Rwanda

Since August 2018, the Democratic Republic of Congo, a neighbouring country of Rwanda, has been facing a large-scale Ebola epidemic in the eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri. Since the outbreak began in August 2018, there have been nearly 3,200 reported Ebola cases and over 2,100 deaths. Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo and possessing high-quality transport infrastructure. The country is therefore Priority 1 at high-risk for the rapid spread of Ebola infection. In 2018, the Government of Rwanda activated Ebola preparedness mechanisms to minimize the risk of importation or cross-border transmission. Although Rwanda remains Ebola-free, 15 districts are at risk of cross-border spread. In addition, Rwanda is home to some 150,000 refugees. Many refugee children face a range of protection concerns, including violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Most refugee-hosting schools lack the necessary infrastructure, teachers and supplies to respond to high influxes. Many teachers recruited and trained by partners are not yet integrated into the national systems. With the coming presidential elections in Burundi scheduled for May 2020, an estimated 30,000 additional people could take refuge in Rwanda by June 2020 and require critical humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian strategy

In line with the National Ebola Plan III and the Inter-Agency Plan, UNICEF will continue to support Ebola preparedness in Rwanda, leading on risk communication, community engagement, community health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The response will reach all of Rwanda, with a special focus on the districts bordering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania. UNICEF will also respond to the humanitarian needs of refugees from Burundi in and outside of camps in Rwanda, working closely with the Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide critical services, including health, WASH, child protection and education to children and adolescents. UNICEF will also support the Government to address the needs of refugees by improving access to national social services for up to 50,000 people. As part of its social policy work, UNICEF will closely monitor resource allocation to the social sectors and continue to advocate for access to essential social services for child survival and the protection of children and women in Rwanda, including refugees.

Results from 2019

As of August 2019, UNICEF had US$1.8 million available against the US$3 million Ebola preparedness requirement (55 per cent funded). UNICEF achieved results in communication for development, health, WASH, education and child protection; addressed the needs of refugees in and outside of camps; and supported the implementation of the National Ebola Preparedness Plan in 15 high-risk districts. Over 24,000 refugee children accessed education services, 20,000 were vaccinated against measles and 10,000 received critical child protection services. UNICEF equipped all hospitals, health centres and points of entry in the 15 high-risk districts with initial training and critical WASH supplies to prevent and control Ebola. Some 155,000 people gained knowledge on Ebola signs, symptoms, modes of transmission and prevention, and channels to refer Ebola-related concerns. Ebola remained at the centre of public discourse, with 6 million people reached through mass media. UNICEF also helped train and supervise some 20,000 community health workers. Supplies were procured to protect community health workers from Ebola and support effective Ebola identification at the community level. Lack of funding for the refugee response limited service provision across sectors inside the camps. When possible, UNICEF used regular programmes to provide services outside of camps through national systems.
Community health workers who received a complete set of supplies for Ebola preparedness: 20,000
Refugee children immunized against measles: 20,400

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

Refugees accessing the agreed quantity of water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene: 40,000
Health facilities and points of entry staff trained and equipped to conduct infection prevention and control activities for Ebola: 535

**CHILD PROTECTION**

Refugee children receiving essential child protection services in and outside of camps: 30,000
Child protection workers trained on Ebola preparedness and psychosocial support: 150

**EDUCATION**

Refugee children who accessed formal or non-formal early childhood education/pre-primary education: 30,000

**COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Community health workers trained on risk communication and community engagement for Ebola preparedness: 11,540
People reached with Ebola messaging through community engagement and interpersonal communication approaches: 500,000

Funding requirements

In line with both the National Ebola Preparedness Plan and the 2020 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan, UNICEF is appealing for US$5 million (US$5 million for Ebola preparedness and US$3 million for the refugee response) to meet the needs of children in Rwanda in 2020. Without timely and adequate funding, UNICEF will be unable to scale up its humanitarian action to address the essential and critical needs of refugees – more than half of whom are women and children – in the current context of heightened vulnerability in and outside of camps, and foster adequate Ebola preparedness nationwide.

1. Results are through 31 August 2019.
2. The Government of Rwanda is also currently expanding preparedness activities to the remaining 15 districts with a minimum package of interventions.
6. Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan 2019–2020’. In addition, since 2015, the refugee population in urban areas has increased following the influx of Burundian refugees. Hence, education needs also increased to ensure that all urban refugee children are enrolled in different national schools in and out of Kigali.
7. In addition to the funds received in 2019 for Ebola preparedness activities through the Eastern and Southern Africa appeal, UNICEF allocated US$700,000 from the Emergency Programme Fund, a loan mechanism, to address critical gaps in the response and bridge needs until funding arrives.
8. This is critical to ensuring that health workers immediately report all alerts to health facilities, so these alerts can be investigated promptly.
9. This includes 6 million people for Ebola preparedness in targeted high-risk districts that will be reached in collaboration with WHO through mass media campaign (UNICEF Strategy in Case Management/Infection Prevention and Control Technical Working Group, 2019) and 150,000 refugees in camps (UNHCR, 30 June 2019). UNICEF will continue to focus on the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities using community dialogue and sensitization targeting 2 million people. Fifty per cent are women and 55 per cent are children. In the event of a worst-case scenario Ebola outbreak, an additional caseload of people will be in need of response interventions. ‘Rwanda Country Refugees Response Plan 2019–2020’.
11. This includes 1 million children targeted for Ebola preparedness and 75,000 children targeted for the refugee response. This includes 10 per cent children with disabilities, according to the 2011 WHO/World Bank estimate.
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13. Mostly through existing national child protection services. The reason for the decrease in targets is due to the shift from a camp response to a community-based child protection response – a humanitarian/development strategy supported by the Government.
14. This includes early childhood development.

Who to contact for further information:

**HEALTH**

Who to contact for adequate Ebola preparedness nationwide.

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

Health facilities and points of entry staff trained and equipped to conduct infection prevention and control activities for Ebola.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

Refugee children receiving essential child protection services in and outside of camps.

**EDUCATION**

Refugee children who accessed formal or non-formal early childhood education/pre-primary education.

**COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Community health workers trained on risk communication and community engagement for Ebola preparedness.

People reached with Ebola messaging through community engagement and interpersonal communication approaches.

**Funding requirements**

In line with both the National Ebola Preparedness Plan and the 2020 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan, UNICEF is appealing for US$5 million (US$5 million for Ebola preparedness and US$3 million for the refugee response) to meet the needs of children in Rwanda in 2020. Without timely and adequate funding, UNICEF will be unable to scale up its humanitarian action to address the essential and critical needs of refugees – more than half of whom are women and children – in the current context of heightened vulnerability in and outside of camps, and foster adequate Ebola preparedness nationwide.

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