



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

# WFP Rwanda Country Brief February 2020



## Operational Context

A small, landlocked country with a population of 12.1 million people growing at 2.4 percent annually, Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. Since the 1994 genocide, the Government of Rwanda has recorded significant achievements in poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, education and public health, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, 38.2 percent of the population continues to live below the poverty line and almost one fifth is food insecure. Levels of stunting among young children remain very high (38 percent according to the 2019 Global Nutrition Report for Rwanda). Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, with 89 percent of rural households practising small-scale farming. Poor rainfall, drought, floods and the limited amount of land that is suitable for agriculture, alongside pests and diseases, continue to pose risks to food security.

Moreover, according to UNHCR data, as of February 2020 Rwanda hosts 150,644 Congolese and Burundian refugees. Many refugees have been in the country for decades, with limited prospects for repatriation in the immediate future, and rely almost completely on WFP food assistance. The “forgotten crises” in neighbouring countries, where protracted volatility is exacerbated by political instability, may lead to the further arrival of refugees in the coming years.



Population: **12.1 million**

2019 Human Development Index:  
**157 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower**

Chronic malnutrition: **38 percent**  
of children between **6-59 months**

## In Numbers

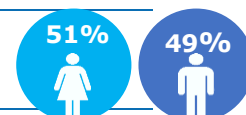
**445 MT** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 1,001,170** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 11.5 m** six months net funding requirements, representing 44 percent of total requirements for the next six months (March - August 2020).

**225,957 people assisted**

In February 2020



## Operational Updates

**Refugee Assistance:** WFP reached 147,966 people with food assistance in February, including 74,342 Congolese refugees, 60,765 Burundian refugees, 372 asylum seekers, 122 returnees, as well as 12,365 primary school children from the refugees and host community attending the same schools.

The number of beneficiaries receiving cash-based transfers increased from 132,366 in January to 133,237 in February as a result of a bank registration exercise conducted in Mahama, Nyabiheke and Gihembe refugee camps in February. The bank registration process is conducted on a monthly basis in Mahama camp and on quarterly basis in Congolese refugee camps, with the objective to register new refugee households, allowing them to access cash assistance through e-cards.

**Pandemic Preparedness and Planning:** In response to the risk of the spread of the global corona virus (COVID-19) into Rwanda, WFP reviewed its business continuity plan and updated its Emergency Preparedness and Response activities to ensure pandemic-related measures were included and up to date. This meant a reinforcement of the infection-prevention and control practices put in place in WFP offices in the last quarter of 2019, originally for Ebola prevention. The Country Office also assessed available stocks of personal protective equipment and mobile isolation units for WFP personnel and to potentially support the Government's efforts to manage COVID-19.

**Social Protection:** A diagnostic study led by WFP together with the Social Protection Sector Working Group has mapped out opportunities to enhance the climate-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection system in Rwanda. The study bases its findings on a climate analysis, a desk review and in-country field work, and considers the impact of climate shocks on household well-being. The study findings will be discussed at a high-level policy forum at the start of the second quarter.

**Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF):** The first National School Feeding Technical Working Group meeting was held to discuss the National School Feeding Policy and Strategy, the government's five-year costing proposal for scaling up the national school feeding programme and the modeling of nutritious menus for school feeding. The meeting brought together participants from 15 Ministries, government agencies and development partners. Key recommendations to ensure adequate technical support for scaling up the national school feeding programme were formulated.

**Contact info:** Emily Fredenberg ([emilyjean.fredenberg@wfp.org](mailto:emilyjean.fredenberg@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Edith Heines

**Photo caption:** Refugee redeeming food assistance in Mahama camp market. Photo: WFP/Emily Fredenberg

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
226.1 m	55.6 m	11.5 m

### Strategic Result 1: Access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Refugees, returnees and other crisis affected population in Rwanda have access to adequate and nutritious food at all times.

**Focus area:** *Crisis response*

#### Activities:

- Provide food and nutrition assistance and basic livelihood support to refugees and returnees.
- Provide food or cash, nutrition support and other assistance to local Rwandan populations in need of assistance, including through provision of WFP services to the Government of Rwanda and humanitarian agencies.

