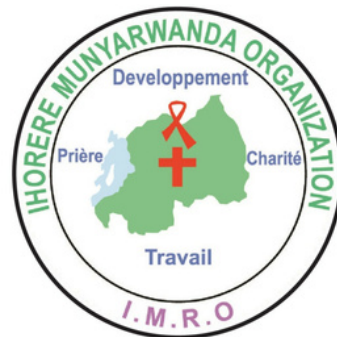


IMRO RWANDA NEWSLETTER

www.imrorwanda.org



"Together as One for a Healthy Society"

Tuesday, April 1st, 2025



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Welcome to the latest edition of the IMRO Rwanda newsletter! We're excited to share with you the fantastic progress and initiatives we've been working on lately. As an organisation dedicated to serving our community, we take great pride in the work we do. Each project, no matter how big or small, represents a step forward in our mission to create positive change and improve lives. We invite you to explore this newsletter and learn more about our recent endeavours. Your support and interest mean the world to us, and we're excited to share our journey with you. Thank you for being part of the IMRO Rwanda community. Together, we can continue to make a difference and build a brighter future for all.

Warm regards,

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COMMUNITIES' QUEST TO FIXING HEALTH SERVICES FOR KEY AND VULNERABLE POPULATION THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING (CLM) IN NYARUGENGE DISTRICT

As part of our commitment to community-led monitoring (CLM), IMRO Rwanda has been actively implementing impactful interventions across Nyarugenge District to ensure the delivery of equitable and quality HIV services.

- Through a series of trainings, stakeholder engagements, and structured support systems, we have empowered communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) to play a central role in monitoring and improving HIV services.
- We began by building the capacity of Community-Led Organizations (CLOs) and community members on CLM principles, data collection, analysis, and the strategic use of evidence to advocate for change. A key milestone was the training of CLM end users—drawn from five pilot sites in Nyarugenge District—where participants gained practical skills in data collection and management. To further reinforce this knowledge, our team conducted daily field supervision, offering coaching and mentoring to CLOs and CSOs to strengthen their implementation of CLM activities.
- In addition to grassroots engagement, IMRO Rwanda facilitated a two-day district-level meeting that brought together HIV and Key Population service providers along with other local stakeholders. This gathering laid the foundation for greater coordination in HIV response efforts and led to the formation of a CLM Task Team—ensuring that community-driven monitoring remains a collaborative and inclusive process.



Finally, we continued to support and recognize the essential role of community data collectors, often referred to as “Community Champions” or “Monitors.” These dedicated individuals received monthly facilitation and support, including stipends and allowances, to ensure their active and consistent engagement in data collection. Their involvement remains crucial in amplifying community voices and holding service providers accountable. Through these combined efforts, IMRO Rwanda is proud to foster a culture of evidence-based advocacy and inclusive service delivery that leaves no one behind. Together, we are shaping a future where communities lead, inform, and transform the HIV response in Rwanda.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN AND EVENT TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE SERVICES FOR PWUDs IN RUBAVU DISTRICT

From January 22 to 24, 2025, IMRO Rwanda, in partnership with the TUBITEHO Project consortium, actively participated in the JADF Icyerekezo Rubavu Open Day held at a scenic lakeside venue near Lake Kivu.



- The outreach campaign aimed to increase awareness among People Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) about HIV prevention, care, and harm reduction services available in Rubavu District. This effort brought together over 100 PWUDs and community stakeholders in an inclusive and engaging environment.
- At the IMRO Rwanda stand, interactive teaching sessions and public lectures were led by Emmanuel Mugabarigira, Harm Reduction Trainer and Program Officer. These sessions focused on the importance of HIV testing, early diagnosis, linkage to care, and reducing stigma. The campaign was enhanced by sound systems, visual materials, and direct engagement with visitors, including local leaders such as the Mayor of Rubavu and health officials.



The outreach campaign also featured voluntary HIV testing in partnership with Gisenyi Health Center, allowing participants to know their status and, where needed, get linked to appropriate care and support. The presence of local leaders and district officials underscored the growing commitment to improving the health and rights of marginalized populations, particularly PWUDs.

Despite a few challenges—including weather disruptions and limited presentation time—the campaign was a great success. It not only educated participants but also strengthened collaboration between community members, health providers, and local authorities. This effort marked a crucial step forward in the fight against stigma and in improving access to inclusive health services in Rubavu District.





NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND ADOLESCENT ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTIVES IN RWANDA

On January 29, 2025, IMRO Rwanda convened a pivotal National Dialogue on Teenage Pregnancy and Adolescent Access to Contraceptives at Highlands Suites Hotel in Nyarutarama.



- The event brought together 30 influential voices from government agencies, youth- and women-led organizations, healthcare providers, and the education sector—all united in their commitment to advancing adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Rwanda.
- The dialogue opened with a clear call to action: while Rwanda has made significant progress in HIV prevention and women's health, adolescents—especially girls—continue to face critical challenges including early pregnancies, unsafe abortions, limited access to contraceptives, and stigma around SRHR education. These issues often lead to school dropouts, early marriages, and long-term health and psychological consequences.

Through thoughtful presentations and rich group discussions, participants evaluated existing efforts aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy and improving contraceptive access. The dialogue fostered a deeper understanding of the root causes and systemic gaps, as well as the social and policy barriers young people face when seeking SRHR information and services.

The event also emphasized the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration. Strengthening partnerships among stakeholders emerged as a key outcome, with a shared commitment to developing more inclusive policies, improving service delivery, and ensuring adolescents—particularly girls—can make informed choices about their health and futures.

As IMRO Rwanda continues to lead human rights-based approaches to health, this dialogue reaffirmed the organization's ongoing mission: to create an enabling environment where all adolescents in Rwanda can thrive with access to comprehensive SRHR education, services, and support.





EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION: ADOLESCENT ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN KAYONZA

In a significant step towards advancing adolescent well-being and rights, IMRO-Rwanda successfully conducted an Adolescent Advocacy and Leadership Training in Kayonza District.

- This transformative initiative brought together 30 secondary school students with the aim of nurturing their leadership potential and strengthening their understanding of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).
- Adolescence is a critical stage of development, often accompanied by heightened vulnerability to health risks such as early pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and limited access to SRHR services. In response, IMRO-Rwanda designed this training to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to become effective advocates and peer leaders in their communities.
- The training featured interactive sessions on human rights, advocacy strategies, and leadership development, using participatory methods such as group discussions, role-playing, and case studies. By integrating real-life scenarios and peer learning, the program created a safe and supportive environment for adolescents to share experiences and explore solutions to the challenges they face.



- Participants emerged with a deeper understanding of their rights and a renewed sense of purpose. Many expressed enthusiasm about taking the lessons learned back to their schools and communities, with a commitment to promoting informed decision-making, open dialogue, and positive change among their peers.
- This initiative reflects IMRO-Rwanda's ongoing dedication to building a generation of empowered adolescents who can actively shape the future of SRHR in Rwanda—starting in their own classrooms and neighborhoods.



PROTECTING COMMUNITIES: IMRO RWANDA LEADS MPOX AWARENESS AND VACCINATION DRIVE IN RUBAVU

In a continued effort to prioritize the health and rights of vulnerable populations, IMRO Rwanda, in partnership with Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), Rubavu District, and Gisenyi Hospital, conducted a vital Mpx prevention and vaccination campaign in Rubavu District.

- The initiative placed special focus on Female Sex Workers (FSWs), a key population often at increased risk and due to systemic barriers to healthcare access.
- The campaign aimed not only to provide the Mpx vaccine, but also to raise awareness about the disease—its symptoms, modes of transmission, and the importance of early prevention. Through on-site education, interactive sessions, and confidential services, participants were equipped with critical information while receiving the protection of the vaccine.
- By taking the campaign directly to the community, IMRO Rwanda ensured that the initiative was inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the unique needs of the FSWs and other key populations. This approach aligns with IMRO's rights-based philosophy, emphasizing dignity, informed consent, and health equity for all.



- The success of this campaign is a powerful reminder that health for all begins with inclusion. IMRO Rwanda remains committed to leaving no one behind in the fight against Mpx and other public health threats, while advocating for sustainable, community-led solutions that empower and protect.



PROMOTING RIGHTS-BASED POLICING: IMRO RWANDA HOSTS SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP WITH LAW ENFORCERS IN RUBAVU DISTRICT

On February 19th and 20th, 2025, IMRO Rwanda, under the TUBITEHO Project, convened a 2-day sensitization workshop at Kivu Peace View Hotel in Rubavu District. The workshop brought together 15 law enforcement officers—including representatives from the Rwanda National Police, RIB, DASSO, and Reserve Forces—serving in key sectors across Rubavu.

