

BUTARE: Rwanda's Ministry of Sports announced plans to expand the Isonga youth sports project, aiming to increase participation from 599 children in the first phase to 2,727 in the second phase starting this September.

The announcement followed the conclusion of a sports camp Saturday, August 9, at Groupe Scolaire Officiel de Butare (GSOB), which marked the end of the initial phase of the program.

The closing ceremony was attended by Sports Minister Nelly Mukazayire, Huye District Mayor Sebutege Ange, and leaders of several national sports organizations.

The camp featured competitions in six sports: handball, running, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and cycling.



Participants included children enrolled in the Isonga project, top performers in under-16 tournaments, and youth from camps affiliated with international clubs such as Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain.

A total of 569 children, including 208 girls and 361 boys, participated. The number was lower than expected as some athletes prepared for the FEASSSA 2025 games in Kenya.

Since its launch three years ago, Isonga has operated in 17 schools across multiple provinces. The ministry plans to expand the program to 42 schools and introduce new sports for children with disabilities, including goalball and sitting volleyball.

Minister Mukazayire encouraged young athletes to embrace the opportunity to develop their talents and represent Rwanda.

"This journey in sports and talent development is possible because of your commitment," she said. "We started with 569 participants and aim to reach thousands more. Remember, your talent reflects Rwanda's dignity, resilience, and hard work."

Isonga project director Dr. Clairon Niyonsenga said the expanded program will also focus on building sports infrastructure and preparing youth athletes for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal.