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Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 March 2021

Rwanda

Humanitarian Situation Report



Highlights

- 2 million people were reached with key messaging on COVID-19 prevention and access to services.
- Through COVAX facility, UNICEF supported the development and submission of the vaccine request, cold chain equipment application and the National Deployment Vaccination Plan.
- 27,527 refugee children were reached with quality inclusive education
- 25,480 children in schools and communities were reached with hygiene promotion.
- 1,884 refugee children were vaccinated against measles.
- Of US\$6 million appealed in 2021, UNICEF mobilized US\$ 1,3 million, representing 22 per cent of the funding needed to address the urgent needs of women and children.

Situation in Numbers



2,000,000

children in need of humanitarian assistance (UNICEF 2021 HAC)



4,000,000

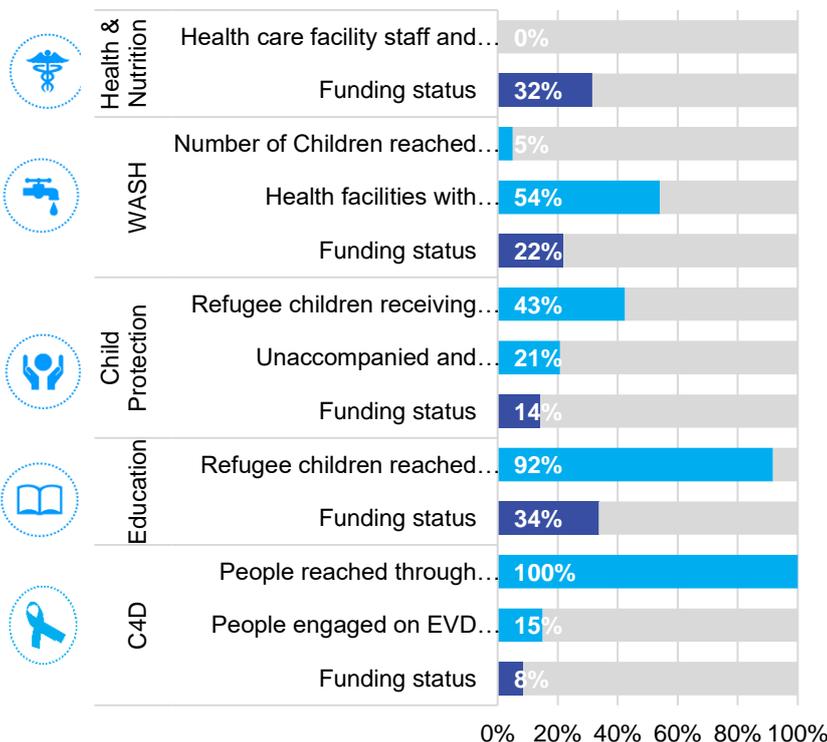
people in need (UNICEF 2021 HAC)



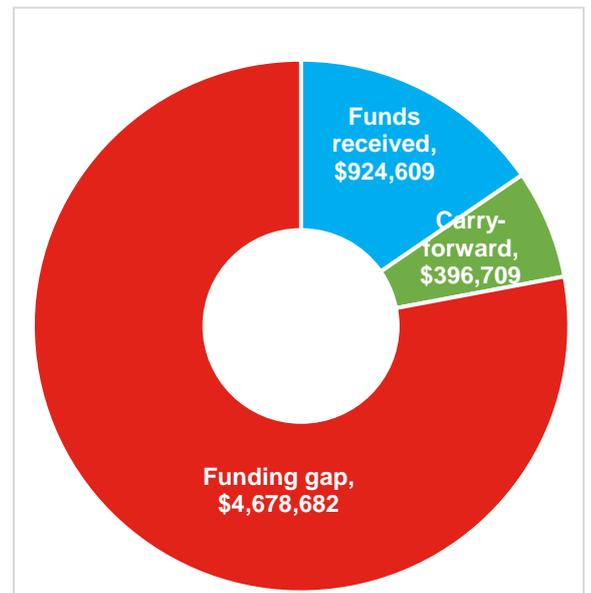
146,831

Refugees (UNHCR December 2020)

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



UNICEF Appeal 2021 US\$ 6 million



Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, UNICEF Rwanda has appealed for US\$ 6 million to continue delivering life-saving services to refugees and children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts, and to maintain its Ebola preparedness and contingency planning.

As of 31 March, UNICEF has raised US\$ 1.3 million, 21.6 per cent of the appealed amount, to address the most essential needs of vulnerable children and those caring for them. Without timely and adequate funding, UNICEF will not be able 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 and COVID-19 preparedness and response nationwide.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

In 2021, the humanitarian context has not evolved much in Rwanda compared to 2020. The three small-scale overlapping emergencies persist: the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the presence of around 147,000 refugees in Rwanda who require urgent assistance, and the new risk of Ebola outbreak.

Rwanda has registered 21,419 cases of COVID-19, of which 301 deaths (1.4 per cent) and conducted over 1.1 million tests (RBC, 28 March 2021). 348,929 people have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility. All confirmed cases of COVID-19 are being monitored and contacts have been traced while restriction measures continue to be implemented to control the spread of the virus.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) has completely reopened schools after a partial lockdown affecting schools located in Kigali. Since 23 February 2021, all pre-primary, primary, secondary grades in public and private schools have resumed in-person classes, as well as universities, technical and vocational schools. The 2020-2021 school year is expected to be completed in July 2021 for upper primary and secondary students and in September 2021 for pre-primary and lower primary grades.

In the Nutrition sector, the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among children under five years of age is becoming concerning. A total of 12,332 cases were admitted and treated in 2020, which is almost the double of the cases reported in the previous three years. This may be attributed to the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods and food prices negatively impacting household food security and nutrition. UNICEF's nutrition program is requiring more funding to upscale the preventive measures, secure the provision of nutrition commodities (ready-to-use therapeutic food, therapeutic milk, micronutrient powder), and strengthen the capacity of all service providers.

Four cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD), including two deaths, have been reported in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), neighbouring to Rwanda (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control). The DRC's 10th Ebola outbreak in that region lasted for nearly two years and by the time it ended in June 2020, there were 3,481 cases of which 2,299 deaths (66 per cent). The response to the outbreak in that region was particularly challenging due to insecurity.

UNICEF is supporting the GoR to mitigate the secondary effects of COVID-19 on children and families, including in providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for community health workers and child protection volunteers. UNICEF also continues to support the GoR response to refugees and preparedness efforts to prevent EVD.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

UNICEF continued to provide technical and financial supports to the GoR to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first quarter of 2021, UNICEF provided funds to pay the remuneration of 169 staffs working daily in the covid-19 surveillance team and has been procuring hand sanitizers for all Community Health Workers (CHWs) to enable them to continue providing support in COVID-19 community case management program.

Through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility, UNICEF supported the development and submission of vaccine request, cold chain equipment application and the National Deployment Vaccination Plan. UNICEF also provided technical assistance to develop COVID-19 vaccines guidelines and standard operation procedures (SOPs), and trained central and districts staff on the logistics, proper handling of

vaccines and the maintenance of the cold chain. UNICEF supported the shipment and distribution of the first wave of COVID-19 vaccines and supported the vaccination rollout countrywide.

UNICEF continued its support to maintain the maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) services despite the secondary impact of COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF is promoting child health services through C4D interventions for demand generation and advocacy to the GoR to maintain a high-level commitment to essential health services.

UNICEF advocacy to Gavi and Rwanda's Ministry of Health (MOH) resulted in an agreement to support Mahama refugee camp in a most sustainable way. Gavi through its policy on fragile countries and emergency situation is providing now 100 per cent of vaccines doses for all eligible children in Mahama Camp. All basic and new vaccines, including measles-rubella combined vaccines used in Rwanda, are being provided to refugee's population through the MOH systems and the reporting is integrated in the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) system. During this reporting period, 1,884 children were reached with vaccination services, including 360 who received measles-rubella. In addition, refugee camps are included in the GoR COVID-19 response plan and, as of now, all health workers working in Mahama refugee camp have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Nutrition

The implementation of nutrition activities continues countrywide, including in the Mahama refugee camp, in collaboration with MOH.

