



# NSINDAGIZA ORGANIZATION

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## Geneva Health Forum participation report



*Figure 1: Elie MUGABOWISHEMA participating to the GHF22*

### Introduction

The Geneva Health Forum Conference is organized every 2 years in Geneva, bringing together key actors of global health to help find solutions to global health challenges. GHF22 was the 9<sup>th</sup> edition and was held in Geneva from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 under the theme "COVID19 Pandemic and Environmental Emergency: Reinventing Global Health in times of Global Changes". One the sub-themes was: The involvement of the community in their own healthcare and in the health of their environment. NSINDAGIZA organization, promoting the rights and welfare of older persons, submitted an application to share "The power of community participation in improving the health of older persons during the COVID-19 case of Rwanda", which refers to a one-year COVID-19 project implemented by Helpage International in 2020 in 8 countries, funded by Age International, of which NSINDAGIZA is a national implementing partner in

*Fight for the rights and welfare of older persons, [www.nsindagiza.org](http://www.nsindagiza.org)*



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Rwanda. The abstract was successful for poster presentation, which was an opportunity to profile the joint intervention between Helpage International and Age International as International NGOs and NSINDAGIZA Organization as a local NGO in fighting the pandemic and the promotion of the older people's right to access quality health, themselves involved as stated in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

## **Participation**

A total of 1,600 people participated including NGOs, scientists, politicians, UN representatives, private sectors and other different key actors in the health sector. It was an opportunity for different people to profile their works and interact with others from different corners of the world. Most of the presentations were focused on healthy people, a healthy ecosystem and healthy wild and domestic animals, summarized into "One health approach", with the aim to promote one health at international, regional and national levels as this is the basis of sustainable development goals.

## **Profit of participation**

My poster presentation was "The power of community participation in improving the health of older persons during the COVID19 pandemic", which fits well with healthy humane, though apparently they didn't think about older persons. It was, however, interesting for them to hear about what we do in relation to health and ageing. It also gave me an opportunity to interact with different actors in health through individual discussions, workshops and side events. I was able to raise ageing issues through challenging questions related to the link between One Health and the UN decade of healthy ageing. If older persons are not included in different health programs, proposing to extend their intervention to all ages if they really want to promote global partnership in One Health approach through advocacy and awareness-raising. As there were no other people representing the ageing network, I was happy to see that one of the winning research topics from university students was on ageing, presented by one student from Ethiopia, even though the African figure was almost absent. His topic question was "What are ethical challenges with decision-making in old age, in Ethiopia?" and in his research he found that older people were the last priority during the COVID19 pandemic. Older people don't have enough information when decisions are made and they complain about the quality of health services they receive at health structures, because health professionals are not trained and sensitized. Then the question was "What does it take to make better and more ethical decisions in relation with Bio-ethical & ageing?"



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## Outcomes

Participation in the GHF22 responds to the implementation of NSINDAGIZA's 5 years' strategic plan. One of its pillars is healthy ageing and networking, according to the National older persons' policy of which promotion of health is one of the objectives. Thanks to the participation in the GHF22, I was able to hear from different presenters, the issues related to ageing among marginalized communities (although older people were not mentioned) and understand how to apply it to older people. It was also an opportunity to share with others how we worked together with Age International, Helpage, NSINDAGIZA, the Government of Rwanda, Community-based volunteers and the older people themselves, to face the pandemic of COVID19, and while I can't quantify it, I was happy that our voice was raised in that forum, where people seemed not to be aware of healthy ageing though they are among its owners. The challenging question asked to me was "What did you do with the RNA findings"?

## Take away from the conference

The take away from the conference include the following:

1. Adopt the whole society approach of stronger together;
2. Move from principles to implementation/action;
3. Include one health in education system and trainings;
4. Strengthen collaboration and cooperation;
5. The world failed in preventing the pandemic of COVID19, we should learn from past experiences to always be prepared for any potential danger.

## Conclusion

We are thankful to Age International for their financial support to participate comfortably in the GHF22, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, we wish that the strong ageing actors such as Age International, Helpage International and others join the GHF in order to push the inclusion of ageing in that important forum.

We are also thankful to Helpage International for their technical support in developing the abstract but also by the good collaboration during the Project implementation.

Done at Kigali on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022

By Elie MUGABOWISHEMA

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