At least 46 journalists from different media houses in Rwanda completed four days of training on professional coverage of health issues and promotion in the country. The training closed this Friday, September 29th, 2023 at Lapalisse Hotel, in Nyamata District.

Looking at the role of journalists in increasing their engagements in community mobilization and promoting public access to fact-based information, the training focused on high burdened diseases like HIV, TB, STIs, HCV and Mental Health.

The workshop facilitated by the Rwandan Media Network against HIV/AIDS and for Health Promotion (ABASIRWA) and supported by Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) was aimed at equipping journalists with skills to debunk and mitigate the myths and misinformation relating to these highly burdened diseases.

Innocent Bahati, the Executive Secretary of ABASIRWA observed that the media is required to play a vital role in engaging the public in the implementation of various measures against diseases, that are putting pressure on the communities.

This was also meant to increase journalist's engagement in community mobilization and promote public access to fact-based information on health.

The focus was put on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and mental health by health professionals from RBC who provided an overview of these diseases.

Dynamo Ndacyayisenga, the Director of the Drug Abuse and Management Unit at RBC told journalists that in order to report good health information they must know first their audience.

"While reaching the audience always first know who they are and learn how to reach them ask which information they are looking for," he added.

He also advised journalists to remember to harmonize their content and messages. "Ask them who they trust and consider their calendar and timing."

The role of media in communication of health issues was also underlined during the training urging reporters to use official and credible sources rather than misinforming their audience.

During the 4-days, journalists from various media houses in Rwanda heard from different health professionals and experts through sharing information and

experience.