



RWANDA NGOs FORUM ON HIV/AIDS
& HEALTH PROMOTION

NEGLECT NO MORE: HOW COMMUNITIES ARE REWRITING RWANDA'S NTD STORY, TURNING A 2030 ELIMINATION TARGET INTO PROVEN, GROUND-LEVEL IMPACT

Together for a Healthy Society



NTDs NEWSLETTER (2025-2026)

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Welcome to our July 2025

May 2026 Newsletter

We are pleased to share this edition of our newsletter. It highlights progress in efforts to reduce and eliminate the transmission of schistosomiasis (bilharzia) and soil-transmitted helminth infections (intestinal worms) in Bugesera and Ruhango districts.

During this period, we focused on improving prevention in high-risk areas and supporting locally led solutions.

This edition features community mobilisation activities, storytelling sessions with schools and families, youth engagement initiatives, and snail control interventions in wetlands.

We appreciate your continued support as we work towards interrupting transmission by 2027 and eliminating Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) as public health problems by 2030.



UNMASKING THE INVISIBLE ENEMY: HOW BUGESERA AND RUHANGO ARE BREAKING THE TRANSMISSION CHAIN OF BILHARZIA AND INTESTINAL WORM INFECTIONS

In Bugesera and Ruhango, many families rely on wetlands, marshlands, and farming for their daily living. However, the same water used for these activities exposes communities to schistosomiasis (SCH) and soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections.

Rice farmers, fishermen, and families living near irrigation areas are among the most affected, while children face repeated infections linked to poor sanitation and unsafe water.

Over the past one year, we carried out community mobilisation, school and community storytelling, youth-led campaigns, snail control in wetlands, and other public health activities to support efforts to interrupt transmission of these infections.

SCH and STH infections are NTDs caused by parasites that spread through contact with contaminated freshwater and soil. NTDs disproportionately affect communities with limited access to safe water, sanitation, and healthcare. They disrupt daily life, especially among children, women, and people in high-risk occupations.

In line with the World Health Organization (WHO) roadmap for NTD elimination by 2030 and the 2022 Kigali Declaration, Rwanda, through the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) and the Ministry of Health, is increasing efforts to eliminate NTDs as public health problems.

In Rwanda, SCH and STH infections are the most common NTDs, with recent data from RBC showing STH at 38.7% and SCH at 1.7%.



RBC, with implementing partners including the Rwanda NGOs Forum on HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion (RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP) launched the Interruption of Transmission (IoT) initiative in Bugesera and Ruhango Districts.

The programme combines treatment, community engagement, and behaviour change. It includes Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) coordination, surveillance, and environmental interventions.

The goal is to reduce infections to below **2% by 2027**. It also aims to support national scale-up.

Activities took place from
July 2025 to May 2026

THE SNAIL HUNTERS: INSIDE RWANDA'S FRONTLINE FIGHT AGAINST SCHISTOSOMIASIS TRANSMISSION



The RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP organised a four-day training of trainers on snail control in Kigali from November 26 to 29, 2025. The training was held in recognition that treatment alone cannot fully interrupt SCH transmission.

The training brought together 16 master trainers from our NGO, RBC, Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA), and Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA).

Facilitated by international consultant Dr. Khadime Sylla, the training strengthened participants' understanding of snail biology and ecology. It also focused on identifying snail habitats, collecting and sampling snails, managing the environment, and engaging communities.

The newly trained master trainers are expected to support snail control activities. They will help build local capacity to address SCH transmission at its source.

Mass Drug Administration and Social and Behaviour Change communication have helped reduce the burden of SCH. However, freshwater snails that carry the disease-causing parasites still thrive in wetlands, marshlands, and irrigation canals.

A 2024 Environmental Impact Assessment found infection rates of over 20% in some areas. This shows that transmission is still active.



FIELD VISIT IN BUGESERA PUTS TRAINING INTO PRACTICE



Knowledge gained in the classroom becomes more meaningful when applied in real-life situations. That is why, on days three and four of the training, the **16 master trainers** travelled to Bugesera District, where they spent two days doing hands-on field practice in rivers, marshlands, and dam areas where SCH transmission remains high.

