



WFP Rwanda Country Brief

February 2023

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

A small, landlocked country with a population of 13.2 million people growing at 2.3 percent annually, Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. In the past three decades, 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 (33 percent according to the 2019-2020 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey). Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, with 69 percent of households engaged in crop production or animal husbandry. Irregular 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 28 February 2023 Rwanda hosted 126,737 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. Many refugees have been in the country for decades 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: **13.2 million**

2021 Human Development Index: **165 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower**

Chronic malnutrition: **33 percent** of children between **6-59 months**

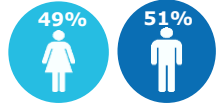
In Numbers

505.354 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 959,043 cash-based transfers (CBT) distributed

USD 19.2 million six months (March – August 2023) net funding requirements, representing 54 percent of total requirements

240,879 people assisted in February 2023



Operational Updates

Refugee Assistance:

- WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 123,281 people, including 109,837 refugees, 5,634 asylum seekers, 7,460 host community children, and 350 Rwandan returnees. This included USD 959,043 of cash-based transfers, allowing eligible refugees to purchase food of their choice. Refugee and host community children attending the same schools received school meals.
- Due to the continued high food price inflation in Rwanda, WFP adjusted the cash rations to refugees from RWF 7,000 to RWF 10,000 per person per month for highly vulnerable and from RWF 3,500 to RWF 5,000 for moderately vulnerable refugees. This was done in consultation with MINEMA and UNHCR, resulting in a significant improvement in the purchasing power of beneficiaries in all camps.
- Since November 2022, insecurity in eastern DRC has been displacing an increasing number of people due to armed violence in the area. By 28 February 2023, 5,634 asylum seekers had arrived in Rwanda. WFP is providing in-kind food and nutrition assistance to these people.

Resilient Livelihoods:

- WFP distributed livestock to 207 people (64 percent female) in Rutsiro and Karongi districts. This included 98 pigs, 74 goats and 35 sheep, and training on feeding, hygiene, and disease management and control. The livestock provides for income diversification to address immediate food and household needs, strengthening resilience against shocks and stressors that negatively impact livelihoods.
- 313 community members (55 percent female) received gender awareness training and coaching. Gender champions trained by WFP and its partners lead trainings to different groups such as cooperatives and households for gender transformation and behaviour change. This addresses gender inequality as an underlying cause of food insecurity to empower women to have more decision-making power.

Nutrition and HIV:

- WFP conducted a study on the availability and consumption of fortified and biofortified foods in seven selected districts of Rwanda: Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rutsiro, Kayanza, Gasabo, Burera, and Karongi. The final report is expected at the end of March 2023.
- In collaboration with Rwanda Biomedical Center, WFP conducted a study on HIV-sensitive Social Protection. Data collection was completed and the final report is also expected by end-March 2023.

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Photo caption: WFP and its partners provided training to 298 stakeholders to improve the quality of the National School Feeding Programme and compliance with the School Feeding Operational Guidelines. Photo: WFP/Aristide GATERA

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2024)

| Total Requirement (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 278.3 m | 140.7 m | 19.2 m |

SDG target 1: Everyone has 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.

SDG target 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.

SDG target 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.

SDG target 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.

SDG target 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 populations.

School Feeding:

- Daily school meals were provided to approximately 117,000 students in 140 schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and district authorities. This aims to improve children's concentration, health and nutrition, and reduce school absenteeism.
- Cash transfers to WFP-supported schools enabled the supplementation of the dried commodities of fortified rice, beans, and fortified wholegrain maize meal on three days per week. Initial reports from schools have shown the cash transfers greatly enhance the nutritional value of the meal, providing schoolchildren with much-needed nutrients from fresh fruits, vegetables, and animal-source protein, such as dried fish.
- Together with the Ministry of Education and partners, WFP continued national school feeding trainings to 298 stakeholders in the Western and Northern provinces, as well as Kigali. The continued roll-out of this Training-of-Trainers model serves to improve the quality of the National School Feeding Programme and compliance with the School Feeding Operational Guidelines. These trainings will build the capacity of stakeholders at national and local level, a crucial step ahead of the transition of 75 percent of WFP-supported schools into the national programme after the current school year.

Monitoring

- During February, the average cost of the food basket was RWF 13,218, representing a decrease of 5.6 percent from January 2023 (RWF 13,997), and 86 percent increase compared to January 2022. All refugee camps registered a decrease in the cost of the food basket, especially in Kiziba and Nyabiheke where it reduced by 9.9 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively. Like in January 2023, the observed decrease is mainly attributed to reduced prices of maize grains in several parts of the country, following Season A 2023 maize harvests.
- Continued high food price inflation and extreme climate events threatening food and nutrition security caused Rwanda to be classified under the Early Action and Emergency Response category in [WFP's corporate alert system](#).

Challenges

- WFP requires USD 19.2 million for the next six months (March – August 2023), representing 54 percent of the total funding requirement for planned activities. Of this, USD 17 million is required to restore full food rations to refugees hosted in Rwanda, in line with a targeting mechanism where WFP provides support based on vulnerability status, as well as to support new asylum seekers and Rwandan returnees.
- USD 1.3 million are needed in complementary funding for the year 2023 for the home-grown school feeding (HGSF) programme to procure locally produced fresh foods sourced from markets near schools, in line with the national school feeding programme.
- WFP is facing a shortfall of USD 400,000 for strengthening the national social protection system, required to meet the technical assistance commitments to the Government for enhanced shock response.
- In addition, WFP needs USD 413,090 to continue nutrition capacity strengthening activities and support the Government's stunting prevention efforts.

Donors: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, EU (ECHO and INTPA), France, Germany (BMZ and GFFO), Japan, Republic of Korea, Mastercard Foundation, New Zealand, Norway, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Common Funds and Agencies, USA (USAID BHA and USDA).