



IMPACT REPORT 2025



water for people
RWANDA



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In 2025, Water For People Rwanda advanced its long standing promise of Everyone, Forever by pairing district level delivery with national level systems reform. After years of groundwork, strengthening public institutions, professionalizing rural service delivery, and catalyzing market based sanitation, we focused this year on building reliable services, improving service quality, and mobilizing finance to sustain them.

The year's defining features were scale and system coherence. Locally, we constructed new schemes, improved institutional WASH, and expanded climate resilience. Nationally, we drove tariff reform dialogue, sharpened performance management for private operators, and progressed project preparation to unlock financing. These efforts, together, are positioning Rwanda to accelerate toward Destination 2030 while ensuring that gains in access are matched by gains in reliability, affordability, and inclusion.

OUR VALUES



Collective Transformation

We believe in the power of collective action.



Environmental Stewardship

We are committed to being responsible stewards of the environment.



Integrity

We act honestly and transparently to inspire trust.



Courage

We encourage brave exploration of new ideas and informed risk-taking.



Amplify All Voices

By putting people first, celebrating diversity, and pursuing justice, we prioritize our shared humanity.

OUR MISSION

Water For People exists to promote the development of high-quality drinking water and sanitation services, accessible to all, and sustained by strong communities, businesses, and governments.

OUR VISION

A world where every person has access to reliable and safe water and sanitation services.

OUR IMPACT

FOR YEAR 2025



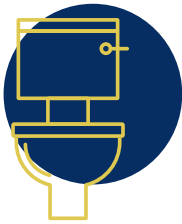
208,737

People reached with new or improved water services.



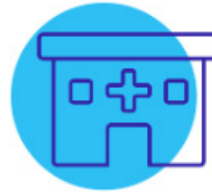
295

Communities with improved or new water services.



50,288

People reached with new or improved sanitation services.



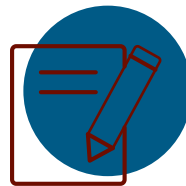
21

Health clinics with access to improved water, sanitation, and hygiene.



11,397

People reached with hygiene education.



79

Schools with improved access to water and sanitation



\$6,4 MILLION

Total investment made in 2025 to provide WASH services to communities where Water For People works

A community member from Gisagara District is fetching water from a newly rehabilitated water supply system.



WATER ACCESS

In 2025, Water For People Rwanda significantly expanded reliable and climate resilient water access, while strengthening the systems required to sustain services beyond project timelines. Our work was grounded in the Everyone, Forever model—balancing immediate service delivery with long term institutional performance.

At district level, we constructed 23 new water supply systems across Karongi, Gicumbi, and Gisagara, supplying safe drinking water to 125,367 people every day. These schemes were engineered with a strong emphasis on source protection, hydraulic reliability, and energy efficiency, ensuring systems remain functional in Rwanda’s challenging terrain.

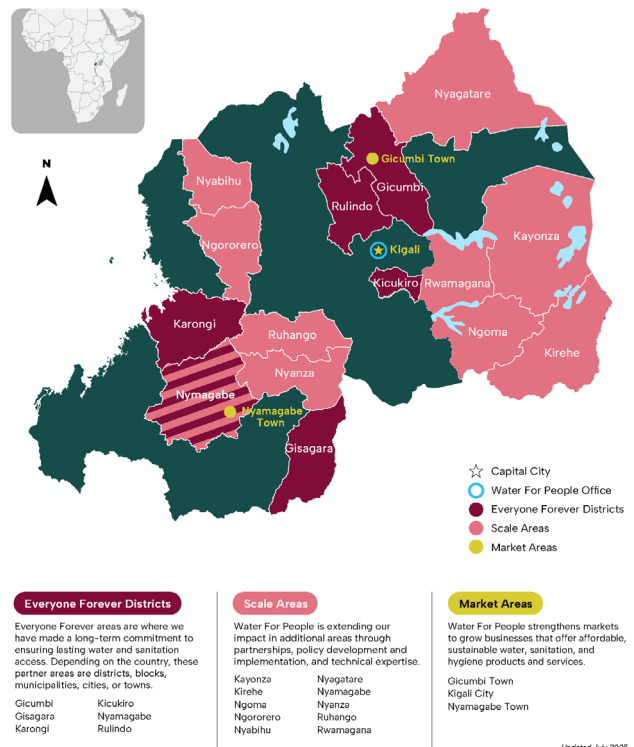
We prioritized institutional water access, connecting 13 health care facilities to reliable services. This investment directly improved clinical hygiene and patient safety for 1,558 health workers and patients, reinforcing water as a foundation of public health outcomes.