Guided by Dr. Khadime Sylla, participants identified snail habitats and selected sampling sites. They collected snails using scooping methods and carried out environmental management activities, including removing vegetation around water bodies and improving drainage.

The training continued on December **1 and 2, 2025**, with **30 peer educators**, including agronomists, cooperative leaders, community health officers, and environment officers, who received practical training on snail control interventions. They spent a full day in Ruhango's marshlands, learning how to identify snail habitats, collect snails, and apply environmental management measures, with the expectation that they would later share these skills with their communities.



The skills gained were then passed on to communities most affected. From **December 8 to 12, 2025**, peer educators, supported by master trainers, conducted training sessions across **24 sectors in Bugesera and Ruhango districts**, targeting farmers and fishermen in high-risk areas for SCH.

Challenges and recommendations

	Challenge	Recommendation
1	Limited availability of protective equipment and sampling tools hindered peer educators from immediately applying learned techniques in the field.	Equip district-level snail control committees with the necessary tools and protective gear to support regular habitat monitoring and environmental modification.
2	Low awareness of the link between snail habitats and schistosomiasis transmission delayed behaviour change among farmers and fishermen.	Integrate snail control messaging into existing community platforms including cooperative meetings, Community Health Worker (CHW) visits, and school health programmes to sustain awareness beyond formal training.

Key successes

- The three-tier cascade model proved effective. Training master trainers, who then trained peer educators and later farmers and fishermen, built local capacity that could sustain itself. Within weeks, **492 community members** were reached in all the **24 sectors**.
- Field-based learning strengthened impact. Participants who worked in the marshlands of Bugesera and Ruhango gained practical skills and greater confidence to carry out snail control activities on their own.

IGNITING A GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS: THE LAUNCH OF RWANDA'S FIRST-EVER MALARIA AND NTDs YOUTH CORPS

Rwanda's fight against malaria and NTDs depends on strong community involvement. On February 20, 2026, we held the first Annual Youth Champions Capacity Session, which welcomed **100 youth champions** from Kigali to the two districts.

The session provided them with the knowledge and skills to engage their peers, raise awareness, and reduce the impact of malaria and NTDs. Using existing community networks and local volunteers, these leaders are supporting communities to build their own protection in the areas most affected.



It gave them space to design youth-led ideas aligned with national elimination plans.

Through experience sharing, group discussions, and co-creation sessions, the young people created action plans to put into practice in their communities.

Creativity and impact were recognised through the Youth Against NTDs Arts Contest Awards, which honoured outstanding poems, songs, drawings and audiovisual messages produced ahead of World NTDs Day 2026.

Key achievements

- **A hundred youth champions** from Kigali, Bugesera, and Ruhango were capacitated on malaria and NTD prevention strategies and community engagement approaches
- Youth-led intervention ideas were co-created and approved for action in 2025–2026.
- Since its formal launch, the Youth Corps has reached more than **15,000 people** through community outreach and awareness activities.

Challenges and recommendations

	Challenge	Recommendation
1	Youth Corps members work in different districts, where support from local authorities varies, leading to inconsistencies in implementation and follow-up.	Set up clear coordination between youth champions and district stakeholders to ensure consistent, accountable implementation and strong support across all districts.
2	Keeping youth motivated and engaged after workshops is difficult without regular recognition and follow-up.	Hold yearly workshops and recognition events to maintain momentum, celebrate achievements, and strengthen the Youth Corps as a valued national platform.

3,000 GRASSROOTS LEADERS, ONE MISSION: REVOLUTIONISING HYGIENE FROM THE GROUND UP

WASH competitions and refresher trainings were held for village leaders, para-social workers, National Women Council members, and youth representatives. Participants came from **12 sectors in IoT District Areas**, including **six sectors** each from Bugesera and Ruhango.



Results

- **Six representatives** from district and hospital staff (**three per district**) participated in the activities.
- At sector level, **24 staff** were engaged, including Executive Secretaries, Health and Sanitation Officers, Heads of Health Centres, and Community Environmental Health Officers.
- At cell level, **168 leaders**, including Executive Secretaries and Social and Economic Development Officers, took part in sessions, with two representatives drawn from each of the **84 cells**.
- At village level, **3,024 participants** were trained, including village chiefs, representatives of special groups, and village committee members. Each village contributed four participants, covering nine villages per cell, seven cells per sector.

