



**RULINDO DISTRICT  
MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE**



**water for people  
RWANDA**



# **Rulindo Challenge Program**

## **Our Journey**

**A Joint WASH Initiative to Reach Everyone Forever**

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## The Journey to Reach Everyone Forever

In May 2010, the district of Rulindo, together with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water For People, launched an ambitious plan to bring full access to water and sanitation services to the entire population of Rulindo District. A few months later, local authorities, officials, partners, donors, and hundreds of local communities gathered in one of the district's most remote neighborhoods as they launched a community water supply system. Amid cheers, pomp and glamour, the Rulindo Challenge Program set in motion work that will bring the full district high quality water and sanitation services in a sustainable way.

The Rulindo Challenge is the first effort of its kind at this scale, anywhere in a low-income country, to bring full water coverage to Everyone Forever and has since been replicated as organizations and governments work to address water issues.

When the Rulindo Challenge was started, there were stories of children missing school or skipping classes while they went to look for water. Women spent hours out early in the morning and late into the evening climbing and descending hills in search of water. The water related disease burden was heavy as well. At the time, only 29% of the district population accessed clean water, and only 4% had improved latrines in their households; 50% of schools and clinics lacked proper water and sanitation facilities.

A few years down the road, the situation has changed drastically. Thanks to the Rulindo Challenge, 271,804 new people, 56 schools, and 13 health care facilities across all of the district's 17 sectors have access to clean water since 2012. As a result, children can go to school and women can focus on developmental initiatives rather than spending days looking for water. There are also fewer incidences of water-borne diseases, cleanliness has improved, and people are working more on their development.

Today's Rulindo story is that of a journey of deep transformation that concludes with access to water, improved sanitation, and better health. It is a testimony that reaching Everyone Forever is possible.

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## 1. Introduction

In 2010, Water For People and Rulindo District began working on a unique, ambitious program with the objective of bringing safe and lasting water and sanitation access to the entire district population. Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) and the Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC), the program was named “**the Rulindo Challenge**” to highlight the urgent and heavy task of finding a permanent solution to bring full access to safe water and sanitation services in the entire district by 2018.

Through this multi-year pledge, partners committed financial, technical, and human resources to reach Everyone in Rulindo. Water For People in Rwanda committed to provide 55% of all hardware costs, MININFRA through WASAC pledged 30%, and the district of Rulindo accepted to cover 15% of the water supply component. Water For People also committed to cover the costs for capacity building for communities to manage the water systems sustainably, hygiene education, community mobilization, and monitoring.

By committing to reaching Everyone in the district, partners in this ambitious program committed to bring lasting access to safe water and sanitation services to every household, every community, every school, and every health care facility in the district. They also committed to develop the institutions and local capacity so that everyone in the 494 villages, 100 schools, and 24 health centers have access to safe and sustainable drinking water by the end of the program.

Over the last nine (9) years, this partnership has brought water infrastructure to 269,247 new people, 56 schools and 13 health care facilities since 2012. In addition to increasing access to drinking water through infrastructure development, the initiative is also addressing sustainability challenges through capacity and local knowledge development to ensure that systems built today last well into the future.

Outside the district, the Rulindo Challenge Program has inspired a policy shift from traditional sporadic water provision projects to more sustainable and comprehensive interventions with the Government of Rwanda, scaling up the same approach at national level under the District Wide Approach banner. Globally, Water For People scaled up the approach under the *Everyone Forever* model after a very successful initiation in Rulindo District.

This document provides an insight into the key achievements made through the Program so far, including key lessons, best practices, successes, challenges, and plans for the future.

## 2. Program Description

The Rulindo Challenge Program is a unique and ambitious partnership between the Government of Rwanda, Rulindo District, and Water For People, an international not for profit organization that is working to bring lasting access to water and sanitation services across nine countries.

As shown in Table 1, prior to the Program’s initiation, only 28% of the Rulindo communities had access to high-quality water infrastructure, with 32% having no access at all, according to a 2012 baseline survey conducted by Water For People. The same baseline survey also showed that only 4% of households had access to high-quality sanitation infrastructure, and 34% of schools and health centers had high-quality Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. The rest did not have access or had access to water and sanitation services that were not meeting standards. However, after eight years, the achievements are promising. In 2019, the survey showed that 82% of community water infrastructure provided a high-quality level of service, 59% of households have access to high-quality sanitation services, and 98% of schools and health

centers have access to high-quality WASH services. This dramatic improvement was caused by investment in WASH infrastructure and sustainability-oriented activities.