- The initiative aimed to strengthen their understanding of harm reduction strategies and human rights-based policing approaches when engaging with People Who Use Drugs (PWUDs).
- This workshop marked the second phase of sensitization efforts following a successful district-level engagement. By shifting focus to the sector-level law enforcers, IMRO Rwanda sought to promote grassroots-level change in how security officers interact with drug-using populations. Opening the session, a representative of the Rubavu District Mayor emphasized the urgent need for harm reduction strategies to curb the rising health and social risks of drug use, especially among young people.
- Facilitated by experts from IMRO Rwanda and HDI Rwanda, the training blended theory with practical exercises to increase awareness, empathy, and collaboration. Participants explored the types and consequences of drug use in Rwanda, discussed real-life case studies of stigma and discrimination, and analyzed how punitive approaches undermine health and community safety. Using interactive methods such as group discussions, a power walk exercise, and pre/post assessments, the workshop fostered critical reflection and action-oriented dialogue.

- To sustain the momentum, IMRO Rwanda recommended several actions moving forward: disseminating tailored IEC materials, identifying and strengthening referral pathways, supporting the establishment of drop-in centers, and expanding community outreach on drug use prevention.
- This workshop is a powerful step forward in bridging the gap between law enforcement and public health. By equipping officers with rights-based tools and fostering a collaborative spirit, IMRO Rwanda continues to advocate for a more compassionate, informed, and just approach to addressing drug use in Rwanda.





ENGAGING FAITH LEADERS TO CHAMPION ADOLESCENT SRHR: A GROUNDBREAKING WORKSHOP BY IMRO RWANDA

On February 25th, 2025, IMRO Rwanda proudly hosted a transformative Engagement Workshop for Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) at Highlands Suites Hotel, Nyarutarama. The one-day event brought together 30 faith leaders from diverse religious backgrounds to advance dialogue and collaboration on the promotion of adolescents' access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services.

- Faith-based organizations play a vital role in shaping values, guiding behaviors, and influencing attitudes in communities. Recognizing this, IMRO Rwanda designed the workshop to bridge the gap between faith-based perspectives and SRHR realities affecting adolescents in Rwanda. The workshop sought to dispel myths, address misconceptions, and promote open, respectful conversations around the sexual and reproductive health challenges that many young people face today—such as teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions, gender-based violence, and barriers to accessing SRH services.
- The workshop's key objectives were to build a comprehensive understanding of adolescents' SRHR needs, encourage faith leaders to support SRHR initiatives, and empower them to become allies in creating stigma-free spaces for youth within their communities. Through powerful discussions and learning sessions, participants gained practical insights into how faith can be harmonized with accurate SRHR education and advocacy.



- By the end of the day, participants expressed renewed commitment to promoting adolescent health and well-being. IMRO Rwanda celebrates this milestone as a critical step toward fostering a more informed, inclusive, and supportive environment—where every adolescent, regardless of faith or background, can access the health services and knowledge they need to thrive.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN RWANDA'S WESTERN PROVINCE

IMRO Rwanda recently convened two transformative workshops under the theme “Advancing Human Rights Advocacy and Capacity Building in Rwanda.” Held in Karongi (Feb 27–28, 2025) and Rubavu (Mar 5–6, 2025), the sessions brought together 60 participants from diverse backgrounds—including civil society organizations, media, youth and women’s groups, local law enforcement, and marginalized communities such as Female Sex Workers, PWUDs, and LGBTQI+ individuals.



- These workshops served as a platform to deepen understanding of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Facilitated by Me. SENGOGA Christopher, participants engaged in lively discussions, real-life case studies, and group exercises aimed at improving advocacy, monitoring, and community engagement skills.
- The sessions were tailored to empower local champions with the tools to identify and address human rights violations. Participants explored the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, Rwanda’s legal frameworks, and strategies for inclusive governance. A significant outcome was the dramatic knowledge improvement, with post-test scores rising by nearly 50% in both sites—clearly demonstrating the effectiveness of the training.

- Despite a few challenges—including limited time and sensitivity around certain topics—the workshops fostered meaningful dialogue, encouraged peer learning, and laid a strong foundation for ongoing advocacy. IMRO Rwanda has since established a WhatsApp group to continue supporting participants through shared resources, mentorship, and peer discussions.
- This initiative marks a powerful step forward in advancing a culture of human rights, dignity, and equity in the Western Province—and beyond.