THE CLEANEST VILLAGES IN BUGESERA AND RUHANGO DISTRICTS: MEET THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WASH COMPETITIONS

Good hygiene saves lives, but change doesn't happen on its own. It works when communities take charge, stay accountable, and have their efforts recognised. This is the approach behind the WASH sector competitions we ran.

The initiative rolled out in four phases; awareness and training, household support, competitions and evaluation, and recognising the top performers. It reached communities from the district down to the village level.



Refresher training on WASH was held for village leaders, para-social workers, nutrition and wellness coordinators, and youth representatives. It covered **12 sectors** across the **two districts**.

In April 2026, the top-performing sectors and WASH clubs were awarded during official ceremonies in both districts. In Bugesera, Ruhuha Sector came out on top. This was due to strong leadership, active community participation, and clear progress in sanitation, hygiene, and environmental cleanliness.

In Ruhango, outstanding villages, cells, and sectors were also honoured through the Excellent Village Initiative. The initiative shows communities that set a standard for others to follow.

Challenges and recommendations

	Challenge	Recommendation
1	Sustaining WASH behaviour change after the competition period is still a challenge. Some communities return to poor practices once the evaluation phase ends.	Include WASH competitions in district annual plans and hold quarterly reviews to maintain accountability and keep momentum after the award period.
2	Inconsistent access to WASH infrastructure, mainly functional latrines and handwashing facilities, limited the ability of some villages to compete on equal footing.	Prioritise household level infrastructure support in the most underserved villages to ensure all communities can meaningfully participate in and benefit from WASH improvement initiatives.

Key achievements

- WASH competitions motivated communities to improve hygiene. They encouraged peer accountability and made progress visible across sectors. This approach turned hygiene from a health message into a community achievement.
- Recognition inspires replication. Awarding the best-performing sectors and documenting their approaches gave other communities practical examples to learn from and apply. This helped spread impact in other communities.

HOW HYGIENE INSPECTIONS ARE KEEPING COMMUNITIES ACCOUNTABLE?

An orientation meeting was held in March 2026, ahead of WASH inspection visits in selected sectors of the two districts. The RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP convened district authorities, WASH stakeholders, and sector hygiene committees from both districts. The discussions focused on supporting hygiene and sanitation through regular inspections and accountability.

Following the meeting, sector and district hygiene committee members conducted WASH inspection visits as part of support supervision. Each district deployed **30 team members**.



- Participants received WASH inspection guidelines, key hygiene measures, and supervision resources. These support routine monitoring and follow-up in communities.
- Discussions focused on building up hygiene committees and improving accountability from sectors and cells down to villages and Isibo structures. Leaders agreed to hold quarterly reviews and use a common approach to monitoring.
- The initiative supports the ongoing sector-level competition and plans to integrate inspection activities into district annual plans. This will help reduce SCH and STN and sustain progress towards their elimination.



We wanted to show that simple actions, like washing hands or wearing boots, can keep our families safe from disease," said one youth champion in Ruhango. Parents, local leaders, and volunteers joined the activities, supporting ownership and showing youth as champions of behaviour change in Rwanda's malaria and NTD response.

The orientation meeting reached 336 participants from nine sectors of Bugesera and 15 sectors of Ruhanga.

FROM RICE FIELDS TO FRONT YARDS: MOBILISING THOUSANDS OF HIGH-RISK GROUPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NTDs

RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP alongside partners organised an intensive community mobilisation campaign from November 18–20, 2025, to raise awareness on prevention of STH and SCH among high-risk communities.



In Ruhango, under the theme “Together, let’s unite to eliminate helminthiasis and schistosomiasis” (***“Tujyanemo mu kurandura inzoka zo mu nda na Bilariziyoze”***), residents engaged in discussions on hygiene practices, safe water use, and environmental management to reduce parasitic infections.