**Table 1: Survey Results for Baseline (2012) and Achievements (2019)**

Indicator	Baseline in 2012			Achievements in 2019		
	Service Meeting Standards	Service not Meeting Standards	No Access to Improved Infrastructure	Service Meeting Standards	Service not Meeting Standards	No Access to Improved Infrastructure
Community Water Point Service	28%	40%	32%	82%	17%	1%
Household Sanitation Service	4%	94%	2%	59%	40%	1%
WASH service in schools	34%	31%	35%	98%	2%	0%

Source: Adapted from different Water For People survey results (2012, 2019)

The Rulindo Challenge Program was designed as a solution to this problem with the aim of reaching all citizens and ensure full coverage to all schools, all health care facilities by 2018. The Program also facilitates capacity building, establishing strong systems and supply chains for individuals to purchase household sanitation services, without relying on government subsidies.

### 3. Implementation Arrangement

#### 3.1 Responsibilities

The partnership between the District of Rulindo, MININFRA, and Water For People is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that sets roles and responsibilities of each partner, as well as details regarding implementation and monitoring.

**Rulindo District** coordinates all procurement and contract management of under the Rulindo Challenge Program, in addition to technical and financial contribution. The District responsibilities include hosting quarterly (or more frequent) meetings with WASH sector stakeholders to discuss project progress, successes, challenges, and innovations, as well as supporting and mobilizing communities and public institutions to pay for WASH services and play their roles in sustaining program outcomes. By the time Water For People exits the district, the District of Rulindo will have taken full responsibility and ownership for the annual monitoring of WASH services.

**Water For People** provides technical and financial support to implement water and sanitation projects. It works together with the District of Rulindo and MININFRA to select target communities, coordinate the installation of water and sanitation infrastructure and promote systems-strengthening to sustain the systems. Water For People works with local communities to raise awareness of key issues in the Rulindo Challenge Program: safe water, maintaining water infrastructure and management systems through a tariff, hygiene, sanitation infrastructure, and operating water and sanitation systems as businesses. It also plays a key role in strengthening the ability of the district to effectively manage and coordinate water and sanitation activities through capacity building activities. Finally, Water For People is responsible for documenting the program, its successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

**MININFRA** through **WASAC** provides financial support and leadership to the Rulindo Challenge Program and participates in all phases of the work.

It is also responsible for overseeing the monitoring of water quality and informing the partners of the progress, success, and challenges.

### 3.2 Implementation Approach

The Rulindo Challenge Program is a progressive partnership that addresses district-wide water and sanitation demands. It moves the district away from traditional community-based programming that requires development agencies to work with communities indefinitely, to a more systematic program that:

- Tackles sustainability challenges by strengthening local institutions and capacity building to ensure sustainability;
- Leverages local resources;
- Serves as a model for future replication and scale.

The Program emphasizes involvement of the private sector in implementing, operating and maintaining water and sanitation infrastructures through promoting Water as a Business (WAAB) and Sanitation as a Business (SAAB) models. By collecting water tariffs, the private sector, local government, and communities have the capacity to meet infrastructure operation and maintenance as well as capital replacement costs to respond to future water and sanitation needs.

### 3.3 Monitoring

The Rulindo Challenge Program adheres to a strict monitoring process and believes that monitoring both the infrastructure developed, and strong management systems are necessary to maintain a successful and sustainable project. Programmatic data is collected annually using a mobile data collection system, called Akvo Flow. After data is collected, it is validated by the district and its partners. The data is used to measure water service, the sustainability of water service providers, household sanitation levels, public institution WASH service levels, and customer satisfaction with water and sanitation services.

Building upon the monitoring data, Water For People hosts an annual programmatic reflection session, attended by all the Rulindo Challenge Program partners, to discuss the successes and challenges of the past year and plan for the coming year.

In addition to this annual monitoring, more frequent informal and formal monitoring occurs. Annual work plans are monitored monthly to ensure planned activities are progressing properly, and an assessment is shared with project partners. In addition, the Organisation Rwandaise Pour la Solidarité et le Développement (ORS) – a local NGO partner of Water For People – conducts daily monitoring of water and sanitation infrastructure and hygiene practices in households, schools, and health facilities.

