Abstract
Soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections are known to be a significant problem in Rwanda. The Ministry of Health and individual villages are aware of its impact on people’s health and well-being as well as its impact on the country’s economy. The goal of the JeffHEALTH project is to educate poor, rural villages in Rwanda so that village members can take the knowledge they gain, put it into practice and share this knowledge with generations to come.

Introduction
In the summer of 2012, a plan was developed to teach a health committee in the rural village of Akarambi in Rwanda about ways soil-transmitted helminths are transmitted and ways to prevent infection. In addition, a plan was formulated to teach children in the village about preventing STH infections through educational and interactive games.

2012 Program
Three educational sessions were held with the health committee, teaching members about the life cycle of STH, how they are transmitted, signs and symptoms if one becomes infected, and steps to take to prevent infection. Each committee member received an information packet for reference that included all of the information that was discussed in the lessons. Additionally, two interactive sessions with children were completed. Forty children in total learned about preventing STH infections by listening to a short lecture and then playing games to highlight the importance of practicing good hygiene and wearing shoes. It was impressed upon the health committee that the games should be played with children in the village periodically throughout the year to reinforce the importance of practicing quality hygiene and wearing shoes in an effort to prevent STH infections, improve their overall health, and give them the knowledge to spread to other children in the village and to future generations.

Future Objectives
Short-term Objectives:
1. Assess the health committee’s knowledge about STH, especially on how to prevent infection.
2. Determine whether or not the health committee is being diligent about sharing their knowledge about proper hygiene and preventing STH infections with the community, especially with children through the interactive activities developed by JeffHEALTH.
3. Assess children’s knowledge of STH and how to prevent infection.

Long-term Objectives:
• An investigation into the number of cases of STH infections occurring each year in Akarambi.
• Determine who is becoming infected and why.
• Case-control, retrospective study. The case will be Akarambi village and the control is another village that is similar to Akarambi- same water supply, close in location to Akarambi. If it is determined that the number of cases of STH infections continually decline each year, then the program is succeeding in its effort to prevent infections. If the number of cases is on the rise or staying status quo, then the program needs to be re-evaluated and adjusted so that infection rates decrease.

Conclusion
JeffHEALTH’s 2012 program achieved its objectives in dispensing knowledge to Akarambi village about how to prevent STH infections. Moving forward, the program will be evaluated for its effectiveness and its sustainability in the village.

Resources