Rice farmers and cooperative members committed to treating drinking water, maintaining clean household latrines, and avoiding contact with unsafe swamp water.



In Bugesera, the campaigns focused on health education, better sanitation, clearing vegetation from water bodies, improving water flow, and breaking snail habitats.

Communities were educated on using personal protective equipment during water-related activities and encouraged to take part in upcoming mass drug administration rounds.

36 CONVERSATIONS THAT TURNED KNOWLEDGE INTO PREVENTION

Targeted interpersonal communication sessions were held in the marshlands and surrounding communities of Bugesera and Ruhango districts. RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP reached rice farmers, fishermen, women doing domestic work near water bodies, and households in high-risk areas.

The sessions were based on findings from the **2023 WASH and Social and Behaviour Change needs survey, which showed that fewer than 36% of community members** had enough knowledge about SCH and STH prevention.

Discussions covered safe water use, proper latrine use, regular handwashing, using protective gear during water-related work, and seeking treatment early.

Health education materials in Kinyarwanda were distributed to support these messages. A total of 36 interpersonal communication (IPC) sessions were held in the two districts, with 12 sessions conducted each quarter.

Hard-to-reach groups, including informal agricultural workers and out-of-school youth, were reached through community-based outreach activities.



Challenges and recommendations

	Challenge	Recommendation
1	Not all mobile and seasonal marshland farmers attended the sessions, as many were away for work during the scheduled activities.	Plan IPC sessions to coincide with farming schedules, cooperative meetings and Umuganda to increase participation.
2	Limited access to safe water has made it difficult for some communities to consistently adopt recommended hygiene practices.	Support IPC sessions with demonstrations and regular follow-up visits to help communities put lessons into practice.

MORE THAN JUST WORDS: HOW STORYTELLING IS TURNING THE TIDE ON BILHARZIA IN SCHOOLS AND HOMES

In October and November 2025, we worked with RBC, with support from the END Fund and other NTD partners, to conduct trainings in the two districts for teachers, parents, and local leaders. These aimed to improve engagement and promote social and behavior change.



Participants shared their experiences.

One parent said,

“Our swamp gives us life, but it has also brought sickness we didn’t understand. We thought it was just bad luck, but now we know it was bilharzia.”

A rice farmer said,

“The enemy is not the water, but the tiny parasite within it.”

The BSI project was officially launched on December 15 in Bugesera and December 18 in Ruhango. It uses child-friendly storytelling methods such as plays, poems, drama, songs, and games. These help children learn about bilharzia transmission, avoiding unsafe water, and the importance of hygiene, sanitation, and early care-seeking.

By empowering children as health champions, the programme fosters safer practices and mobilises collective action.

Key achievements

- In Kinazi Sector, Ruhango District, **50 village leaders and parents** were trained to support community action against these infections. In the same sector, **87 primary school teachers** learned how to prevent NTDs, detect them early, and include NTD education in their daily school routines.
- In Rweru Sector, Bugesera District, **37 teachers** received similar training, helping to build a network of school-based advocates for hygiene and sanitation.
- **Fifty-eight parents** took part in interactive sessions to co-design community solutions, focusing on safe water use, latrine hygiene, and community-led clean-up activities to help stop the spread of infection.

Call to action

We call on partners, donors, and stakeholders to support and expand storytelling approaches that engage children and communities. Storytelling helps people better understand health messages, reduces stigma, and encourages more active participation in the prevention, treatment, and care of NTDs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AGAINST NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES (NTDs)

1

RWANDA



Kinazi Sector

RUHANGO DISTRICT (Kinazi Sector)

COMMUNITY LEADERS & PARENTS TRAINING



50
leaders & parents
trained

Support Community Action
Against Schistosomiasis &
Soil-Transmitted Helminths

TEACHER EMPOWERMENT



87
primary
teachers
trained

Prevent, detect early, and
include NTD education in
daily routines

2

RWANDA



Rweru Sector

BUGESERA DISTRICT (Rweru Sector)

SCHOOL-BASED ADVOCACY NETWORKS



37 teachers trained

Advocates for Hygiene & Sanitation in Schools

3

COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN SOLUTIONS



STOP THE SPREAD
OF INFECTION



SAFE WATER
USE



LATRINE
HYGIENE



COMMUNITY-LED
CLEAN-UP

58 PARENTS PARTICIPATED
Interactive Sessions to Co-design
Local Solutions

VOX POPS: WHAT TRAINEES SAY...

