



World Food Programme

SAVING
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WFP Rwanda Country Brief January 2024



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 January 2024 Rwanda hosted 135,343 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 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 future.



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

157,081 people reached in January 2024



USD 763,391 cash-based transfers (CBT) distributed

USD 11.7 million six months (February 2024 – July 2024)
net funding requirements, representing 46 percent of total
requirements

289.8 MT of food distributed

Operational Updates

Refugee operation and emergency assistance:

- WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to a total of 118,120 individuals, including 110,889 refugees, 7,104 unregistered asylum seekers, and 127 Rwandan returnees. This included USD 757,401 through cash-based transfers, enabling eligible refugees to purchase food of their choice. USD 5,990 was transferred to schools that host refugees for school feeding contributions. A total of 213.55 MT of food commodities were distributed as hot meals to asylum seekers and under nutrition and school feeding programmes. Moreover, 8,666 individuals benefited from Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCCN) interventions.
- Increased insecurity in eastern DRC since November 2022 has precipitated the displacement of a rising number of individuals owing to armed conflict in the region. As of the end of January 2024, a total of 14,314 asylum seekers had sought refuge in Rwanda from DRC. While unregistered individuals are receiving in-kind food assistance, bank-registered individuals are being absorbed into WFP's cash assistance.

Disaster Risk Management:

- WFP together with FAO, IFRC, Rwanda Red Cross and other partners participated in a first-ever Anticipatory Action workshop in Rwanda. A technical working group was initiated to lead the design of anticipatory action frameworks for minimizing disaster impacts on lives and livelihoods.

School Feeding:

- Daily nutritious school meals were provided to approximately 29,000 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.
- In January 2024, the Ministry of Education and WFP co-chaired the first National School Feeding Steering Committee meeting. This event, attended by high-level stakeholders, aimed to improve coordination and sustainability of the programme, as outlined in the 2019 Comprehensive National School Feeding Policy.
- WFP welcomed the Ogilvy Paris team working on Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) to promote demand for and understanding of healthy diets and nutrition among school children, adolescents, and their families. They visited one HGSF-supported school (GS Nkondo I) to better understand how to best implement the approved SBCC strategy.

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Photo caption: Mukarusagara Regine enjoying a school meal at GS Ruganda, a WFP-supported school in Karongi district. Photo: WFP/ Aristide Gatera

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
304.3 m	188.4 m	11.7 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), JAWFP, Republic of Korea, Mastercard Foundation, New Zealand, Norway, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Common Funds and Agencies, USA (USAID and USDA).

Nutrition:

- WFP and Plan International, in collaboration with local community health workers, successfully completed the third cohort of peer learning sessions on Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) in January 2024. The programme, which lasted for two months, involved 96 participants, including 38 couples and 20 single mothers, from three villages near the Mahama refugee camp (Ruhondo, Nyenyeri, and Kagera). Upon completion, the participants received motivational materials and certificates of achievement.

Smallholder Agricultural Market Support:

- WFP together with FAO, IFAD, UN Women and government partners including MINAGRI, MIGEPROF, RCA, and cooperating partners, participated in a 5-day strategic workshop, aimed at establishing a robust and results-driven foundation for Phase II implementation of Joint UN Programme for Rural Women Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE). During the workshop, participants focused on document review to provide strategic guidance for each outcome component, as well as assessment and harmonizing of relationships with cooperating partners to minimize overlaps and enhance synergies.

Monitoring

- During January 2024, the average cost of the food basket was 9,237 RWF, representing a decrease of 14.2 percent from December 2023 (10,761 RWF), and was 34 percent lower compared to January 2023. All camps registered a decrease in the food basket cost, especially in Nyabiheke, Kigeme and Mahama where it reduced by 27.5 percent, 15.4 percent and 11.4 percent, respectively. In Mugombwa and Kiziba the food basket cost reduced by 8.6 and 8 percent respectively.
- The decline in the cost of the food basket is a result of an increased commodity supply from the ongoing harvest of season 2024 A. Apart from salt which experienced a 4 percent increase, other commodities registered price decreases in January 2024 compared to December 2023. Beans and maize prices decreased by 26 and 13 percent respectively, while cooking oil prices decreased by 4 percent.
- For beans, the highest decrease of 33 percent was observed in Mugombwa and Mahama, followed by a 31 percent and 18 percent decrease in Kigeme and Kiziba refugee camps respectively. The price of dry beans decreased by 7 percent in Nyabiheke camp. For maize, the most significant decrease of price was observed in Nyabiheke (41 percent), followed by Kigeme (9 percent), Mahama and Kiziba (6 percent). In Mugombwa, a slight decrease of 1 percent was observed.

Challenges

- WFP requires a total of USD 11.7 million to sustain its operations for the next six months (February 2024 – July 2024), representing 46 percent of the total funding requirement for planned activities. Of this, USD 10.5 million (loans of USD 4.5m included) 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 250,000 to continue nutrition capacity strengthening and support stunting prevention until July 2024.