## 4. Program Investment and Co-finance Model

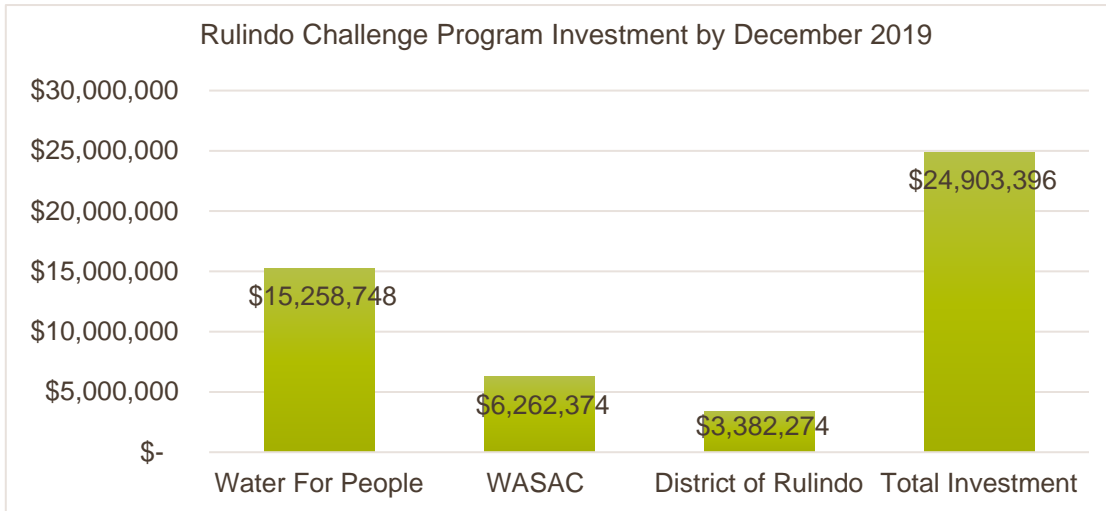
To successfully achieve the Everyone and Forever targets, Water For People, the Government of Rwanda (GoR), and the Rulindo District co-finance the investment required. For water infrastructure development, Water For People, Ministry of Infrastructure via WASAC and District of Rulindo contributed 55%, 30% and 15% respectively.

For interventions in schools and health care facilities, Water For People and the district contribute 80% and 20%, respectively, of the total investment required to finance water and sanitation projects. For sustainability and ownership program activities, Water For People funded 100% for ORSD to implement directly all sustainability oriented activities. The district only contributed in-kind to these sustainability activities through the time of district staff and indirect beneficiaries. WASAC contributed to WASH sustainability-oriented activities indirectly through its department in charge of supporting rural districts. The contribution of WASAC is not cash invested, rather time of staff.

#### 4.1 Program Investments per Partner

Graph 1 indicates a total investment of US\$24,903,396 over the past eight years of implementation of the Rulindo Challenge Program, including hardware and software activities. It also shows that Water For People contributed over 60% to this program. The main reason is that Water For People financed more on water infrastructure development and fully supported the sustainability oriented activities including capacity building and community mobilization. These activities were implemented through the ORSD which has a partnership MoU with Water For People and District of Rulindo.

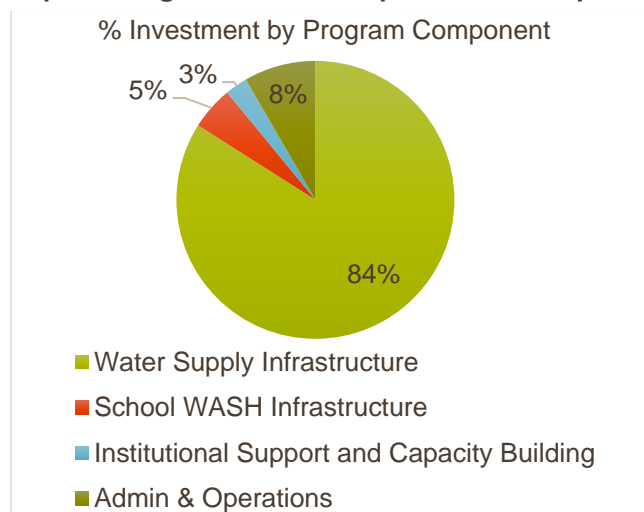
**Graph 1: Rulindo Challenge Investment and Co-finance**



#### 4.2 Program Investment per WASH Component

Graph 2 shows how the investments were spread through each of the Challenge’s programmatic components. 84% of the budget went into the establishment of water supply infrastructure, 8% was invested in program management, 6% was spent on school WASH infrastructures, and the remaining 2% was invested in institutional support and capacity building. Based on Graph 1, other program partners should invest in the sustainability-oriented activities to ensure a high level of WASH services, WASH infrastructure users are satisfied with the services, and the program outcomes are sustainable. This will be only possible if the district and WASAC can allocate sufficient budget for sustainability-oriented activities.