Ongoing SAM management in refugee Mahama camp: UNICEF, in collaboration with UNHCR, WFP, American Refugee Committee and Save the children, continues to provide technical support and nutrition commodities to Burundian refugee children under five years with SAM. During this reporting period, 50 children (23 males, 27 females) with SAM have been admitted in the program and treated. Among them 28 (16 male and 12 females) were treated and cured, and 7 (4 males and 3 females) have been repatriated to Burundi.

Vitamin A and deworming campaign in all 30 districts, including Mahama camp: Despite COVID-19 pandemic, the GoR managed to implement the vitamin A and deworming campaign from end-February up to March 2021. The preliminary results of this first round of the campaign showed that 87 per cent of children aged 6-59 months received vitamin A and 90 per cent were reached for deworming. In Mahama refugee camp, the coverage rate was 100 per cent for vitamin A and 88 per cent for deworming.

Communication and capacity strengthening: During the reporting period, communication materials were developed, printed and disseminated as part of the response to stop the increase in the number of children with all forms of malnutrition.

Education

In January 2021, in response to an increase in COVID-19 cases, the GoR closed schools in Kigali while reopening all grades in the other 29 districts. As co-chair of the education sector in Rwanda, UNICEF continued supporting the Government's efforts to fully reopen schools and ensure learning continuity. As of 23 February 2021, all grades from primary, secondary and tertiary education resumed in-person learning. So far, 95 per cent of pre-primary children, 94.5 per cent of primary school children and 95 per cent of secondary school students are now attending in-person classes.

As schools fully reopen, remote learning remains a priority for the education sector, particular for lower grades and for Kigali schools where in-person learning activities were disrupted in January and February 2021. UNICEF's support to distance learning is now targeting young children whose parents are more reluctant to send them back to school. As a result, the radio lessons, developed and produced with support from UNICEF, are expected to reach an estimated 282,428 young children (50.8 per cent young girls). In Kigali, during the lockdown, an estimated 309,712 students were accessing remote learning. In parallel, UNICEF continued to support home-based individualized learning for 7,282 children with disabilities with support from 30 sectors and local and 984 education activists and 30 itinerant teachers.

To respond to the needs of refugees during the first quarter of 2021, UNICEF has procured learning materials for an estimated 20,000 refugee children, which will be distributed at the reopening of schools in early April after the Easter holidays. Further, UNICEF has launched a rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on the education of refugee children. Preliminary results are expected to be available early May 2021.

In collaboration with Rwanda Education Board, UNICEF continues to support the implementation of safe school protocols through the distribution of brochures and posters with key messages on COVID-19 prevention and response to 2,635 schools.

In the area of early childhood education (ECD), UNICEF in partnership with ADRA and UNHCR continued to support the ECD programme in Mahama camp. During the first quarter of 2021, key focus was on scaling up establishment of ECD facilities and providing early childhood care, stimulation and learning for children aged 0-6 years and their families through centre-based and home-based approaches. UNICEF supported the construction and operation of additional 10 semi-permanent ECD stimulation rooms giving a cumulative number of 39 ECD stimulation rooms, including 11 permanent and 28 semi-permanent rooms.

Following the closure of all ECD centres from March 2020 to January 2021 to prevent the spread of COVID-19, UNICEF supported the development of national guidelines for the re-opening of schools and ECD centres. To ensure all ECD centres meet the standard threshold in line with the national COVID-19 guidelines prior to re-opening, UNICEF supported the establishment of handwashing facilities and procured Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face masks, gloves, thermometers, sanitizers and soap for improved hygiene and safety. This provided a safe and secure environment for the children and caregivers in the centres.

