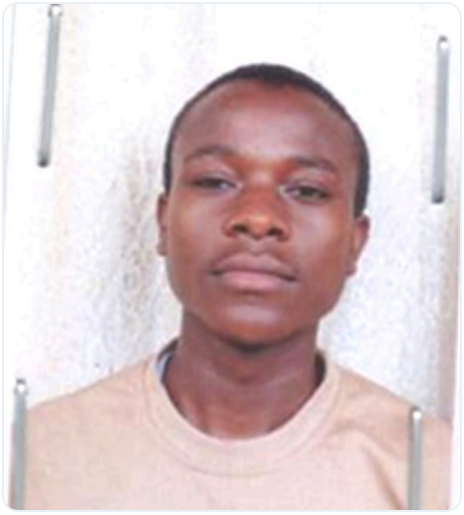
2026 – 2027 Scholarship Recipient



Ruphin Biragi

Biomedical Sciences · Year 2 of 4
Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Goma

> *"I want to work on water because that is where health begins. My community has no clean drinking water, so we drink what makes us sick."*

First
IN HIS CLASS
Ranked first in his high school every year, on an 85% average.

84%
UNIVERSITY, YEAR ONE
Honors, University of Bukavu, the only year a sponsor paid for in full.

Top 10%
NATIONAL EXAM
Congo's university entrance exam, taken by over a million students a year.

His story

Ruphin is from a small village in the DRC where almost everyone lacks access to clean drinking water. Pregnant women, girls, and elderly women walk to the lake to retrieve unsafe water. Cholera is common. Ruphin is one of the top scholars in his region: first in his class in high school, and one of the highest grades in his first year at university in 2023, which was funded by a local DRC sponsor. The escalating war in the DRC brought financial instability, and his sponsor could no longer afford to pay for his studies. Ruphin has very limited income from tutoring local children, and his parents are currently out of work.

What he will do with the degree

- → Work in health care and with DRC-based NGOs that treat and prevent cholera and typhoid.
- → Improve nutrition and everyday health, so people are stronger against waterborne disease, especially children and the elderly.
- → Share his knowledge with children in his community, where he is already a tutor.

His promise

- → Get good grades and continue to excel.
- → Graduate in three more years, with one year of study already finished.
- → Use his profession to help prevent sickness, and use the higher salary a university degree brings to support his family and his community.

PROGRAM
Biomedical Sciences

UNIVERSITY
Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Goma

YEAR
2 of 4

STATUS
In class since Oct 26, 2026

AGE
21

HOME
Goma, North Kivu

LANGUAGES
French, Swahili, some English

FUNDING
Every student in this program is funded by a combination of Clean Water Help, corporate sponsors, and private donors.

SELECTION
Chosen from more than thirty applicants by our review panel, on exam results, financial need, and a demonstrated commitment to water.

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Clean Water Help and PALPER asbl fund university scholarships for students in North Kivu who will spend their careers on water. Every student is selected on merit and followed through to graduation.

To support the next group of students, contact **impact@cleanwaterhelp.org**

Statement of Purpose and Need

Ruphin Biragi · In his own words, June 2026

To the Clean Water Help organization: allow me to come before you with this letter, and to set out my journey and my ambitions.

Why I want to work on water

I want to work in the water sector because it is essential to the quality of health care. My community does not have clean drinking water, and that exposes us to disease. Clean water is a cornerstone of good health, and I want to work where the two meet.

What I have seen at home

My village is Cishugi. There is no clean drinking water there. Pregnant women and elderly women walk to the lake and carry the water home. It is not safe to drink and they drink it anyway, because there is nothing else. What follows is cholera, other waterborne illness, and complications in pregnancy.

How I got here

I finished secondary school at the Kanyantende Institute in 2023. From primary school through to my diploma I was first in my class, and first in my school, with an average of 85 percent. There were many days I could not sit in class because the fees had not been paid. I held my place anyway.

A man then offered to pay my university fees, on condition that I study his own field. He worked in mining, so I enrolled at the Official University of Bukavu, in the School of Mines, and finished the year with honors. He then told me that with a result like that the university should carry my costs, and he stopped. I lost the following academic year entirely.

A second man offered to help, on condition that I move to the health sector. He enrolled me at the Catholic University of Bukavu, in medicine. Then the war in the east reached his own situation and he could not continue, so I could not finish that year. I am grateful to both of them. I am also, once again, without a way to pay.

Why I cannot pay

My parents have no income that can support my studies, and I have no sponsor now. One year at university costs $1,500, which covers registration and tuition, books and supplies, and food, transport and housing, so that I do not have to work instead of study.

What I will do with the degree

I want to work in health care, and with Congolese organizations that treat and prevent diseases like cholera and typhoid. I want to work on nutrition and everyday health as well, because a person who is already weak suffers most when the water is bad, and that means the sick, the elderly and the children. I also want to keep teaching. I work as a tutor for children at home, and I have always wanted to pass on what I know.

My promises

→ I will not disappoint you.

→ I will do quality work, not only for myself but for my community.

→ I will serve anyone who needs it, without discrimination.

Ruphin Biragi

GOMA, NORTH KIVU · DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Every fact here comes from Ruphin's own application letter and his written answers to our questions. The English has been shortened and tidied for length, and nothing has been added that he did not say. Ruphin reviewed and approved this text before publication.

Why We Are Funding Ruphin

A note from Clean Water Help

More than thirty young people applied to this program for Fall 2026, and Ruphin was one of the five students chosen. He is extremely motivated and has been successful in school in every situation where he had funding. He now has the financial stability to simply focus on studying, and we expect him to excel.

Money is the only thing that has stopped him

Ruphin has never failed a year. He has run out of money twice. The first sponsor decided that a strong result meant the university should take over the cost. The second lost his own means to the war in the east, which is a sentence we write often about North Kivu and never lightly. Between them, Ruphin has lost two academic years to funding rather than to performance. That is the one problem funding solves outright, and it is now solved.

He already thinks about water the way we do

Most applicants write about water in general terms. Ruphin names a place, names who the problem falls on, and names what it costs them. He also makes the connection our work is built on, that clean water sits upstream of health care rather than beside it. Biomedical sciences at Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs is the right foundation for the work he describes, and it is work we expect to be doing alongside him in North Kivu.

We already know him

Ruphin has been in direct and regular contact with Byran Fuhrmann, our executive director, who is also his mentor in this program. He answers, he follows up, and he does it in English as well as French and Swahili. We did not fund a file. We funded someone we know, and we intend to keep working with him well beyond this scholarship.

> *"How could I not help my community with the capacities I hold?"*
>
> RUPHIN BIRAGI, IN HIS APPLICATION LETTER, JUNE 2026

Byran Fuhrmann

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CLEAN WATER HELP · IMPACT@CLEANWATERHELP.ORG