**Graph 2: Program Investment per WASH Component**



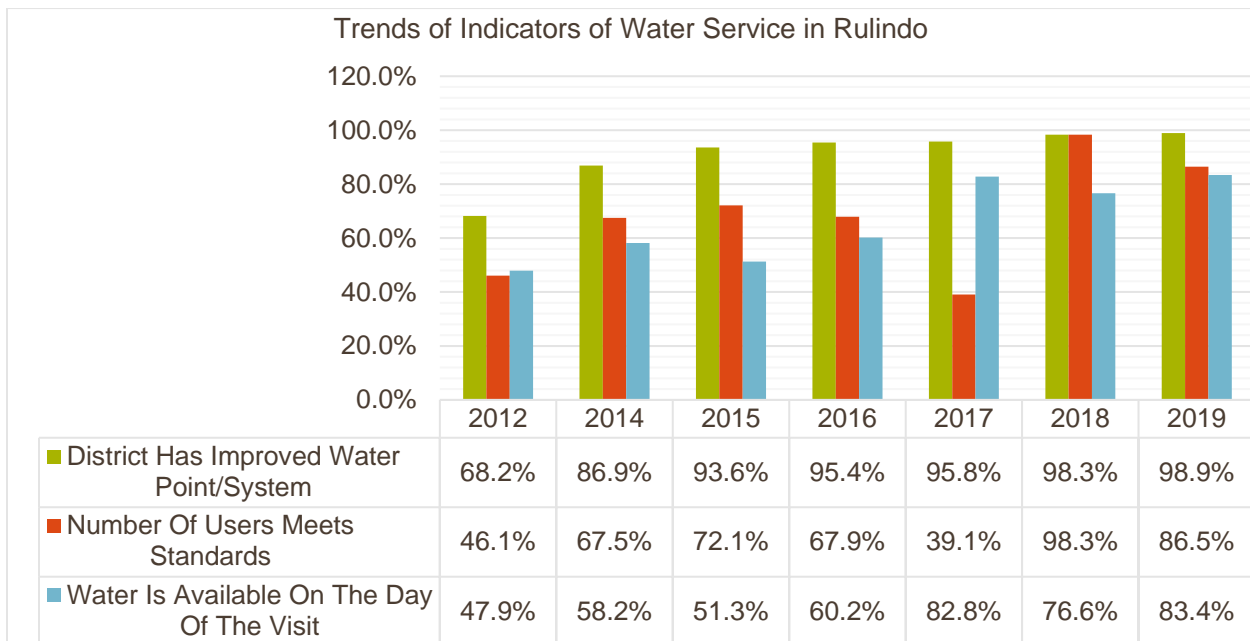
### 5. Progress and Achievements to Date

One of the biggest successes of the Rulindo Challenge Program is that the Rulindo District and the local population had ownership of the Challenge from the beginning. As of September 2018, the following has been achieved:

- 46 piped systems (14 motorized and 32 gravity-fed water supply systems) were built, rehabilitated and extended in all 17 sectors, serving 269,247 people, 56 schools, and 13 health care facilities;
- 85 schools and 2 health care facilities were supported with rainwater harvesting systems, with rainwater mainly being used for cleaning purposes;
- 59 schools were supported with eco-toilets, and schools use human manure and urine as soil conditioner in the school gardens. Some schools sell human manure and urine to the neighbor households for use in their farms;
- 494 Community Health Clubs were established and trained in all villages. Health clubs help communities in hygiene education and improvement of sanitation facilities in their respective communities;
- 919 Water Users' Committees (WUCs) were established and trained to manage water systems and community water points. WUCs oversee the management of water systems and report their complaints to the district and service provider;

4,142 households have constructed their own sanitation facilities, and 1,558 households upgraded their toilets because of community mobilization and hygiene education by 2018. This big achievement is the result of sanitation marketing and hygiene education done through Community Health Clubs.

**Graph 3: Trend of Water Service Levels in Communities since 2012**



Source: Adapted from different Water For People survey results (2012-2019)

### 5.1. Progress of Water Services at the Household Level

The investment in water infrastructure development resulted in increased levels of water service in communities. Graph 3 shows the trend of water service indicators in Rulindo since 2012. It illustrates that access to improved water infrastructure increased from 60.9% to 98.9% from 2012 up to 2019. Other indicators that illustrate increased water service in Rulindo include number of water users (which increased from 35% to 86.5%), water availability (which increased from 42.2% to 83.4%), and quantity of water (which increased from 9.4% to 76.6%).

This shows that Rulindo District has water infrastructure and management in place. However, there is a need to improve water services to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development



