

# Hillary Clinton, Melinda French Gates and President of Burundi commend new women's hospital through Village Health Works

KIGUTU, BURUNDI, June 29, 2023

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- The Kigutu Hospital and Women's Health Pavilion is the first teaching hospital in the region, aligning with President Evariste Ndayishimiye's strategic vision to provide each commune in Burundi with access to a comprehensive hospital and health care. There is an urgent need for maternity, neonatal, and preventive pediatric care in Burundi, where the maternal mortality rate is an alarming 334 deaths per 100,000 births. Before reaching five years old, 78 children die per 1000 live births (source: UNICEF) Burundi is one of the poorest nations in the world, and has seen improvements in health and education outcomes in recent years with the help of the global community.

"This hard-fought and long-awaited milestone is a testament to the incredible work of your community, and the powerful belief that health care is a human right and a fundamental building block to global equity." – Hillary Rodham Clinton

[Village Health Works](#) (VHW) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing dignified health care, innovative education programs, and building equity throughout



Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye speaks at the opening of the Kigutu Hospital and Women's Pavilion on June 20, 2023.



Members of the community gather at the opening of the Kigutu Hospital and Women's Pavilion in Burundi.

communities in Burundi. VHW seeks to address issues that stem from the inequality and injustice that impact humanity.

The new hospital (85,000 square feet) will offer a range of health care services (primary health care, emergency, trauma, physical therapy and rehabilitation, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, pediatrics, mental health, general surgery, critical care, neonatology) with diagnostic services including radiology and a laboratory that will include pathology, the first laboratory of its kind in Burundi.

The three-day inaugural celebration of the hospital was commemorated with the attendance of President Evariste Ndayishimiye and the Minister of Public Health, Dr. Sylvie Nzeyimana, regional and local officials, and an outpouring of support by the community of Kigutu. Also in attendance were U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Keith R. Giles and Public Affairs Officer Karin M. Ehlert. The event was open to the general public. Following the inaugural ceremony, community forums on health and education were held for two days at the Kigutu International Academy (KIA), an innovative school for high-performing students supported and operated by VHW.

Although unable to attend the event in person, messages of support were sent by longtime supporters of VHW, Melinda French Gates and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Global philanthropists and leaders in health care and higher education came to Burundi from all over the world for the hospital opening, including philanthropist and VHW board member Sharon Jacob, author and board member Anne Peretz, Dennis Hanno, board treasurer and former president of Wheaton College, Leonce Ndikumana, board member and Professor of Economics at the University of



An aerial view of the Kigutu Hospital and Women's Pavilion in Burundi.



Village Health Works founder and CEO, Deogratias "Deo" Niyizonkiza escorts President Evariste Ndayishimiye to the opening ceremony of the Kigutu Hospital.

Massachusetts Amherst, CEO of Carbon Direct Capital and board member, Jonathan Goldberg, board secretary Larry Goldberg, board chair and Founding Principal of T2AM, Rishi Narang, and entrepreneur and activist Michael Hebb. VHW Founder and CEO Deogratias (Deo) Niyizonkiza led the ceremony, noting that the opening of the Kigutu Hospital and Women's Health Pavilion is the start of a new and critical chapter for Village Health Works.

“Congratulations to everyone that made this into reality. This is a wonderful moment for your community, for Burundi, and all of Africa.” – Melinda French Gates

### About Village Health Works

Village Health Works was founded by internationally recognized humanitarian Deogratias (Deo) Niyizonkiza to provide quality, compassionate health care and education in a dignified environment while addressing the root causes of illness, poverty, violence, and neglect. VHW operates in a rural area of south Burundi, serving a population of approximately 200,000 people, receiving patients mainly from the provinces of Rumonge, Makamba, and Bururi—but also from as far away as Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“Burundi believes in democracy, and knows that health is the key to sustainable development. This hospital is an example of our commitment to sustainable economic development and peace in our country.” – President Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of Burundi

“Since HE Evariste Ndayishimiye took power in 2020, he stressed that universal access to dignified health care is a key pillar of sustainable development in our country Burundi.” – Dr. Sylvie Nzeyimana, Minister of Public Health and the Fight Against AIDS

“The Kigutu Hospital and Women’s Health Pavilion was conceived to fulfill our vision that every human being has the right to receive dignified health care, regardless of whether they are poor or rich” – Deo Niyizonkiza, Founder and CEO, Village Health Works

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