How has your understanding of bilharzia and the way you address it changed after participating in the BSI training?



“

Before training, our community lacked knowledge about NTDs. Now we understand how they spread and how to prevent them, through clean water, hygiene, and awareness. We rise by teaching others.

Gregoire Ndayisaba,
Health Director Kinazi, Ruhango.

”

“

Many people in our community got sick without even knowing it was Bilharzia. Now, with a clear understanding of its signs and symptoms, we can detect cases early and guide people to get the help they need. As educators, we teach children how Bilharzia spreads and how to prevent it, by washing hands, using toilets properly, and practicing good hygiene. This training has empowered us to protect our families, our students, and our neighbors.

Eric Niyonizeye,
Teacher, EP Kacyiru, Kinazi, Ruhango.



”

“

We used to think schistosomiasis was a curse or poison when people got sick with headaches and swollen bellies. Thanks to the health campaigns, those myths are gone. Today, we know it's a medical disease. If someone shows symptoms like bloating or diarrhea, they head straight to the health center or contact a community health worker. Even the fear surrounding the treatment pill has vanished; we take it gladly now because we understand it saves lives. For us farmers who work in the marshes, protection means wearing boots and gloves, using clean water, and putting an end to open defecation.

Narcisse Bikorimana,
Farmer, Bugesera District

”



Q&A

SINGING, ACTING, AND LEARNING: A HEADTEACHER'S TAKE ON RWANDA'S CREATIVE BILHARZIA CAMPAIGN



We had an exclusive interview with **Ndagijimana Karenzi**, the **Headteacher of Kakirenzi Primary School**, who shared how the BSI has impacted teaching, learning, and community awareness around bilharzia prevention.

Excerpts:

How was the Bilharzia Storytelling Initiative introduced at your school, and how was it received? What challenges did you face before, and what immediate changes did you see?

Our story with the Bilharzia Storytelling Initiative began the moment RBC, and RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP came through our gates. Before this programme, we were fighting an invisible battle.

Many of our children were swimming and fetching water from the same rivers and ponds that put them at risk, not out of carelessness, but because no one had ever explained the danger in a way they could fully understand. Handwashing was inconsistent, hygiene was overlooked, and waterborne illnesses were affecting school attendance without clear understanding of the cause.

When RBC and partners introduced the initiative, they first trained our teachers, providing them with knowledge on how bilharzia spreads, its impact, and how it can be prevented. That training became a turning point. Our teachers became advocates. When the programme reached the learners, the atmosphere in the school changed noticeably.

What part of the initiative worked best for your school, and why?

The child-led creative competitions stood out most. When children are given a stage and a message they believe in, health information stops being something they are taught and becomes something they advocate for.

They memorised facts about bilharzia; they expressed them through performance, rhyme, and storytelling. That level of engagement made the lessons memorable beyond the classroom.

The learning materials in the local language, supported by clear illustrations, also made a difference. When learners see content that reflects their own environment and is written in a language they use daily, the message becomes clearer and more relevant.

In what ways has the programme brought the school, parents, and community closer in addressing bilharzia awareness?

The impact went beyond the school. Learners went home and shared what they had learned about safe and unsafe water sources. They demonstrated handwashing and repeated songs and stories with their families.

With support from RBC and local leaders, parents were also engaged more directly. Conversations expanded past academic performance to include child health and safety. Parents enhanced the same hygiene messages at home, encouraging children to avoid unsafe water sources and maintain good hygiene practices.

Have you noticed any changes in learners' knowledge, attitudes, or daily habits since the programme began?

Yes! Today, children wash their hands without being reminded. They encourage each other to avoid stagnant water and use their illustrated notebooks to explain bilharzia prevention to younger pupils.

