National gathering honors top students, teachers, and schools as Rwanda achieves historic milestones in mathematics competitions.

Rwanda's brightest young mathematicians were on Saturday 1. November, recognized at the national gathering celebrating outstanding achievements in mathematics during the 2024–2025 academic year.

The event, organized by the Rwanda Olympiad Program in partnership with AIMS Rwanda and the University of Rwanda – College of Science and Technology (UR–CST), brought together students, teachers, and schools whose dedication has propelled Rwanda to new heights in national and international mathematics competitions.

Rwanda marked a landmark year at international Olympiads. At the Pan-African Mathematics Olympiad (PAMO) 2025 in Gaborone, Botswana, all six team members won medals — four silver and two bronze — the country's best-ever performance.

Other notable international competitions included the International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO) in Brisbane, Australia, where two Rwandan contestants received honorable mentions. Rwanda was also represented in the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) in Bolivia and the International Olympiad in Artificial Intelligence (IOAI) in China.

"These competitions provide our students with global exposure and the confidence to compete at the highest levels," said Celestin Kurujyibwami, Head of the Mathematics Department at UR–CST. "By rewarding them, we also show that their hard work contributes to Rwanda's development and prepares them to be problem-solvers for the future."

At the national level, École des Sciences de Byimana, in Ruhango District, claimed the top spot in the Rwanda Mathematics Competition, followed by Hope Haven Christian Secondary School and Groupe Scolaire Agateko.

"We are proud of our students," said Rukundo Jean D'Amour, a mathematics teacher at École des Sciences de Byimana. "Some have gone on to universities like MIT and Harvard, which shows the level of talent we are nurturing here in Rwanda."

Teachers from other schools also emphasized the importance of mentorship.

Nyiransabimana Jacqueline, a mathematics teacher at École des Sciences de Gisenyi, noted that study clubs help students build problem-solving skills and confidence.

Among the awarded students, Ihirwe Rukundo Bertin, a Senior 3 student at GS Saint Mathieu Busasamana, said, “These competitions have opened my mind. I’ve learned so much more in mathematics than I ever expected.”

Inclusivity and Nationwide Reach

Arun Shanmuganathan, founder of the Rwanda Olympiad Program

Founded in 2019 by Arun Shanmuganathan, the Rwanda Olympiad Program has grown rapidly, now reaching over 50,000 students from 900 schools annually. The program prioritizes inclusivity, ensuring participation from rural areas and a 50/50 gender balance in teams.

Students with disabilities are also accommodated; for example, Braille versions of exam papers are provided for visually impaired learners at schools such as the Nyabihu School for the Blind. “Every talented student deserves the opportunity to excel,” said Shanmuganathan.

Building on Rwanda’s success, the Olympiad co-founders launched the African Olympiad Academy, a new Pan-African secondary school in Kanombe, Kigali, in September 2025. The academy currently trains students from eight African countries, preparing them to compete in mathematics Olympiads while nurturing analytical and problem-solving skills.

“Our goal is to find and develop Africa’s most talented young mathematicians,” said Shanmuganathan. “By providing the right environment early on, we empower students to become innovators and problem-solvers who will shape the future of the continent.”

The Rwanda Olympiad Program continues to work with the Ministry of Education, schools, and teachers to strengthen mathematics education nationwide.

“These students are not just competing; they are learning to solve real-world problems,” said Kurujyibwami. “They represent Rwanda’s future scientists,

engineers, and leaders, and their achievements show what is possible when talent is nurtured from an early age.”