SIHI Uganda**, now piloted at **SIHI Nigeria**, to integrate gender in social innovation for health.



Social innovations were also documented through comprehensive case studies.

This year, **10 research case studies** were reviewed and approved and are in the process of being published. These innovations highlight localised, community-based approaches to sustainable care, including task shifting, digital tools, innovative financing, and economic empowerment, all grounded in a whole-person approach.

Findings across various research projects were also disseminated through **oral/poster presentations**.

These multidisciplinary research efforts highlight a growing body of evidence that social innovation is not peripheral but essential to building responsive and inclusive health systems. They also strengthen SIHI's advocacy by translating local experiences into credible, policy-relevant insights, elevating social innovation as a key approach and informing partners and decision-makers across contexts.



## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Supporting bottom-up solutions to global and national health security challenges

**In 2025, SIHI hubs offered a wide range of learning and capacity strengthening opportunities.**

SIHI was able to reach diverse audiences—from PhD candidates and early-career researchers to community innovators and even high school students—strengthening the pipeline of actors driving social innovation in health.

### **Key learning initiatives:**

- A PhD-level course on **Social innovation in theory and practice** led by **SIHI Sweden** at Uppsala University, advancing academic grounding in the field
- TDR Massive Open Online Courses co-organised by the SIHI Hubs:
  - Community engagement and implementation research, co-led by **SIHI Indonesia**, which reached 1,453 participants across 70+ countries and issued 592 certificates
  - Implementation Research Massive Open Online Course (IR-MOOC) in Spanish, co-led by **SIHI LAC**, reaching over 1,300 participants in the region





SIHI Kuwait, 2025

Beyond formal courses, hubs equipped innovators with practical skills in implementation, research, and scaling solutions.

**Fellowships and mentorship:**

- **SIHI Uganda** completed its 2024-2025 cohort of the Makerere University Social Innovation in Health Fellowship Program; 60 fellows have completed the six-month program to date.
- **SIHI Philippines** provided mentorship and training for 10 innovators focused on implementation research and innovation strengthening.



SIHI LAC, 2025

**Youth engagement:**

- **SIHI Kuwait's WYN Academy** Summer Internship introduced high school students to clinical exposure and social innovation training.
- **SIHI Latin America and the Caribbean** launched a partnership with the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente (Cali, Colombia) to build student capacities through its Social Innovation Lab.



### ***Training programmes and innovation challenges:***

- **SIHI South Africa** graduated 75 participants from entrepreneurship bootcamps addressing primary healthcare challenges.
- **SIHI India (DERBI)** co-hosted a national hackathon engaging over 100 innovators, public health professionals, and mentors.
- **SIHI China's** Grant-o-thon 2025 attracted over 3,000 registrations, supporting early-career researchers in grant writing.

Complementing these efforts, **new financing mechanisms for innovation** are beginning to emerge. In **SIHI Uganda**, a social innovation small-grants scheme supported by the Swedish Embassy provided seven implementation grants in 2025 (approx. USD 30,000 each), enabling innovators to move from ideas to action.

Together, these initiatives reflect SIHI's commitment to ensuring that individuals across contexts are equipped to design, implement, and scale solutions that respond to local and global health challenges.

SIHI's learning and capacity-strengthening efforts embedded social innovation within academic and institutional systems, strengthening uptake, collaboration, and its application at scale across health systems.



# ADVOCATING AND CONVENING

Creating synergy across the global network of partners

Throughout the network, SIHI hubs strengthened their role as conveners.

SIHI brought together policymakers, communities, researchers, and practitioners to co-create solutions and exchange knowledge across contexts.

## Convenings

Through an **international conference**, **10 hub-led multistakeholder fora**, **4 webinar series**, and a **Community of Practice**, the network created spaces for collaboration among policymakers, communities, researchers, and practitioners.

Platforms for convening occurred in both physical and virtual spaces, including:

- The SIHI Community of Practice in **Uganda**, which convened a regional multidisciplinary network for innovators and policymakers, with over 200 active participants.
- The **3rd SIHI Sweden International Conference**, which brought together 60 participants from 11 countries to discuss advancing equity in social innovation in health.



### Webinar Series

Multiple webinar series were run across the network at different time zones: **SIHI Talks** (SIHI Global); SIHICOP monthly webinars (**SIHI Uganda**); **Cafe Virtual** (SIHI LAC and SIHI Honduras); **Let's Talk Social Innovation in Health** (SIHI Malawi and SIHI Rwanda).

### Cross-hub Collaboration

In-person cross-hub convenings were also explored in 2025. **SIHI Uganda's** Dr. Phyllis Awor and the **SIHI Nigeria** team connected to strengthen collaboration between the two hubs. **SIHI Indonesia** staff engaged with TDR's Anna Thorson in Indonesia, exploring the hub's ongoing work and opportunities for future collaboration.