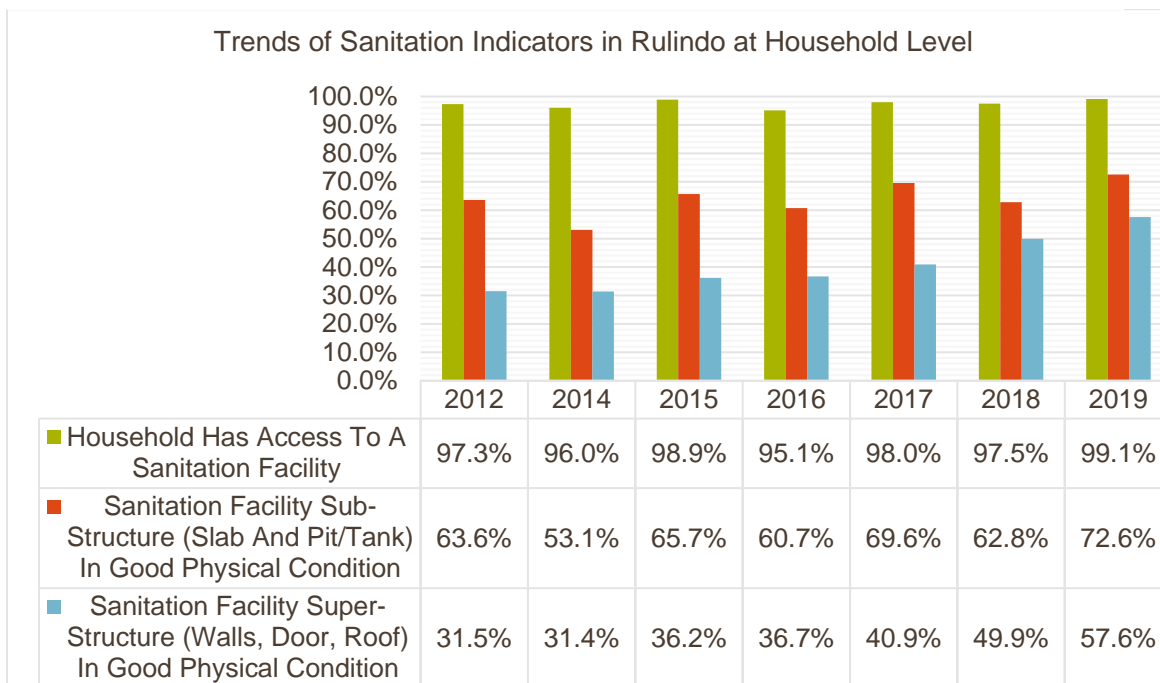
Goal of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030.

To this end, the district decided to hire two private operators to manage all the water systems in all 17 sectors, instead of having multiple private operators to manage water systems using a cost-based tariff and without taking care of the needs of water users. The two hired private operators were required to implement a rural water tariff set by Rwanda Utility Regulatory Authority (RURA).

## 5.2. Progress of Sanitation Services at the Household Level

Sanitation marketing and hygiene education resulted in an increase in the level of sanitation service in Rulindo District (illustrated in Graph 4). The three indicators include household access to sanitation facilities (which increased from 97.3% to 99.1%), status of sanitation sub-structure (which increased from 63.6% to 72.6%), and status of sanitation super-structure (which increased from 31.5% to 57.6%). This achievement is mainly due to the commitments and different initiatives of Rulindo District leadership and different sanitation initiatives launched, including hygiene campaigns and human security campaigns that targeted the improvement of hygienic conditions of toilets in the entire district.

**Graph 4: Trend of Sanitation Service Levels at Household Level since 2012**



Source: Adapted from different Water For People survey results (2012-2019)

## 5.3. Progress of WASH Services in Public Institutions

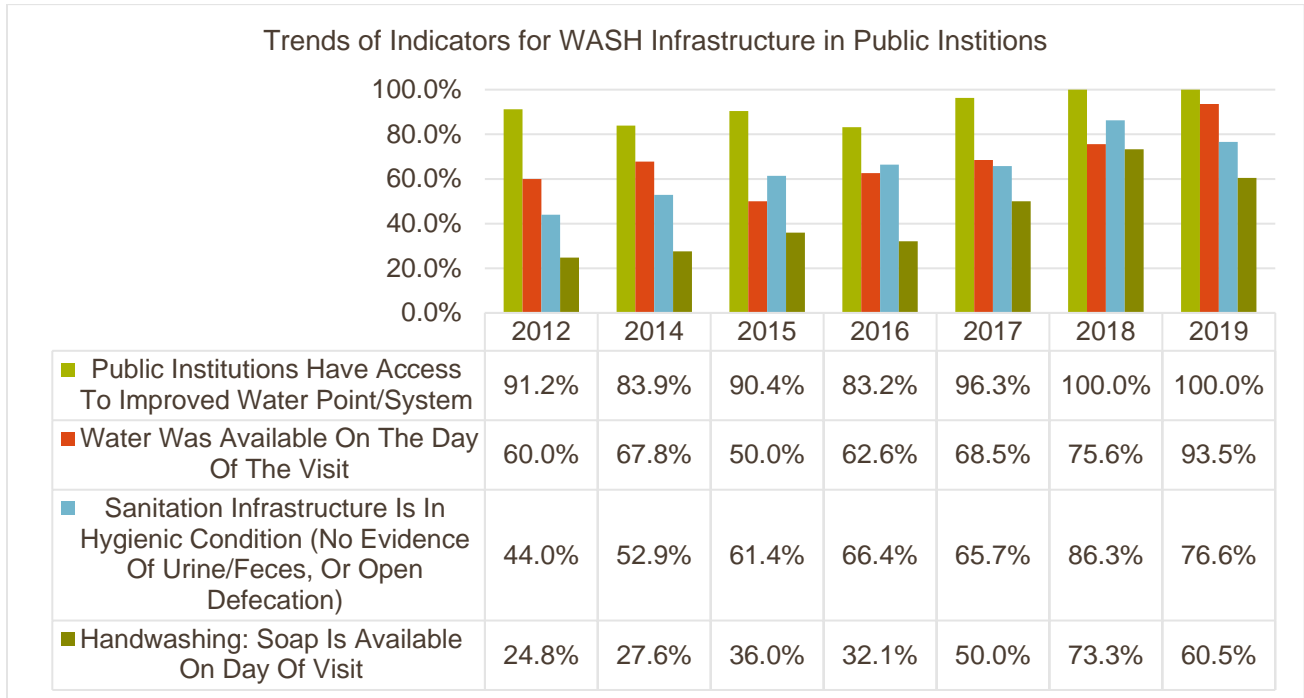
In schools and health facilities, Graph 5 illustrates the status of WASH service indicators in public institutions (schools and health facilities). The district reached 100% access to improved water infrastructure in all public institutions. Other indicators include water availability (which increased from 60% to 93.5%), hygiene conditions of sanitation facilities (which increased from 44% to 76.6%), and availability of soap for handwashing in public institutions (which increased from 24.8% to 60.5%).