Recognizing increasing climate variability, we integrated water security measures across schools and health facilities, installing 221 rainwater harvesting tanks to cushion seasonal shortages and reduce reliance on stressed sources. Complementing infrastructure, we completed Climate WASH resilience studies in Rulindo, Gicumbi, and Karongi to guide future investments toward slope stability, flood protection, and source sustainability.

To address the affordability barrier at household level, we piloted an innovative revolving fund for household connections in Gicumbi and Rulindo. This enabled 105 low income households to connect to piped services while simultaneously strengthening operator revenue and reducing non revenue water. In 2025, we also established the Nyamagabe WASH Program, signing an MoU in January and officially

launching in June. Early investments focused on planning, institutional alignment, and school WASH, laying the groundwork for rapid scale up beginning in 2026.

Our Geographical Focus



125,000

People gained access to clean and safe water after the construction or rehabilitation of 23 water systems.

SANITATION

Water For People Rwanda advanced sanitation outcomes in 2025 by combining infrastructure delivery, market based approaches, and inclusive design, particularly for women and girls.

Across 21 schools in Karongi, Gisagara, and Nyamagabe, we constructed 374 improved toilet cabins, providing 17,502 learners with access to safe, dignified sanitation. To address menstrual hygiene, a key determinant of girls' attendance and performance, we built 47 Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) rooms, ensuring privacy, product storage, and safe disposal.

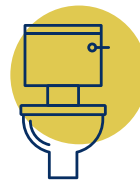
At household level, we piloted tiger worm (vermi) toilets in Nyabihu, demonstrating a low cost, nature based fecal sludge management solution with minimal operation and maintenance requirements. This innovation shows strong potential for replication in dense rural settings.

Through the Isoko y'Ubuzima Program, sanitation outcomes reached national scale. Supply side constraints were addressed through the construction of four District Sanitation Centers, 41 community showrooms, and training of 150 sanitation sales agents.



21,282

household toilets improved or constructed.



25,785

SATO pans sold by trained sales agents using our market-based sanitation strategy





A peer learning session for non-revenue water reduction.

Capacity building

Sustainable WASH services depend on capable institutions, skilled operators, and access to finance. In 2025, Water For People Rwanda made strategic investments across all three.

At district level, we established Non Revenue Water (NRW) technical taskforces in four Everyone Forever districts and delivered pump preventive maintenance training to private operators and WASAC branch technicians. These efforts directly reduced downtime and protected infrastructure investments.

We strengthened frontline capacity by training 405 water sellers and 166 village leaders in tariff literacy, customer care, and water point management, improving both service quality and revenue protection.

Nationally, we supported policy and regulatory reform, advancing advocacy for national water and sanitation tariff restructuring, a critical step toward balancing affordability with cost

recovery. In parallel, we worked with WASAC to define standard performance KPIs for private operators, enabling benchmarking and performance based improvement across the sector.

We also unlocked financing. In 2025:

- An ESIA for RWB contributed to USD 9 million mobilized for sector investments.
- Feasibility studies were completed for WASAC Development.
- Connection investment needs studies positioned six private operators to expand coverage and reduce both physical and commercial NRW.

