



World Food Programme

WFP Rwanda Country Brief

October 2023

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

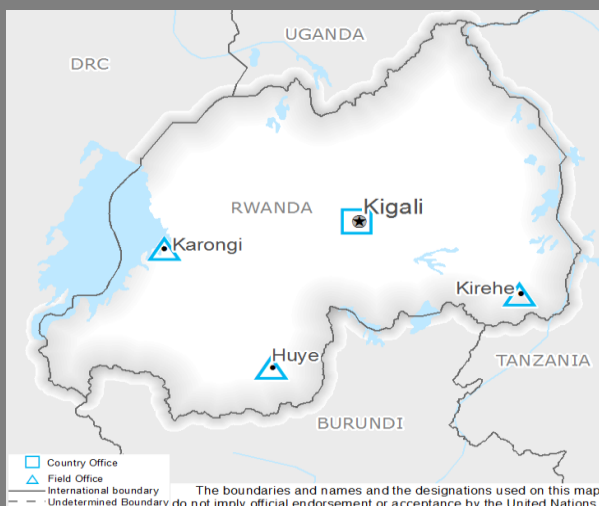


Operational Context

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 31 October 2023 Rwanda hosted 134,749 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

338.8 MT of food distributed

USD 1,226,000 cash-based transfers (CBT) distributed

USD 16.2 million six months (November 2023 – April 2024) net funding requirements, representing 63 percent of total requirements

162,931 people assisted in October 2023



Operational Updates

Refugee operation and emergency assistance:

- WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 128,554 people, including 118,362 refugees, 9,514 unregistered asylum seekers, and 678 Rwandan returnees. This included USD 906,672 of cash-based transfers allowing eligible refugees to purchase food of their choice, and USD 23,469 transferred to schools as first trimester school feeding contribution to schools that host refugees. A total of 247 MT of food commodities were distributed as hot meals to asylum seekers and returnees, and under nutrition and school feeding programmes. In addition, 4,709 people were reached through Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCC-N).
- Since November 2022, insecurity in eastern DRC has been displacing an increasing number of people due to armed violence in the area. By end-October 2023, a total of 13,446 of asylum seekers had arrived in Rwanda from DRC. Around 9,000 of these have been relocated to Mahama, Kiziba and Nyabiheke refugee camps and are receiving in-kind food awaiting UNHCR registration. Once registered they transition to cash assistance.
- Starting from November 2023, WFP will reduce cash rations to 63 percent of entitlements (against 74 percent currently) due to funding constraints. Highly vulnerable refugees (89 percent of all camp-based refugees) are normally entitled to full rations, while moderately vulnerable refugees are entitled to half rations.
- Following community sensitization and a verification exercise across six districts (Ngororero, Rubavu, Rutsiro, Karongi, Burera, Nyabihu), WFP successfully disbursed USD 335,859 to support 3,225 households affected by floods in May 2023.

Resilient Livelihoods:

- On 24 October 2023, WFP, in collaboration with Duhamic-Adri, Good Neighbors International, and the Government of Rwanda, conducted an official asset handover ceremony for the SMART project in Murama Sector, Kayonza District. The event featured an exhibition showcasing partners' activities and the official signing of the handover document between WFP's Country Director and the Mayor of Kayonza, emphasizing the district's commitment to maintaining the assets for community development.
- WFP distributed 2,484 avocado, 18,800 grevillea, and 982 Alnus tree seedlings to support nutrition and climate-smart agriculture in Kaduha, Ruhango, and Rwankuba Sectors. These were planted during Umuganda public works on a 64-hectare site selected by local authorities.
- WFP conducted regular monitoring of the seven maize dryer centers in Agatobwe marshland to ensure their proper maintenance, and these were found in excellent condition for the upcoming harvest. Additionally, beneficiaries were reminded about the importance of maintenance during the regular outreach activity.

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Photo caption: Hermogene, managing a Farmer Service Centre (FSC) supported by WFP through the Shora Neza ("Invest Well") project, in his agri shop. 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	149.7 m	16.2 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.

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 and USDA).

School Feeding:

- Daily nutritious school meals were provided to approximately 28,000 students in 32 schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and district authorities. This aims to improve children's concentration in school, health, and nutrition, and reduce school absenteeism.
- Cash transfers to WFP-supported schools enabled the provision of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as animal protein such as dried fish, enhancing the nutritional value of the meal and providing much-needed nutrients to school children. These are served to students three times per week.
- In October, WFP Rwanda hosted a representative from the Novo Nordisk Foundation for a donor visit, with the objective of strengthening collaboration on initiatives focused on home-grown school feeding and supporting local farmers. The foundation's support is dedicated to enhancing health, nutrition, and food security for vulnerable communities in Rwanda.

Nutrition and HIV:

- In cooperation with the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), WFP conducted a four-day training in Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Support (NACS) for 57 new nutritionists working within Health Centers. This initiative aims to enhance the quality of service delivery for people living with HIV.

Smallholder Agricultural Market Support:

- In October, WFP onboarded Good Neighbors International and Duhamic-Adri for the implementation of the Shora Neza ("Invest Well") project and conducted an orientation session to align project approaches. The 5-year project supported by the Mastercard Foundation aims to enhance food systems and create youth employment opportunities.
- WFP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have signed an agreement to jointly implement the WFP Rwanda Bridge. This concessional, blended lending facility is tailored to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises operating within Rwanda's agricultural sector.

Monitoring

- In October 2023, the average cost of the food basket was RWF 13,773, representing a decrease of 2.2 percent from September 2023 (14,078 RWF), and of 9 percent compared to October 2022. A decreased cost in the food basket was observed in Kiziba (-14.1 percent), Nyabiheke (-5.1 perce), and Kigeme (-1.8 percent); while the cost of the food basket increased by 14.8 percent in Mahama and 0.8 percent in Mugombwa.
- The decrease in the food basket cost is attributed to an overall decrease in prices of dry beans (-5%) and stable prices of maize grain. Except for Mahama camp where the price of dry beans increased by 7 percent, other camps registered decreased prices of dry beans, with Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Mugombwa registering the highest decreases of 10 percent, 9 percent, and 8 percent, respectively. Despite October being a lean period, these reductions are attributed to increased imports of dry beans from neighboring countries.

Challenges

- WFP requires a total of USD 16.2 million to sustain its operations for the next six months (November 2023 – April 2024), representing 64 percent of the total funding requirement for planned activities. Of this, USD 15 million would allow to restore full cash rations for food assistance to targeted refugees in Rwanda based on their vulnerability status, as well as to support new asylum seekers and Rwandan returnees.
- WFP is facing a shortfall of USD 400,000 for strengthening the national disaster risk management and social protection systems, required to meet the technical assistance commitments to the Government for enhanced shock response. In addition, WFP needs USD 323,000 to continue nutrition capacity strengthening and support stunting prevention.