



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Rwanda Country Brief

May 2025



Operational Context

Rwanda has made significant progress over the last few decades, demonstrating the Government's dedication to economic growth. This is evidenced by significant achievements in poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, education, and public health, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. With a population of 13.2 million people expanding at 2.3 percent annually and an ambition to become a middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050, Rwanda continues efforts to diversify the economy, enhancing industrialization, and developing human capital.

However, 27.4 percent of the population live below the poverty line and 17 percent are food insecure. Levels of stunting among young children remain high at 29.7 percent (2024 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis) with regional disparities. 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 May 2025, Rwanda hosted 136,230 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**

2025 Human Development Index:
159 out of 193

Income Level: **Lower**

Chronic malnutrition: **30 percent** of children between **6-59 months**



In Numbers

166,087 people reached in May 2025

USD 484,143 cash-based transfers (CBT) distributed

USD 14 million six months (June – Nov. 2025) net funding requirements

252 mt of food distributed

Strategic Updates

- WFP, in collaboration with MINEMA, UNHCR, Impact Hub Kigali and Inkomoko, hosted an [IGNITE food systems challenge demo day](#). The event showcased locally led ventures that promote refugee self-reliance and deliver essential services to refugee communities. These ventures received entrepreneurship training along with seed capital of USD 25,000 to support and scale their innovations. Watch more [here](#).
- WFP met with the World Bank's technical team to discuss both organizations' support to the Government in addressing stunting, as well as opportunities for collaboration. Nutrition analytics was identified as a strategic and critical decision-making tool that could be jointly explored. Going forward, both organizations plan to conduct a Cost of Diet analysis. This analysis seeks to generate evidence to inform and strengthen programme design and implementation.

Operational updates

Food Assistance & Refugee Self-Reliance

- In May, WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 129,954 individuals, including 115,914 refugees and registered asylum seekers, 4,700 unregistered asylum seekers, 8,379 host community children attending the same schools as refugee children, and 961 Rwandan returnees who received three months of take-home food assistance in the form of cash transfers. Additionally, 4,133 individuals participated in Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCC-N) and livelihood projects, fostering their self-reliance.
- Due to critical funding shortfalls, WFP continued to implement ration reduction in cash-based transfers for all targeted refugees, providing them with only 50 percent of their entitlements required to meet daily caloric food needs. However, full support is maintained for in-kind food assistance for asylum seekers, supplementary nutrition, and school feeding. As a result of ration reductions, complaints from refugees have increased across camps, as has the adoption of negative coping mechanisms like incurring debt and adults skipping meals to prioritize children. This indicates deteriorating food and nutrition security.
- WFP disbursed USD 477,264 to refugees empowering them to purchase food of their choice and meet their dietary needs with dignity. In addition, schools hosting refugee children received USD 6,879 to support school feeding, helping to keep children in class and ensuring they have the nutrition they need to learn.
- WFP continues its resource mobilization efforts to avert further ration reductions for refugees. A total of USD 12 million is urgently required to ensure continued humanitarian food and nutrition assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and returnees until December 2025. Without additional funding, WFP will be forced to completely stop its cash-based transfers for food entirely in August 2025.
- Rising needs driven by insecurity continue to force displacement. Between November 2022 and May 2025, Rwanda received 16,825

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Photo caption: The Honorable Ambassador of Japan visited Mahama Camp and observed how refugees are supported through food assistance, school meals, and farming initiatives; nurturing hope, building self-reliance, and investing in a better future. Photo: WFP/Raissa Iradukunda

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2025)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
312 m	205 m	14 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: Canada, Denmark, EU (ECHO and INTPA), Finland, France, Gates Foundation, Germany (BMZ and GFFO), Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mastercard Foundation, Netherlands New Zealand, Norway, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Switzerland, UN Common Funds and Agencies, USA (USAID and USDA).

asylum seekers from the DRC. A sharp influx of over 2,000 returnees in May 2025 alone far exceeded the monthly average of 350. While WFP had planned to assist 3,600 returnees this year, UNHCR now projects 10,000 more. WFP and the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) are providing cash and in-kind support to aid reintegration.

Disaster Risk Management

- In collaboration with MINEMA, WFP facilitated the Anticipatory Action (AA) Technical Working Group meeting in May. Participants identified key challenges related to AA and agreed on important next steps, including capacity building, simulation exercises, risk assessments, and contingency planning. These efforts will strengthen community preparedness ahead of upcoming rainy seasons.

Human Capital Development

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and district authorities, WFP provided daily nutritious school meals to 32,274 children across 32 schools in three supported districts (Kayonza, Burera, and Gasabo).
- To promote clean cooking in schools, WFP and MINEDUC jointly established a Clean Cooking Task Force under the School Feeding Technical Working Group. This will allow stakeholders to coordinate efforts and develop a strategy to phase out biomass use in the National School Feeding Programme.

Promotion of Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems

- WFP launched new climate-smart6 agriculture activities to support small businesses that promote conservation agriculture and improved farming practices. These efforts aim to support 2,500 youth organized into 100 groups in Burera and Kayonza districts. With a strong emphasis on gender inclusion, at least 50 percent of participants are young women who are supported to boost agricultural productivity and income through the adoption of conservation agriculture practices.
- WFP, in collaboration with FAO and IFAD, jointly hosted a workshop on post-harvest loss solutions, bringing together stakeholders from public and private sectors. Defining technical specifications aimed at improving post-harvest management technologies in Rwanda.

Monitoring

- In May 2025, the average monthly cost of the food basket was RWF 12,451, slightly lower than in April (RWF 12,570), but 48 percent higher compared to May 2024. The monthly decrease is primarily attributed to a drop in dry bean prices, which fell by approximately 9 percent compared to April 2025. However, despite this decline, prices generally remain significantly higher than in the same period last year, primarily due to increases in prices for key commodities including beans and maize which have increased by 59 and 55 percent, respectively.

Challenges

- WFP requires a total of USD 14 million to sustain its operations for the next six months (June- Nov. 2025), representing 60 percent of the total funding requirement for planned activities. Out of this, USD 6 million are urgently needed to resume the previous 75 percent cash rations for targeted refugees and returnees instead of the reduced 50 percent. Also, critical initiatives like support for refugee self-reliance and social protection remain severely underfunded, highlighting the need for additional support.