Through the Isoko y'Ubuzima Systems Agenda, 506 professionals completed WASH Systems Academy courses, while national "Building Blocks" scores improved from 3.4 (2022) to 3.9 (2024), with gains in regulation, planning, and finance.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Infrastructure alone does not deliver health or dignity. In 2025, Water For People Rwanda invested heavily in social behavior change (SBC), ensuring that communities adopt, manage, and sustain improved WASH practices.

At local level, we refreshed sanitation plans for schools and health facilities and rolled out district-wide hygiene competitions, energizing students, teachers, and communities around clean environments and shared responsibility.

- We strengthened community leadership through extensive training: 525 Local WASH Promoters trained and monitored
- 1,270 Hygiene Focal Points and 635 Village Agents trained
- 2,267 VSLA groups engaged to reinforce household investment
- 1,097 school health clubs established nationwide

During the Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) response, SBC was central. All materials were approved in Kinyarwanda by national authorities, and 347 trainers from 60 hospitals were prepared to reinforce infection prevention and control behaviors. These efforts translated immediate emergency response into long-term hygiene resilience

Looking ahead to 2026, we are scaling SBC further, training 372 additional water sellers, deploying MHM and WASH educational games in 42 schools, and expanding district-wide performance programs.



A community member is fetching water on a newly rehabilitated water supply system in Nyamagabe District.

We celebrated 16 years of achievements in Kicukiro and set the cap to Nyamagabe



Kicukiro District Exit

Last year, we marked our official exit from Kicukiro District after 16 years of partnership, impact, and shared commitment to sustainable water and sanitation services.

Since 2009, Water For People has collaborated closely with the Kicukiro District leadership, WASAC Group, and the Rwanda Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) to make safe water and sanitation a lasting reality for every household, school, and health facility.

Together, we achieved the “Everyone” milestone in 2019, ensuring universal access, and in 2025, we proudly celebrated the “Forever” milestone, confirming that Kicukiro now has strong local systems, financial sustainability, and resilient service delivery that will last for generations.

This exit is not an end, it’s a celebration of local ownership and sustainability. Kicukiro now stands as a national model for district-wide, system-driven WASH service delivery, proving that “Everyone Forever” is not just a vision, but a reality.

Nyamagabe became our new Everyone Forever District

As we exited the Kicukiro District as an Everyone Forever District, we also launched Nyamagabe District as a new EF District, transitioning from a scale district with our United States Government-funded Isoko y’Ubuzima Project.

Our CEO, Mark Duey, and Regional Director for Africa, Cate Zziwa Nimanya, joined local leaders and partners, led by Mayor Hildebrand Niyomwungeri, to launch the Nyamagabe District WASH Program, with Gemma Maniraruta, Director General of Water and Sanitation at the Rwanda Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA), who graced the event and led the symbolic laying of the foundation stone for one of the new water points.

This program aims to ensure that every household, school, and health clinic in Nyamagabe has access to sustainable and climate-resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services by 2029.

Sustainability Plan and Future Priorities

Local Impact and Service Sustainability

In 2026, the program will prioritize consolidation of gains and long-term sustainability of services at district level. A key milestone will be the definition and launch of the Rulindo Exit Roadmap, providing a clear transition framework for durable service delivery. In partnership with WASAC, six pumping stations will be rehabilitated to improve system reliability, alongside targeted service-level improvements in Kinihira and Tumba through priority network and infrastructure rehabilitations. Climate-resilient upgrades will be implemented on the Tare and Marengue water supply systems to strengthen resilience to climate variability. Results-Based Incentives (RBIs) will be rolled out in Rulindo and Gicumbi to reinforce utility and operator performance. Construction will be completed on four water supply systems (WSS) in Gisagara District and three WSS in Nyamagabe District by March 2026, collectively serving an estimated 103,276 people. Two additional regional systems—Nyesayo–Mugote and Nyungwe–Kizimyamuriro—will be delivered by September 2026. Institutional WASH will remain a priority. All scheduled school WASH packages in Nyamagabe, financed through LDS and charity: water grants, will be finalized between May and September 2026. These packages include improved toilets, rainwater harvesting systems, and dedicated menstrual health management (MHM) rooms.