This significant increase in the level of WASH services is attributed to the investments in schools and health facilities. Two indicators on hygiene, which are related to hygienic conditions of

sanitation infrastructure and handwashing with soap, still need more efforts to ensure that all schools and health facilities adopt and practice hygiene best practices.

As part of the Rulindo Challenge Program, schools and health centers were supported with safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, rainwater harvesting systems, and hygiene education. In addition, hygiene clubs in schools were established and trained. School Hygiene Clubs were supported throughout all schools to improve levels of sanitation, hygienic conditions at schools, and a clean environment.

**Graph 5: Trend of Indicators for WASH Infrastructure in Public Institution Service Levels since 2012**



Source: Adapted from different Water For People survey results (2012-2019)

In all schools, Water For People and the district introduced performance contracts based on operation and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure in schools. The performance contracts are evaluated every 6 months and best performing schools are rewarded.

District of Rulindo, Water For People, and ORSD are involved in the evaluation of performance contracts and a rewarding ceremony of best performing schools. This initiative contributed significantly to the improvement of the level of WASH service in schools.

## 6. Key Lessons & Best Practices

The Rulindo Challenge Program partners are invested in the regular maintenance of the infrastructure and most importantly the sustainability of WASH services. The following are key lessons learnt from the Rulindo Challenge Program.

**Public Private Partnership (PPP) in water supply infrastructure management:** Once water supply projects are completed in Rulindo District, their management is delegated to a private operator through a contractual arrangement with the successful bidder. The initial contract is usually signed for a 5-year period, renewable based on performance. This private operator model

has contributed to the improvement of water services in Rulindo.

**Establishment of a District WASH Board:** The District WASH Board was established in Rulindo in 2014 to oversee the delivery of WASH services in the entire district. The WASH Board is composed of representatives from all categories of water users: the district council, schools, factories, health care facilities and other public institutions, and communities. The establishment of the District WASH Board contributed to improved ownership of water and sanitation facilities, and this has enhanced the engagement of the district in monitoring and planning WASH services. However, to ensure its sustainability and guarantee that it meets its mandate, the District WASH Board needs permanent staff. This was a recommendations of District WASH Board 5 Year Strategic Plan, which was developed and published, in December 2017. 2018-2023 District WASH Board strategic plan set a vision and roadmap for the Rulindo district WASH Board.

**Community Health Clubs:** In partnership with its local partner and the district, Water For People supports Community Health Clubs (CHCs) in all 494 villages of the district, and their members have attended all Community Based Environmental Health Promotion Program sessions. To ensure full functionality and sustainability of the CHCs, club members were trained and encouraged to establish self-growth groups, including cash round groups to invest in income-generating activities. The CHCs are an essential tool to educate and mobilize the population on adopting proper hygiene and sanitation practices, including using safe drinking water and improving latrines and household hygiene.

**Development of a customer feedback platform:** This tool was developed to help the District WASH Board monitor the service provision and customer satisfaction. It is an IT-based customer feedback platform that allows water users to send complaints and compliments to the district, either through calls or SMS to a designated toll-free number. This has led to quicker response times for the repair of breakdowns and other water user needs across villages.

**Development of a District Water Safety Plan:** A District Water Safety Plan was developed to provide a framework for water quality testing in the district. It gives high priority for biological tests (virus, bacteria, and protozoa), recommends priority actions required to avoid recontamination of water, and ensures water safety from the source to end water users. The service providers are required to test water quality at least every three months.