Their understanding has also deepened. Bilharzia is no longer unfamiliar or ignored; learners now speak about it with awareness and seriousness. This has also been shown in school attendance and participation. Illness-related absenteeism has reduced, classrooms are more consistent in attendance, and learners are more active in lessons.



Today, children wash their hands without being reminded. They encourage each other to avoid stagnant water and use their illustrated notebooks to explain bilharzia prevention to younger pupils.



YOUTH IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT: HOW RWANDA'S YOUNG CHAMPIONS ARE REIMAGINING MALARIA AND NTD RESPONSE

The RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP led the national launch of the Rwanda Malaria and NTDs Youth Corps on November 26, 2025, convening young leaders to drive community action, advocacy, research, and policy engagement in the fight against malaria and NTDs.

Established in partnership with the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) 2030 and the RBC, Rwanda became the 19th African Union Member State to roll out a Youth Corps under ALMA's continental model.

ALMA works with African governments and partners to scale up the fight against malaria and NTDs by ensuring community involvement and tracking progress across countries.





The Youth Corps gives young people a voice in these efforts, enabling them to take on active roles in prevention and response.

The forum provides guidance, coordination, and mentorship, enabling young leaders to raise awareness, promote prevention, and drive community action.



Building on earlier youth engagement activities in Bugesera and Ruhango districts, Corps members have already joined malaria prevention campaigns in Gasabo District, reaching students, fishermen, rice farmers, and miners.

This initiative seeks to nurture a generation capable of sustaining progress toward a malaria- and NTD-free future.

GOALS FOR GOOD: HOW FOOTBALL, DRAMA, AND AND DIALOGUE ARE SCORING BIG FOR HEALTH AWARENESS

Building on earlier youth engagement activities in Bugesera and Ruhango districts, Corps members have already joined malaria prevention campaigns in Gasabo District, reaching students, fishermen, rice farmers, and miners.

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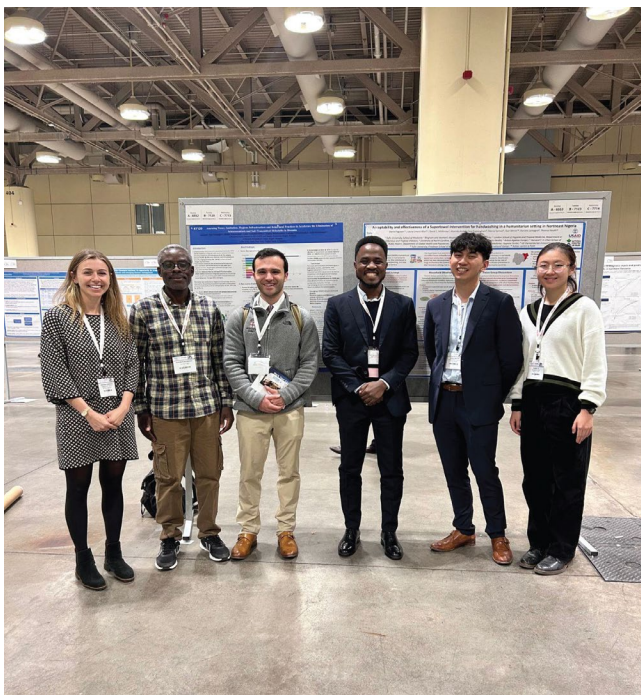
In both districts, events attracted more than **2,300 people** through sports, dialogue and health education, with football providing a platform to explain disease transmission, symptoms and prevention.

Residents were encouraged to adopt safe water practices, handwashing, latrine hygiene, protective footwear, deworming and early healthcare seeking.

RWANDA ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: SPOTLIGHTING NTD PROGRESS AT THE ASTMH GLOBAL SUMMIT, TORONTO, CANADA

Rwanda's efforts to eliminate NTDs were showcased at the 74th American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) Annual Meeting, held from November 9–13, 2025 in Toronto, Canada, under the theme "United in Science for Global Health."

