INTRODUCTION
Many rural regions in Uganda struggle with food security, nutritional adequacy, and poverty. The vast majority of individuals struggle with malnutrition that leads to poor public health outcomes such as high maternal morbidity, increased chronic diseases, and congenital defects. In an effort to create a sustainable solution for these rural populations, the Kigezi Health Care Foundation (KIHEFO) developed the rabbit project. In the fall of 2019, we were able to aid in the data collection of the project, speak to various community members about how the project has impacted their community, and attend a variety of outreach events to experience the local healthcare. Originally, the project provided a small number of rabbits for farmers to breed and sell as a source of income. Eventually, these rabbits were successfully reared and became a healthy source of lean rabbit protein to families that suffered from malnutrition. We were able to observe and gather insight into the exponential growth and success of the project. Through the organization of the survey data collected, we found that the three rabbits that kickstarted the project in 2014 has grown to a total of 10,450 rabbits among 7 sub-counties in the Kigezi region of Uganda in 2019. The Nyanja village was the most successful community that is benefiting from the rabbit project. To show their appreciation for the project, they hold an annual rabbit festival. Visitors and tourists from all parts of Uganda can experience the ways in which the rabbit project has embedded itself in the culture of the community. The citizens of the Nyanja village were also able to successfully kick start a village savings fund. They use the earnings and income from rabbit rearing to subsidize education, individual healthcare emergencies, and the generation of small businesses.

EXPERIENCES

Rabbit Farms
We visited local Kabale and neighboring village rabbit farms to understand the maintenance and upkeep of rabbit rearing. We learned from and spoke to rabbit farmers about how the project has impacted their lives.

Other Outreach Work
We visited a local traditional healer in Lake Bunyonyi. Here we were able to observe and learn the history behind how traditional natural medicine was made.

Financial Impact on Nyanja Village
When visiting the village, they were able to show us how the women of their community were able to start a village savings fund. They use the earnings and income from rabbit rearing to subsidize education, individual healthcare emergencies, and the generation of small businesses.

Nyanja Village
The Nyanja community has shown the most success with the rabbit project. To show their appreciation for the project, they hold an annual rabbit festival. Visitors and tourists from all parts of Uganda can experience the ways in which the rabbit project has embedded itself in the culture of the community. The citizens of the Nyanja village were also able to successfully kick start a village savings fund. They use the earnings and income from rabbit rearing to subsidize education, individual healthcare emergencies, and the generation of small businesses.

PERSONAL GROWTH
From this experience, we were not only able to successfully immerse ourselves in a whole new culture and gain insight to international healthcare and public health initiatives. We were also able to gain a new sense of community and further develop self-identities. Language barriers and a slower pace of life were challenges that we experienced throughout our time in Uganda. However, these challenges were overcome by learning basic vocabulary, using translators, and letting go of expectations to adjust to a new environment. We are now able to take these personal lessons and apply it to all aspects of our lives.

TAKE-AWAYS
The central take-away was developing a better understanding of how scientific data is collected and recorded in rural settings. Through this, we experienced the success of a simple project initiative. We were able to learn about the most prevalent and current public health crises as well as cultural beliefs that surround healthcare. These projects catered to Ugandan beliefs and allowed villagers to be comfortable in participating. This experience showed us that we don’t need to do much to change things for them to see success. Even the simplicity of offering an extra set of hands proved to be incredibly helpful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
I would like to thank my capstone advisor, Dr. Karen Cowgill, for her guidance, emotional, and mental support. UWIT’s Office of Global Affairs for the scholarship opportunities and support for the transition to study abroad. I would also like to thank the KIHEFO staff for curating an incredible traditional Ugandan experience.