**Development of a District Water Resources Management Plan:** The District Water Resources Management Plan was developed to provide guidance on effective management of water resources to ensure sustainable water services. The key recommendations of this Plan emphasize protection of water sources, regular monitoring of water quality and quantity, installation of chlorination units to the water systems that do not meet water quality standards, and a study aimed at increasing water production in Rulindo to meet current and future demand. The Plan identifies the status and quantity of water available and provides recommendations for improving water quality and increasing water production to meet water demand in certain sectors of Rulindo District.

**Development of an Asset Registry:** The Asset Registry is a tool that helps the district identify which water systems need maintenance and capital replacements based on the status of water infrastructure. However, this tool needs to be improved to show estimated costs of each water component that needs to be replaced or repaired.

**Establishment and training of hygiene clubs in schools:** School Sanitation and Hygiene Clubs were established and trained on adequate sanitation and best hygiene practices. In addition, they

were sensitized and trained on the need for safe drinking water, menstrual hygiene facilities, and improved hygiene at school. Club members are composed of representatives of parents, teachers, and students. The establishment of these clubs contributed significantly to the improvement of hygienic conditions of sanitation facilities at school.

**Performance contracts in schools:** The initiative of performance contracts signed between the Mayor of Rulindo and schools played a pivotal role in the improvement of WASH services in schools. This initiative is recommended for all the schools because it engages the district and its decentralized entities in the follow-up of school WASH services.

**Technology:** Water complaints and compliments are shared via phone calls, phone short message services, and WhatsApp messages in the customer feedback platform. Based on Rulindo water service delivery experiences, this customer feedback plays a key role in water service delivery. There is an opportunity to build on this platform to improve communication between water users and private operators. Phone technology can be leveraged to pay water bills and improve recovery.

**Long-term planning:** The Rulindo Challenge Program was possible because partners had a long-term planning vision and a WASH investment plan that guided the mobilization of funds. Any district willing to invest in WASH and ensure that all communities, schools, and health clinics have sustainable WASH services needs a long-term WASH investment plan.

## 7. Program Challenges

While the Rulindo Challenge Program has been a success, partners experienced the following challenges.

**Planned settlements:** When the Program was launched, the District of Rulindo was not yet planning for planned settlements, and this became a handicap for the comprehensive investment plan of water supply in the district. This resulted in missing the program target of achieving full infrastructure coverage by 2018.

**Topography:** The district's hilly topography also complicated efforts to supply water to its population and is responsible for the high costs of water supply infrastructure. In some areas, the only possible option to ensure uninterrupted water supply was through the installation of pumping systems which use high pressure pumps and require high operating costs.

**Introduction of tariffs:** Since the population in this rural district used to get untreated water from springs, rivers, and swamps for free, introducing the concept of paying for water was challenging. Through continued education efforts, the population became aware of the necessity to pay a small tariff (RWF 20 per 20 liters for electrical motorized water systems and RWF 8 per 20 liters for gravity water systems) to meet the cost of maintenance and repairs and ensure the long-term sustainability of the system. In addition, communities were encouraged to use safe water to avoid a heavy health cost resulting from avoidable diseases. However, there are limited cases of people resisting to pay the tariffs which need to be addressed to avoid losses to water operators and eventually limit their ability to pay for repairs in due time.

**Unstaffed District WASH Board:** There are no dedicated permanent staff to serve the District WASH Board, drive its agenda, and coordinate all its interventions. This hampers the ability of the Board to deliver on its mission.

## 8. Success Stories

### 8.1 Communities

People in Rulindo are proud of the Rulindo Challenge Program because they are now fetching water near their homes, and the time used to fetch water far away in mountains is now used for household income generating activities. In addition, water near the homes has improved the hygienic conditions of people in Rulindo.

Before the Rulindo Challenge Program was implemented, there was no water service in Rulindo. Rulindo District had many private operators, and there was no consistent tariff. Each private operator had its own tariff that was based on investment and management costs of water systems. In most cases, some parts of Rulindo did not have water service at all because there was no regulation or awareness.

In 2015, Rulindo District and partners started the process of implementing a uniform tariff where water systems were clustered into two lots to ensure that gravity systems were mixed with motorized systems. This was done to facilitate cross-subsidy between gravity systems and motorized systems. The uniform tariff was fixed at RWF 20 per 20-liter jerry can. The implementation of this tariff was appreciated by private operators that were hired. At first, some households fetching water on gravity systems complained because they were used to paying a lower tariff of RWF 5 or 10 or no tariff at all.

In January 2017, RURA set a new national rural tariff, which replaced the uniform tariff in Rulindo (Table 2). This national rural water tariff had different rates on gravity and motorized systems. The rate of gravity systems is RWF 8, and the rate of motorized systems is RWF 20.