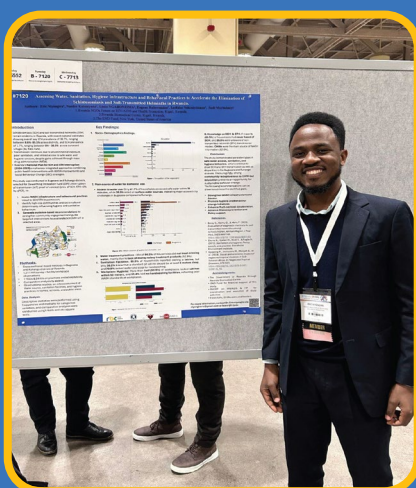
The meeting gathered global health professionals from academia, government, NGOs, foundations, the private sector, the military, and private practice.



The RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP shared progress on Rwanda's Schistosomiasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminths Integrated Operational Plan (2024–2027).

Early assessments in Bugesera and Ruhango districts found limited access to safe water, low use of household water treatment, and weak sanitation and hygiene conditions. Awareness of NTDs remains low. Community Health Workers continue to provide health education and support behaviour change.

“I attended the meeting as the RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP delegate. I shared findings from our WASH assessment in the two districts, focusing on hygiene practices. I explained the link between behaviour change and WASH advocacy to promote community ownership in the fight against these infections,” said Eric Niyongira, SCH/STH IoT Coordinator.



He added:

“The meeting proved our commitment to turning scientific evidence into simple actions that communities can apply, ensuring every community in Rwanda is reached in the fight against NTDs.”

THROUGH THE LENS: MEDIA TOUR CAPTURES RWANDA'S NTD PROGRESS ACROSS FIVE DISTRICTS

Media professionals and social media influencers participated in the NTDs Media Tour on January 26–30, 2026, visiting Ngoma, Gatsibo, Bugesera, Kigali, and Ruhango districts to document Rwanda's efforts to eliminate NTDs.

Organised by RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP in partnership with RBC, The END Fund, and WHO Rwanda, the tour connected journalists with communities and experts advancing a One Health approach toward Rwanda's 2030 NTD elimination targets.

In Gatsibo, rice farmers reported a **70 percent** reduction in Bilharzia and intestinal worm infections following sanitation improvements, including the construction of **128 toilets**. Students in Ngoma received training on rabies prevention and dog-bite response.

Communities in Bugesera discussed snail control, protective measures, and participation in Mass Drug Administration. In Kigali, visits to the RAB Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and the Welfare for Animals Guild (WAG) provided awareness into Rwanda's rabies surveillance, diagnosis, and stray dog management systems.

The tour ended in Ruhango during World NTDs and Leprosy Day. It highlighted Rwanda's elimination of sleeping sickness and progress in reducing intestinal worm infections, though challenges persist with SCH, rabies, and leprosy.

Media coverage generated through the tour and the national celebration included **31 published articles** across outlets such as The New Times, KT Press, Top Africa News, and several Kinyarwanda-language platforms. **Forty-eight posts on X, 21 YouTube live streams and video recordings**, and community stories were shared on Facebook.

The reporting brought community experiences to bigger audiences, helping raise awareness, correct misconceptions about diseases such as leprosy, and encourage participation in prevention and treatment programmes. Influencers extended the campaign's reach to younger audiences.



Officials call for stronger NTD coordination

RBC noted the continued burden of the infections in some districts, calling for stronger integration of MDA and WASH interventions.

Dr. Brian Chirombo, the WHO Representative to Rwanda said that leprosy is fully curable, does not spread through casual contact, and that affected people deserve dignity and timely care.

RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP Executive Director Nooliet Kabanyana explained that there is need for coordinated action across the health, agriculture, education, WASH, environment, and local government sectors.

Vice mayors from Ngoma, Gatsibo, and Bugesera restated their commitment to the NTD elimination agenda.



Call to action

Enhance coordination between the health, agriculture, local government, and tourism sectors through joint district action, including snail control, disease surveillance, and dog registration to reduce the risk of diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

Improve early detection and treatment of schistosomiasis using simple rapid tests. Train frontline health workers and support health data-sharing systems.

Scale up WASH programmes, open defecation-free campaigns, and hygiene promotion. Engage schools, local leaders, youth groups, and faith-based organisations to support lasting behaviour change.