Service Quality Improvement and Social Mobilization

Efforts to improve service quality will continue through enhanced non-revenue water (NRW) monitoring in Eastern and Northern Focus (EF) districts. District Metered Areas (DMAs) will be piloted across five water supply systems in Rulindo and Gicumbi to strengthen performance diagnostics and operational decision-making. Community engagement and behavior change will be scaled up. A total of 372 water sellers in Gisagara and Nyamagabe will receive structured training. District-wide WASH competitions and school performance programs will be conducted to incentivize improved hygiene practices. The program will also train 208 new Local WASH Promoters and deliver integrated

MHM and WASH education games in 42 schools.

Sanitation Market Development and Innovation

2026 will advance sanitation market strengthening and innovation at both rural and urban levels. Technical support will be provided to ongoing tariff reform initiatives, and 51 sales agents in Rulindo, Gicumbi, and Gisagara will be trained on demand-creation and direct-quality (DQ) selling approaches. A consolidated learning product will be produced to document experience with Demand-Side Credits (DSCs) and community showroom models in Rulindo, Gicumbi, and Karongi districts. At community level, households in Rulindo will be trained on compost production and the safe valorization of fecal sludge and organic waste. The bio-compost business model for the Rulindo vermifiltration plant will be finalized, while operational optimization of the Nyamagabe DEFAST facility will be completed.

National-Level Systems Strengthening and Policy Influence

At national level, the program will continue to provide targeted technical advisory support to WASAC Development. MININFRA will be supported to convene a WATSAN Sector Strategic Plan (SSP) implementation retreat and a national WASH reflection session to accelerate alignment and learning across stakeholders. Collaboration with the Ministry of Health will focus on clarifying institutional roles for hygiene and sanitation and integrating dedicated budget lines into the uniform chart of accounts. Sector coordination will be maintained through a regular cadence of quarterly Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP), Technical Working Group (TWG), and Sub-Working Group (SWG) meetings. Under the Rwanda WASH Challenge Campaign, the program will generate evidence for climate finance mobilization, with a national baseline currently under development, and will coordinate multi-partner resource mobilization efforts aligned to 2030 sector targets.

STORIES

From communities

531-287

Josepha Mukakigeli
has now access to
water close to her
home.



WHEN COLLECTING WATER BECOMES A SPRINT

During a recent monitoring visit to Karongi District, we met Josepha Mukakigeli, a 66-year-old woman from Bugaramantare Village. She lives on a steep hillside near the Nyabarongo River, in Shyembe Cell, Murambi Sector. Water collection has long been a battle of endurance, strategy, and sacrifice for her in this remote and hilly landscape.

"For years, I had to get up at 4:00 a.m. to run for water. If you delay even a little, the spring is full of people. And in the evening, if you're not there by 4:00 p.m., the students come, and it is a struggle to get water on time," says Josepha.

The grandmother living with her four-year-old grandchild would climb down into Ruhondo Valley, a 1.5-hour round trip on a slippery slope.

"It wasn't just steep. It was dangerous. One drop of rain, and the path turns into mud. You could slip and land downhill. I've seen it happen," she adds. Indeed, the contractor to build the water supply there confirmed that they could go weeks without working because of

her cow.

"Some days, I had to go four times. If I was too tired, I paid 200 Francs (around 0.15 USD) per jerrycan. But that wasn't always possible," Josepha recalls. The toll was not only physical but also emotional. "That was a hard life," she said, pausing. She added, "My strategy was to go before the students. Otherwise, you'll be there until 8:00 at night, waiting. And in the rainy season, you don't dare go late. The path becomes slippery, and you could end up downhill."

Everything changed recently with the completion of the Gatare-Gitaba Water Supply System, a project supported by WASAC and the Karongi District in collaboration with Water For People. Now, a water point is within reach.