**Table 2: National Rural Tariff Structure as of 1 January 2017**

Water System	Tariff (VAT exclusive)		Tariff (VAT inclusive)	
	Tariff RWF/m3	Tariff RWF/jerry can	Tariff RWF/m3	Tariff RWF/jerry can
Gravity Systems	287	7	338	8
Electricity pumping systems	731	17	863	20

Source: Adapted from RURA Rural Tariff, 2017

The above tariff structure was appreciated by water users in Rulindo, and the number of people paying for water service increased significantly. Initially, the private operator did not like this national tariff because their income decreased. As the number of people paying for the service increases, the private operator can break even and start gaining a profit. However, RURA is considering reviewing rural water tariff because to address the complains of not making profits from different private operators including private operators from Rulindo District. The tariff review study will be funded by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund).

Even with the national tariff and people accessing water services, Vice Mayor Prosper MULINDWA says there is a need for long-term contracts for private operators, so they can invest in extensions and rehabilitations. A 15-year minimum contract period of would allow for a sufficient pay pack period, and financial institutions would be interested in providing long-term loans.

### 8.2 Schools

Head teacher Florian HABONIMANA, who represents the schools on the District WASH Board, says that before the District WASH Board was established, school leaders were not committed

because they thought that they could manage their own water systems. This led to the failure of water systems because schools were busy with education, and it was not easy for them to manage and operate their water systems.

Florien says that all schools now have access to continuous water service in Rulindo, compared to the past when there was no private operator or tariff. In the past, schools either had their own water systems or students brought water from their homes. Schools without systems struggled to clean schools and sanitation facilities. Improved water and sanitation services in schools resulted in the following benefits:

- **Hygiene:** Hygienic conditions improved in all schools. Schools are clean, and worms are no longer a problem because all schools have safe drinking water and enough water for cleaning. In rainy seasons, the schools have rainwater harvesting tanks, and rainwater is used for cleaning purposes.
- **Attendance:** All schools in Rulindo have water in their compounds. Today, students are no longer requested to bring water from their homes or to go fetch water for cleaning and cooking. School attendance has improved and drop out cases are rare in Rulindo. Absenteeism and dropout rates were linked to lack of sanitation facilities and water service in schools. Under the Rulindo Challenge Program, schools were supported with drinking water stand taps, rainwater harvesting tanks, and EcoSan toilets.

After the district hired the private operator and established the District WASH Board, people have observed that the schools have regular water service. Complaints about water service are shared with Florien via phone calls and WhatsApp messages, and Florien shares those complaints with the district and private operator. The complaints are attended to by the private operator, and if necessary, the District WASH Board office intervenes. Communications through mobile phones and WhatsApp play a key role in improved water service delivery in Rulindo.

### 8.3 Health Centers

Health Center Manager, Augustin MUGENGA, who represents all health facilities on the District WASH Board says that being a Board member has helped to influence different forums about water services. Health facilities that were not paying for water services are now paying because they have a budget line for utilities (phone, electricity, and water). According to Augustin MUGENGA, the District WASH Board helped water users to know their roles in water service delivery. The health benefits of the Rulindo Challenge include but are not limited to:

- **Hygiene:** Improved hygienic conditions in Rulindo where people are now washing their bodies and clothes regularly. Before Rulindo Challenge, a child could see a parent washing his/her body and ask where he/she is going since people only washed their bodies when they visited friends or went to the market. The reason is that they did not have enough water to wash regularly. Today, people have water in or near their homes, and people wash their bodies and clothes every day.
- **Water and sanitation-related diseases:** As a health professional, Augustin MUGENGA says that some diseases, such as skin diseases, are no longer observed in health clinics in Rulindo. In addition, cases of other water-related diseases, like cholera and diarrhea, are rare in Rulindo.

## 9. Conclusions and Scaling Up

Regardless of the challenges of this Program, the Rulindo Challenge has proven to be successful in addressing common obstacles to attaining sustainable water and sanitation services. Water coverage and sustainability has increased in the district due to a unique approach and model. This Program is proof that reaching Everyone Forever is possible not only in Rwanda, but also in

other countries where many people do not have access to safe drinking water.

Following tremendous achievements of the Rulindo Challenge Program, MININFRA has requested Water For People to extend its interventions in other districts, using the same Everyone Forever model. The Gicumbi District WASH Program replicates the Rulindo Challenge Program model and approach, including partnership, planning, monitoring, and institutions strengthening. In addition, Water For People is working with MININFRA to demonstrate that sustainable WASH services can indeed be achieved through a collaborative effort.

The District Wide Approach, the national policy for WASH in Rwanda, born out of the consultations following the success of the Rulindo Challenge, is a sector-led way of working that seeks to achieve universal access to sustainable WASH services in all districts across Rwanda. This will be achieved by creating an environment that compels all players at community, district, and national levels to work in an organized and coordinated manner and to plan based on agreed needs and priorities, within a controllable development space (district). This model is a true replication of the Rulindo Challenge approach that the Government of Rwanda, Water For People, and Rulindo District have successfully implemented together, and it is being piloted by other WASH stakeholders in other new 4 districts.