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## **Shooting Touch’s Newest Basketball Court Uplifts Bugesera District**

RILIMA SECTOR, BUGESERA DISTRICT – This past August, [Shooting Touch](#) partnered with JDS Sports to construct its seventh basketball court in Rwanda, located in Rilima Sector, Bugesera District. The new court provides the Rilima community with a place to play basketball, socialize, and receive vital health education and resources. Shooting Touch, an international sport-for-development organization, currently runs daily sport, education, and health programs in six rural communities throughout Rwanda’s Eastern Province. This expansion into Rilima Sector demonstrates Shooting Touch’s ongoing commitment to growing the game of basketball in Rwanda, and using the exciting sport as a tool to improve the health and well-being of rural communities.

The Rilima court is sponsored by JDS Sports, a holding company that manages a variety of major sports, entertainment, and technology organizations, including SLAM Media and Five-Star Basketball, whose logo graphics are featured on the Rilima Shooting Touch court. JDS proudly supports Shooting Touch’s mission of using the mobilizing power of basketball to bridge health and opportunity gaps for youth and women in Rwanda.

The court opened at a [ribbon-cutting ceremony](#) on August 12, 2022, and included addresses from Shooting Touch staff, beneficiaries, and the Mayor of Bugesera, Richard Mutabazi, who was an important collaborator on this project, providing the land for the court and support throughout the building process.

“This court was built in partnership between the District of Bugesera and Shooting Touch organization in a bid to promote sports in the community and to use this infrastructure facility as a tool for life skills, for health, to fight against drugs and other malpractices in the community,” explained Mayor Mutabazi.

Additionally, the event provided more than a hundred local women, girls, and boys their first opportunity to participate in Shooting Touch basketball training and competitions, offering a preview of the impactful programming that will take place in Rilima going forward.

Shooting Touch recognizes that building basketball infrastructure in rural Rwanda is an important step in growing the game throughout the country, however, the work doesn’t stop

there - through daily programming for youth and women of all ages, Shooting Touch and its partners are improving access to physical activity, educational opportunities, and health care, while working intentionally to address gender inequality and gender-based violence. These efforts, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, have led to positive outcomes related to physical and mental well-being on both an individual and community-level in all five existing Shooting Touch Rwanda communities. In Rilima Sector, Shooting Touch aims to continue these efforts and influence lasting change at the organization's new basketball court, and beyond.

“Shooting Touch will greatly impact this community by encouraging people to participate in sport, therefore improving their overall health,” said Sister Marie Grace, Director of the Rilima Health Center. “Here in Rilima, there are a large number of individuals suffering from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), and many of them don’t know their health status. By providing health education and community testing events, Shooting Touch can help raise awareness about NCDs, allowing us to better address the problem.”

Basketball is on the rise in Rwanda, and Shooting Touch is leading the charge at the community level. As the largest youth basketball organization in the country, Shooting Touch is developing the next generation of Rwandan basketball stars, while empowering them to be strong leaders and advocates for equality. Shooting Touch currently serves 1,800 women and 1,500 children in Rwanda, while sponsoring health insurance for nearly 10,000 individuals. By expanding to Rilima Sector, the organization is immediately impacting hundreds more through daily programming and community events.

“The Shooting Touch team thanks our friends, partners, and participants for joining us as we celebrate this huge milestone,” said Christelle Umuhoza, In-Country Program Director at Shooting Touch. “As we continue to grow alongside the sport of basketball in Rwanda, we are excited to reach more families and more communities, using the platform of sport to bring joy into people’s lives, improve their health, and promote gender balance.”

Today, Shooting Touch provides impactful daily programming to over 150 youth and nearly 100 women in Rilima Sector.

### **About Shooting Touch Rwanda**

Shooting Touch is an international nonprofit sport-for-development organization based in Boston, Massachusetts that uses the mobilizing power of basketball to bridge health and opportunity gaps for youth and women facing racial, gender, and economic inequalities. Shooting Touch provides the opportunities and insight necessary to challenge existing socioeconomic inequalities while establishing trust and belonging amongst the beneficiary communities. Since launching Shooting Touch Rwanda (STR) in 2012, Shooting Touch has continued to expand its reach in Rwanda’s Eastern Province, focusing on expanding access to basketball for youth and women and working to improve public health and gender balance in rural communities. To learn more about Shooting Touch Rwanda or to get involved, visit [www.shootingtouch.com/rwanda](http://www.shootingtouch.com/rwanda).