"I collect four to eight jerrycans a day," she said. "I pay ten francs (less than one cent USD) per jerrycan. Before, I was barely managing two. Now my cow drinks. The child bathes. There's no more rushing, no more slipping."

But Josepha's joy is bittersweet. "My only regret is that I am old now," she said quietly. "I won't live long enough to enjoy this. But I will go underground happy, because we finally have water in our neighborhood."

Josepha emphasized that this is their first time seeing piped water for many of her neighbors. "That's how remote we are. This is a miracle for us."

Josepha's story reminds us that water is more than just a service; it's freedom, a right. It's the difference between struggle and rest, between worry and peace.

For her, getting water no longer means slipping down a dangerous hill or waking up before dawn. It means living with dignity, finally.

**"My only regret is that I
am old now...I won't live
long enough to enjoy
this [water]."**

*Josepha Mukakigeli
Community member,
Karongi District.*

the rain; no matter the car's horsepower, no one dares going to Shyembe when it has rained.

Back to Josepha, she made the trip downhill at least twice daily, carrying 15-liter jerrycans on her head to cover basic needs like cooking, washing, and watering

FLAGSHIP INTERVENTIONS NRW

REDUCTION

In scale districts, we collaborate with local authorities and private operators to improve Non-Revenue Water (NRW) management by implementing a District-Metered Area (DMA) approach and building the capacity of water professionals.

A DMA is an area delimited by bulk meters that allow private operators to quantify the water within a network, monitor it, identify rapid water loss due to pipe leaks, and apply corrective measures.

NRW is water produced and lost before it reaches the customer, or that is not billed. This leads to financial losses for water utilities, unsustainable water management, and ultimately, the inability of water operators to invest in improving water infrastructure and a hindrance to quality water services. The intended result is for rural water supply companies to efficiently bill for water consumption, easily detect and fix water leaks, equip their staff with the necessary tools to curb NRW, and educate communities to participate in reducing physical water loss by reporting leaks and combating vandalism. A higher profit margin will motivate these companies to invest more, thereby improving service.

MARKET-BASED SANITATION

To increase household sanitation, our trained sales agents and other community mobilizers raise awareness and create demand for sanitation and hygiene products and services from the community. As a result, the community is motivated to invest in household sanitation.

To meet the demand created, we collaborate with the districts and the private sector to bring products closer to the community through community showrooms at the sector level and at the district sanitation center. Sales agents collaborate with district sanitation centers to sell the products to households and gain commissions. Project-trained masons build community-preferred sanitation prototypes, such as affordable, accessible, and improved slabs and latrines.

Recognizing some families' relatively low-income level status, we work with financial institutions to create sanitation loan products accessible to individuals through Village Savings and Loans Associations and other communities groups.

This is an innovative shift in sanitation, driven by the use of tiger worms. This approach is revolutionizing the treatment of fecal sludge, helping Rwanda meet its global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while enhancing community well-being. Central to this change is vermifiltration, a method of fecal sludge management (FSM) inspired by natural processes, which is reshaping sanitation systems in small towns and rural areas.

INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

We are intentional in planning and implementation to ensure that no one is left behind to gain sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services. We support the District Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) and District WASH Boards to tackle policy barriers, ensuring inclusive WASH services and the integration of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) at the district level. Nationally, we facilitate dialogues to address policy challenges around GESI and inclusivity, while also strengthening the capacity of WASH professionals at both the national and district levels to promote Inclusive Governance.

CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING

Water For People in Rwanda prioritizes climate resilience in its projects to address the challenges posed by water-related destruction of infrastructure, especially water systems. Collaborating with district governments and the Ministry of Infrastructure, the organization supports the design of resilient water infrastructure in landslide-prone districts.

To ensure sustainable water services, Water For People supports 15 districts in developing Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs) that assess water availability, demand, and climate change impacts, along with soil or seasonal issues that may require solutions like chlorination units or terracing.



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OUR PARTNERS