PICTORIAL: YEAR'S ACTIVITIES SUMMARY



Global teams unite at the Deworming Innovation Fund Annual Review to expand treatment and integrate WASH initiatives.



The official launch of the NTDs Youth Corps! Young leaders are taking full ownership of public health campaigns to eliminate NTDs in their communities.



BSI sessions in action. From local leaders and health workers to eager students, entire communities are uniting to map risk areas and drive total bilharzia prevention.



Community members gather for an interactive sensitisation session, breaking stigmas and sharing vital knowledge to eliminate NTDs at the grassroots level.



Moments captured during the NTDs Media Tour focused on advocacy, awareness, and community impact.



Celebrating excellence and community commitment during the NTDs Sector-Based Competitions Awards.



Capacity-building sessions on snail control management to enhance STH prevention efforts in Rwanda.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National

- Annual High Level National stakeholders advocacy meeting on prevention and control of NTDs
- Surveillance for SCH/STH in IoT areas of Bugesera and Ruhango Districts

International

- Africa Water and Sanitation Systems Leadership Symposium 2026 taking place from 17 - 21 August 2026 in Kigali, Rwanda. It is a pivotal continental gathering, co-convened by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and IRC and other partners. It is one of the key milestone events planned in a series of activities aimed at laying the necessary foundation for implementing the 2063 Africa Water Vision and Policy. For more information and registration, visit: <https://www.ircwash.org/news/save-date-all-systems-symposium-africa>
- UNC Water and Health Conference will take place on October 26-30, 2026 at Friday Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, US. The 2026 UNC Water and Health Conference is the world's largest annual international conference dedicated to advancing action on WASH, and health. The conference gathers researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from around the world to review the latest evidence and best practices on WASH, with the aim of informing policy and improving practice. For more information and registration, visit: <https://web.cvent.com/event/4032e9db-59e1-4a4f-bfea-6efbcf053984/summary>
- The 2026 United Nations Water Conference will take place on December 8-10, 2026 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. It is co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates and Senegal and contributes to efforts to build a water-secure future for all. For more information and registration, visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2026>

APPRECIATION

We are incredibly grateful for the amazing partners who support our mission. Your collaboration makes everything we do possible:



ABOUT US

Rwanda NGOs Forum on HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion (RNGOF on HIV/AIDS and HP) is a National Network established in 1999, uniting 139 National NGOs intervening in the Health and Human Rights sector. RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP has a Legal Personality conferred by Ministerial Order No 77/08.11 of 07/07/2010, in compliance with law No 058/2024 of 20/06/2024 and related Regulations.

For many years, RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP has played a pioneering role in the AIDS and broad health response, focusing on Key and Vulnerable populations and High Risk groups, PLHIV, PWDs, PWUD/PWID that are impacted and affected by HIV, Tuberculosis, Malaria, NTDs, NCDs, RMNCAH, and at High Risk of Pandemics.

The RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP always participates meaningfully in different thematic working groups, steering committees, and holds membership in National and International working spaces, including but not limited to being a Member of CCM-Rwanda, Health Sector Working Group, HIV, TB, Malaria, NTDs, NCDs, SRHR TWGs, EAC TWG, EANNASO, Regional TB Caucus, ECOSOC, Global Fund Advocates Network Africa (GFAN), Global Civil Society for Malaria Elimination (CS4ME).

RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP integrates evidence-based advocacy with community-led and digital solutions, ensuring that every Rwandan has access to the quality care and rights they deserve.



PARTNER WITH US:

Join the Rwanda NGOs Forum on HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion in transforming lives.

- ✦ Together, we can end the neglect of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) and ensure that every community in Rwanda is stronger and has the opportunity to live a healthier, more productive life.
- ✦ Strengthening multi-sectoral collaboration and expanding access to life-saving interventions through an integrated healthcare service approach is the road to NTD elimination.
- ✦ Your partnership today can protect communities, restore hope, and help build a Rwanda free from the burden of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).



Contact Information



Phone

(+250) 783 699 602



Email

rwandangoforumrw@gmail.com



Website

www.rwandangoforum.rw



Location

KG 165 ST , Kigali, Rwanda



[@RwandaNGOForum](#)