EMPOWERING ADVOCATES THROUGH VALUES CLARIFICATION: VCAT WORKSHOP ON SAFE ABORTION

From March 18th to 21st, 2025, IMRO-Rwanda hosted a transformative four-day Values Clarification and Attitudes Transformation (VCAT) workshop at Highland Suites Hotel in Nyarutarama, Kigali.



- The training convened 30 coalition members with the goal of equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to advocate for and support access to safe abortion services in Rwanda. Facilitated by legal and human rights experts Me Christopher Ndahiro and Hon. Theobald Mporanyi, the workshop was an opportunity for deep reflection, open dialogue, and collective learning.
- The VCAT workshop focused on key themes such as the legal and policy framework governing abortion in Rwanda, safe abortion as a human right, and debunking myths and misconceptions that fuel stigma and misinformation. Participants explored Rwanda's progressive 2018 Penal Code revisions, which permit abortion under specific conditions, and discussed how legal ambiguities and societal attitudes continue to pose barriers to access—particularly in rural areas.

- Through guided sessions, participants engaged in self-reflection exercises to confront personal biases and understand how values shape their professional roles in SRHR advocacy. The workshop also addressed the intersection of culture, religion, and reproductive rights, encouraging respectful dialogue and highlighting the contributions of faith-based allies in supporting maternal health and dignity.
- This training reinforced the need for continuous engagement, tailored educational tools, and targeted capacity-building across various sectors to ensure access to safe abortion is not just a right in law, but a reality in practice. IMRO-Rwanda remains committed to strengthening coalition efforts through future follow-up sessions, public education, and inclusive advocacy.



IMRO RWANDA RALLIES KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO CHAMPION ADOLESCENT SRHR IN RWANDA

On March 26th, 2025, IMRO Rwanda hosted a powerful sensitization workshop at Highland Suites Hotel, Nyarutarama, uniting youth leaders, media professionals, and women-led organizations with one common goal: to strengthen advocacy for adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services.



- This timely gathering underscored the urgent need to break down barriers that continue to hinder young people—particularly girls—from making informed decisions about their health and futures. With dynamic representation from diverse sectors, the workshop created a vibrant space for dialogue, shared learning, and collective commitment toward driving sustainable change in Rwanda's adolescent SRHR landscape.
- Participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions around policy gaps, stigma, and the role of inclusive communication in raising awareness among adolescents. Media representatives pledged to use their platforms to amplify youth voices and challenge misinformation, while women-led organizations highlighted the importance of gender-responsive advocacy strategies. Youth leaders brought fresh perspectives, emphasizing peer-to-peer education as a game-changing tool for outreach and impact.

- As Rwanda continues its journey toward universal access to reproductive health services, this initiative by IMRO Rwanda reaffirmed the power of collaboration and youth engagement in shaping a more informed, empowered, and healthier generation. Together, we're building momentum for a future where every adolescent can access the care, information, and support they need—without fear or judgment.



IMRO RWANDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOINS THE RWANDAN DELEGATION AT CSW69

We are proud to share that our Executive Director at IMRO Rwanda was honored to be part of the official Rwandan delegation attending the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

- This year's session, themed "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls," brought together global leaders, advocates, and changemakers to assess progress, share challenges, and renew commitments toward gender justice worldwide.
- As part of the delegation, our Executive Director actively contributed to high-level discussions, side events, and consultations that underscored Rwanda's achievements and ongoing efforts in advancing gender equality. Drawing from IMRO Rwanda's work at the grassroots level—particularly in supporting marginalized women, adolescent girls, and key populations—the Executive Director highlighted the importance of inclusive policy, community-led approaches, and the intersection of health, rights, and economic empowerment.



- This international platform was a unique opportunity to amplify the voices of those we serve, strengthen our partnerships, and reaffirm IMRO Rwanda's commitment to championing gender equity in every sphere of life. We remain inspired by the solidarity and determination witnessed at CSW69 and look forward to translating global commitments into impactful local action.

IMRO RWANDA WISHES TO THANK ★ **Our Partners and Supporterts** ★

- *AMPLIFYCHANGE*
- *EXPERTISE FRANCE*
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- *GLOBAL FUND*
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- *MINISTRY OF EDUCATION*
- *MINISTRY OF HEALTH*
- *MINISTRY OF JUSTICE*
- *RUBAVU DISTRICT*
- *KAYONZA DISTRICT*
- *RWANDA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM*
- **SFR**
- **UNAIDS**
- **UNDP**
- **UNFPA**
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