### Crowdsourcing Initiatives

Crowdsourcing initiatives in 2025 surfaced ideas aligned with national and local priorities and highlighted innovations with strong potential for impact. **Four calls** were conducted, recognising **15 innovations** from a large pool of submissions:

- Four finalists selected at **SIHI China's** global youth co-creation call
- Six finalists selected at **SIHI Nigeria's** National Crowdsourcing Call with the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology
- Five finalists selected at **SIHI Malawi's** Call for Ideas within the areas of surgical intervention and maternal and neonatal health
- **SIHI Uganda** launched a call for innovations targeting the country's Eastern Region

## Global Conferences and Presentations

SIHI hubs were represented in conferences across the globe.

Through these platforms, SIHI actively bridges local action with global dialogue, thus creating synergy across partners.



SIHI China youth co-creation participatory workshop in **Montreal, Canada**.



SIHI Nigeria at the WHO TDR Participatory Designation in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**.



SIHI LAC at the Global Development Conference 2025 in **France**.



SIHI Nigeria at the EDCTP Forum in **Kigali, Rwanda**.



SIHI Philippines at TUFH 2025 in **Philadelphia, USA**.



SIHI Malawi at the 74th ASTMH Annual Meeting in **Canada**.



SIHI Indonesia at the STRIPE Sustainability Workshop in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.



SIHI South Africa at the Afyafest Nairobi Health Ventures Hackathon in **Nairobi, Kenya**.



SIHI Philippines, 2025

Together, **these advocacy and convening efforts strengthened cross-sector and cross-regional partnerships**, deepened knowledge exchange, and elevated locally driven innovations within both policy and global dialogues.

By creating inclusive platforms for co-creation among policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and communities, **SIHI helped translate ideas into actionable solutions** while reinforcing its influence on practice and policy.

These initiatives also supported the uptake, visibility, and scaling of social innovations, **further positioning SIHI as a key connector** between local experiences and global health systems transformation.



# SUSTAINABILITY

Nurturing innovation ecosystems

**This year, the network grew both in scale and depth.**

Now with **14 active hubs** and **three new institutions joining**, SIHI expanded into new regions, including its first hub in the Middle East.

- **SIHI Kuwait at WYN Academy** [officially launched on April 16, 2025, at the Sanctuary Business Club](#). The hub focuses on healthcare education and regional partnerships.
- Joining the SIHI Network are the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, IHMR University in Jaipur, India, and the Gillings School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, whose formal launches are scheduled in early 2026.

At the same time, existing hubs strengthened their foothold within universities.

- **SIHI Malawi** embedded the hub as a flagship programme within the Department of Research and Innovation at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, supported by the university's establishment of a Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- The **University of the Philippines Manila** National Institutes of Health Advisory Board approved the proposal for the Institute of Social Innovation in Health, a major step in [institutionalising SIHI Philippines within the university](#).



# SIHI NETWORK HUB EXPANSION

SOCIAL  
INNOVATION  
IN HEALTH  
INITIATIVE

17 SIHI hubs, supported by the SIHI Secretariat based in the Philippines



As the network grows, the **SIHI Secretariat** has led the development of a network-wide knowledge management strategy to strengthen network coordination. So far, a resource portal and a hub onboarding kit have been developed to make knowledge more accessible and actionable across the network.

With these developments, **SIHI envisions a future where social innovation is integrated into how health systems evolve and respond to community needs.**

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, the SIHI Network deepened its role as a global platform for advancing social innovation in health by moving towards embedding social innovation within institutions, health systems, and communities.

This year saw **growth in both reach and impact**: from expanding into more countries and onboarding new hubs, to generating evidence on gender and health equity, strengthening capacity across diverse actors, and convening multistakeholder ecosystems.

Looking ahead, SIHI will continue to:

- Strengthen institutionalisation of social innovation within health and academic systems
- Expand capacity strengthening efforts to support the next generation of innovators and researchers
- Generate and consolidate evidence that advances equity and informs policy
- Convene platforms that connect communities, researchers, and decision-makers

SIHI remains committed to a simple but powerful idea: that **solutions to complex health challenges already exist within communities**—and that by supporting and scaling these solutions, more equitable and resilient health systems can be built.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

SIHI and TDR have partnered with The Network: Towards Unity for Health (TUFH) to co-organise the **2026 conference** in Manila, Philippines.



SIHI will host a one-day **Social Innovation in Health Summit** on 6 August 2026—bringing together partners, innovators, and stakeholders across the ecosystem. Watch the [welcome video](#) to learn more.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The *SIHI Global Network Annual Report 2025* was prepared by the SIHI Global Network Secretariat. The Secretariat collected the content, coordinated additional inputs from SIHI hubs, led the drafting and editorial process, and curated the content to reflect the network's shared progress, innovations, and impact over the past year.



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For more information on SIHI, visit [www.socialinnovationinhealth.org](http://www.socialinnovationinhealth.org).

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