



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Rwanda Country Brief March 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 March 2020 Rwanda hosts 148,268 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

Contact info: Emily Fredenberg (emilyjean.fredenberg@wfp.org)

Country Director: Edith Heines

Photo caption: Students in Kiziba camp receiving breakfast porridge as part of WFP school feeding.

Photo: WFP/Emily Fredenberg

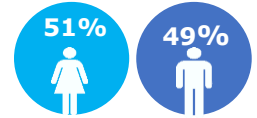
In Numbers

444. MT of food assistance distributed

US\$ 987,549 cash-based transfers made

US\$ 11.8 m six months net funding requirements, representing 45 percent of total requirements for the next six months (April - September 2020).

226, 700 people assisted in March 2020



Operational Updates

COVID-19 Preparedness & Response: Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in Rwanda WFP prioritized continuing its life-saving humanitarian food and nutrition assistance to refugees.

Refugee Assistance: WFP reached 148,059 people with food assistance in March, including 74,400 Congolese refugees, 60,300 Burundian refugees, 2,200 new arrivals, 200 returnees, and nearly 11,000 school children from the host community attending the same schools with refugee children who benefitted from school feeding. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within refugee camps, WFP introduced certain measures including physical distancing at food distribution sites and reducing the number of monthly distributions for the nutrition programme from twice to once per month.

With the closure of schools in and around refugee camps from 16th March, school feeding activities were suspended. The scale of Nutrition Education and Counselling (NEC) activities was reduced, implemented only through Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Due to the closure of the help-desk, complaints and feedback to refugees was primarily gathered and provided via WFP’s hot-line along with WhatsApp texts collected from bank agents regarding e-card issues. Face to face consultation is still ongoing during field visits adhering to restrictions in place such as physical distancing. WFP engaged with its financial service provider, Equity Bank to explore cashless and contactless solutions for refugees to redeem their cash assistance to reduce the risk of transmission.

Social Protection: WFP in collaboration with FAO and UNICEF conducted inception visits in five partner districts to facilitate programme implementation under the Joint UN programme on social protection. Nearly half of the joint programmes budget will be channeled to support integrated social protection and innovative solutions for graduating the most vulnerable from poverty at community level.

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF): On 16th March, due to school closures related to COVID-19, the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme was suspended until schools are able to reopen. The programme reaches 78,677 children with nutritious meals each school day. Before school closures, WFP supported the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to develop an updated modelling of school feeding menus based on budget parameters.

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
226.1 m	61.1 m	11.8m

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.

Nutrition: The second phase of Smart Simplicity activities began, in partnership with One UN nutrition agencies and the Boston Consulting Group, to accelerate the reduction of stunting in Rwanda. The National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) aims to expand the Smart Simplicity approach nationwide, and is seeking additional donor funding to support this scale-up. Tools were developed, including a child scorecard, community register and village dashboard, though the implementation plan required revision following the outbreak of COVID-19. Revisions including exploring the possibility of utilizing remote data collection are expected to take place in April.

The National Guidelines for Food, Nutritional Support and Care for people living with HIV (PLHIVs) in Rwanda and the accompanying counselling cards were revised. Validation of the materials with government was delayed due to COVID-19.

Smallholder Agricultural Market Support: Despite movement restrictions linked to COVID-19, WFP-supported farmer cooperatives continued to deliver maize to buyers with limited interruptions, ensuring farmers were able to sell their produce. Approximately 3,500 MT of maize was sold in March, generating approximately US\$ 1M in revenue for smallholder farmers.

Supply Chain: On 19th March Rwanda borders closed due to COVID-19, except for the movement of goods and cargo. Transport of food and essential goods continued to function with minimal disruption though WFP continued to facilitate movements.

Monitoring

Market monitoring inside and around refugee camps: Food price monitoring in and around refugee camps indicated the average price of a basic food basket in March 2020 was four percent less than the previous month and seven percent less than the WFP transfer amount. Prices were still 21 percent higher than March 2019 and 30 percent higher than March 2018. Price increases were observed immediately after the COVID-19 outbreak for nearly all basic commodities (rice, salt, oil, beans, maize) though prices stabilized in the following weeks. However, prices for salt and beans continued to increase. Markets also reported challenges in adequately restocking food due to transport challenges related to government movement restrictions to combat COVID-19.

Challenges

Funding Situation: WFP needs US\$ 11.8 million in the next six months (April-September 2020) to be able to implement planned activities. US\$ 4.3 million is required during this period to ensure continued humanitarian food and nutrition assistance to refugees. Should additional funding not be received by July 2020, WFP will be forced to impose ration reductions.

Success story

Learn more about how WFP's humanitarian cash assistance to refugees supports entrepreneurial woman in Rwanda [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.