### Strategic Result 2: Access to food

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Vulnerable populations in food-insecure communities/areas have improved access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

**Focus area:** *Resilience building.*

#### Activities:

- Support the design, implementation, and scale up of national food security and nutrition sensitive social protection programmes.

### Strategic Result 3: End Malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Children under 5, adolescents, and pregnant, nursing women/girls in Rwanda have improved access to nutritious foods and services to meet their nutritional needs all year.

**Focus area:** *Root causes*

#### Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening support to national programmes that improve the nutrition status of targeted populations.

### Strategic Result 4: Smallholder Productivity & Incomes

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Smallholder farmers, especially women, have increased marketable surplus and can safely access agricultural markets through efficient supply chains by 2030.

**Focus area:** *Root causes*

#### Activities:

- Provide support, education, and capacity strengthening services for smallholder farmers and value chain actors.

### Strategic Result 5: Global partnerships

**Strategic Outcome 5:** The Government of Rwanda and the humanitarian community is provided with adequate, timely, cost-efficient and agile supply chain services and expertise necessary to effectively respond to emergency crisis.

**Focus area:** *Crisis response*

#### Activities:

- Deliver supply chain services and expertise to enable all partners to provide assistance to affected population.

The HGSF programme reached approximately 78,000 children with nutritious meals each school day. WFP delivered 184 metric tons (MT) of locally produced maize meal with a value of USD 163,944 to schools participating in the HGSF programme in Nyaruguru and Nyamagabe districts. The maize meal was sourced from smallholder farmer cooperatives, including WFP-supported cooperatives through the Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA). FtMA provides capacity strengthening to smallholder farmers to enhance food quality and safety, and to ensure national value chains are smallholder farmer inclusive.

**Nutrition:** WFP supported the Rwanda Biomedical Center to revise the national guidelines for food, nutrition and care for people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Rwanda. These guidelines were developed in 2009 and have been updated to align with new national and international evidence and guidance, reflecting the needs of health staff and PLHIVs in Rwanda. The updated guidelines will contribute to the standardisation and improvement of nutrition and HIV service delivery and are expected to be validated by March 2020.

Phase two of the collaboration between Boston Consulting Group (BCG), One UN, the National Early Childhood Development Programme (NECDP) and other stakeholders on the Smart Simplicity approach to accelerate the reduction of stunting in Rwanda commenced. Phase two is aimed at scaling up from Kabagabo village where the “stunting-free” village concept was modelled in late 2019, to forty additional villages. This collaboration utilises innovative tools such as the child scorecard, village dashboard and improving the capacity of subnational stakeholders including Community Health Workers to support the Government in its efforts to reduce stunting. Activities in this phase will inform an eventual national scale-up.

**Smallholder Agricultural Market Support:** Aggregation and sales activities for the main maize harvest for WFP-supported farmer cooperatives was underway throughout the month, following the successful completion of post-harvest handling and storage (PHHS) training to 28,000 smallholder farmers (51percent of whom were women).

## Monitoring

**Market monitoring inside and around refugee camps:** Regular food price monitoring in and around refugee camps indicated that the average cost for buying a basic food basket was three percent lower than WFP’s cash transfer amount and 17 percent less compared to January 2020. This was 27 percent higher than February 2019. Although, February is post-harvest season, most interviewed traders reported that the maize and beans supply to markets was lower than normal, which is most likely linked to low seasonal production caused by heavy rainfall over the last quarter in 2019.

## Challenges

**Funding Situation:** WFP needs US\$11.5 million in the next six months (March-August 2020) to be able to implement planned activities, particularly for food and nutrition assistance to refugees in Rwanda.

Of the US\$11.5 million, WFP urgently needs US\$1.7 million in this period to continue providing capacity strengthening support to national programmes that improve the nutrition status of targeted populations. Should no additional funding be secured, WFP’s support to these programmes could be at risk.

## Success story

Learn more about WFP’s support to empower rural women farmers through the Joint UN programme on Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment (RWEE) [here](#).

**Donors:** Belgium, Canada, DEVCO, ECHO, Japan, MasterCard, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Common Funds and Agencies (excluding UN CERF), UKAID, USAID, & USDA.