

Kayonza, Rwanda — More than 1,000 people gathered in Nyamirama, Kayonza District, on Saturday, March 22, to celebrate International Women’s Day through a dynamic community event organized by Shooting Touch Rwanda (STR), in partnership with the Kayonza District.

Held under the theme “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment”, the event spotlighted the power of sport as a catalyst for gender equality and health awareness. From a march for gender equality to spirited 3v3 basketball competitions, the celebration was as energetic as it was empowering.

The festivities kicked off with over 500 participants joining a symbolic march advocating for women’s rights. This was followed by basketball tournaments featuring young athletes and women from four sectors within Kayonza. Victories were claimed by teams from Rwinkwavu (U13 Youth and Women), Mukarange (U18 Boys), and Rukara (U18 Girls).

Beyond the court, Shooting Touch placed a strong emphasis on health. Partnering with Nyamirama Health Center, the organization provided free health services including screenings for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A total of 220 community members received care.

“Sports are crucial for health. Sport is a vaccine for a wide range of diseases,” said Jean Damascene Harerimana, Vice Mayor of Kayonza District. “The health screening provided today helps people know their health status and learn to take preventive measures.”

Guest speakers from local government, non-governmental organizations, and international visitors—including representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Kigali and the Noble and Greenough School from Massachusetts—emphasized the urgency of addressing gender disparities in healthcare and physical activity.

According to STR, only 57.6% of women in Rwanda meet the recommended levels of physical activity, compared to 65.8% of men. Through initiatives like this, the organization aims to narrow that gap and promote long-term wellbeing for women and girls in underserved communities.

Muhawenimana Aline, a Shooting Touch player and mother of four, shared her experience: “The free screening helped me understand my health status and learn about healthier lifestyles. As a mother, I now know I must keep doing sports to live

longer.”

At a Glance:

220 individuals received STI, NCD, and HIV screenings

64 youth and women participated in basketball competitions

1,000+ community members took part in health education and sports activities