UNICEF also supported the capacity building for parents and home-based ECD volunteers to provide nurturing care and stimulation to children aged 0-3 in home-based settings. A total of, 1,286 children aged 0-3 years (687 girls and 599 boys) were enrolled in the 72 home-based ECD settings managed by the trained volunteers. The total number of children aged 0-6 years enrolled in both centre-based and home-based ECD services was 7,527 (3,870 girls and 3,657 boys). The number of children increased following the GoR and UNHCR reallocation of more Congolese refugees from Kigeme to Mahama camp. This followed the progressive repatriation of some Burundian refugees back to their country as agreed between Rwanda and Burundi in late 2020. By March 2021, the number of children enrolled in ECD centres in Mahama refugee camp was 6,241 (3,183 girls and 3,058 boys).

Child Protection

In support of Burundian refugees and within the Blueprint Joint Action Plan, UNICEF, UNHCR and Save the Children initiated a partnership in September of 2020 to support child protection initiatives in Mahama Camp. To date the partnership activities have supported the training of 178 child protection volunteers to continue delivering child protection services during COVID-19 and on interpersonal communication. The project also provided cell phone airtime to 31 child protection committee leaders to facilitate reaching parents. As part of the partnership, 416 unaccompanied and separated children (267 males and 149 females) were provided with psychosocial support and follow up by child protection volunteers. This is in addition to 440 (265 females and 135 males) children and caregivers receiving MHPSS support during the Covid19 pandemic. As part of the focus on inclusion, 355 children including 305 (133 females and 172 males) children with disabilities received home-based recreational materials for play and learning along with support by facilitators and parents/caregivers. Children in the camp have also been reached through awareness campaigns on child protection and COVID-19. In total the partnership has reached 4,306 children (2,457 M and 1,849 F).

To support an increased access of refugees to national child protection services and build the capacity of the national child protection system, UNICEF in collaboration with the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), UNHCR and World Vision supported the development of a training module on children in emergencies with a focus on refugees for roll out to the child protection workforce, made up of the 34 professional Child Protection and Welfare Officers and the 29,674 Child Protection volunteers. This module was finalized during the first quarter of 2021 and the training of trainers is planned for the second quarter.

Taking lessons from both the EVD preparedness in 2019 and the COVID-19 response in 2020, health emergencies are often led by the health sector and health professionals are often the first ones to interface with families and children. This could be the case for children left alone without adequate care and protection at home due to illness of the primary caregiver or who are isolated or quarantined in a facility. To ensure health professionals in such emergencies are able to identify critical child protection issues and refer them to appropriate personnel and services, UNICEF and the GoR initiated a consultancy in February 2021 to support the development of a guide and SOP's on Child Protection and MHPSS during pandemics.

WASH

UNICEF continues to support the GoR COVID-19 Response Plan and has deployed Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Specialist since the beginning of 2021 to support the IPC Command Center of the MOH. During the reporting period, the main activities implemented included decontamination of households, facilities, cars

and trucks, training and briefing on IPC, safe and dignified burial management, IPC documents review, assessment and setting of isolation rooms. The training on IPC reached 758 people, including teachers, school administration officials, and faith-based organizations members. UNICEF also supported a mass IPC prevention measures awareness session for 600 students of Riviera High Schools.

UNICEF has completed the construction of permanent handwashing facilities in 54 health centres in Rubavu, Rusizi, Karongi, Gatsibo and Nyagatare districts that provide health services to around 1,242,000 people. The handwashing facilities are now operational and used by both patients and staff and have ancillary units such as water storage.

To reduce wastage of water and the time spent by children to wash their hands in 16 schools in Nyagatare district, UNICEF supported the construction of permanent group handwashing facilities that are low-cost and durable. This has enabled 25,480 school children (12,660 boys and 12,820 girls) and 450 teachers and staff (219 males and 231 females) to easily wash their hands with water and soap as part of COVID-19 preventive measures.

As part of the Blueprint for Joint Action with UNHCR, UNICEF in partnership with WaterAid Rwanda is supporting the construction of permanent group handwashing facilities in 60 schools located in Gihembe, Nyabiheke and Mahama camps catchment areas in the districts of Gicumbi, Gatsibo, and Kirehe respectively. These handwashing facilities will benefit around 60,000 school students (29,400 Girls and 30,600 boys).

Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners regularly reached 2,000,000 people (52 per cent female and 48 per cent male) with messages on EVD and COVID-19 prevention and access to services through mass media (radio, TV, print and online), as well as social media and messengers, Internet of Good Things and community engagement mechanisms.

To date, 30,000 people participated in EVD and COVID-19 engagement activities directed at feedback collection and rumour tracking, including in and around refugee camps.

To address prevailing misconceptions, UNICEF supported community radio programmes and community sensitization sessions reached over 100,000 people regularly across Rwanda. The feedback received from the communities was directed to appropriate local authorities and the Ministry of Health for timely action.

UNICEF continued its partnership with a popular FM radio station to include life-saving health related content on their daily morning programme, including an interactive segment called “fact or fiction” where listeners could call in to ask questions and seek clarifications. Adolescents and youth are the key audience of this interventions with the estimated regular listenership of 2,000,000 people (52 per cent female and 48 per cent male).

In March 2021, UNICEF and a national NGO partner launched the initiative to strengthen RCCE for COVID-19 and EVD prevention in four cross-border districts (Kirehe, Nyamasheke, Rubavu and Rusizi) through engaging with youth volunteers aged 18-26 years old. 83 volunteers (43 female and 40 male) have been trained in RCCE to date and started engaging with the communities.

Messages on COVID-19 prevention and control are regularly included in the popular children’s radio programme called “Itetero” and a famous radio soap called “Urunana” to maximize the reach and effectiveness of its communication efforts. Each of the programmes received listeners’ feedback and queries were addressed during the subsequent episodes.

Two RCCE consultants outposted to the communication division of MOH, supported community engagement as well as developing capacities of the RCCE teams at district and sector levels.

UNICEF and partners developed a series of materials for COVID-19 prevention and control in the ECD settings, including job aides for ECD Caregivers, booklets for parents, a colouring book for children and a series of posters with key messages for awareness raising. In addition to COVID-19 prevention and control messages, the materials cover the themes of positive parenting, inclusion, mental health, stress management and stigma towards persons who have experienced COVID-19.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Ministry of Emergency Management and UNHCR continue to be the overall coordinators of inter-agency efforts. The humanitarian strategy agreed between the Government and development partners is to provide

comprehensive services to refugees and seek fulfilment of their basic rights. This includes provision of registration, shelter, household equipment, food and water, maintaining sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition services, education, and protection. Refugee coordination meetings are held each month and include donors and development partners. With the COVID outbreak, the return of the registered Burundian refugees has been delayed. A total of 50,000 are scheduled to return to Burundi in 2021.

UNICEF and UNHCR also finalised a new agreement “The Blue Print” which aims to strengthen their current collaboration in 2021 and 2022 to address the needs and rights of refugees, and build new synergies including to support advocacy, fundraising and inclusion of refugees in national policies and strategies.

The Ministry of Health continues to lead the COVID -19 response with the support of WHO and all UN and Development partners. UNICEF is supporting the COVAX roll out, risk communications efforts, and children access to essential services including Education, Child Protection, WaSH and Health and Nutrition.

UNICEF alongside WHO, WFP, UNHCR and IOM contributed to establishing COVID-19 technical coordination mechanisms, with groups focusing on health, social protection, food security, and the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. UNICEF has been actively involved in the first three of these groups, co-leading the group on social protection. These mechanisms are keeping development partners informed on the COVID-19 response, collect and share feedback for the Government, and coordinate the development partner response to COVID-19.

UNICEF continues to co-chair the RCCE Technical Working Group meetings to keep RCCE efforts coordinated with the key national and development partners in the framework of the ongoing national “Think Twice” public communication campaign.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

- *HIS produced during Q1 2021:*
 1. [From the frontlines: the battle against COVID-19 misinformation](#)
 2. [Press Release: Launch of Internet of Good Things in Rwanda](#)

- *Social Media posts:*

Twitter:

1. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1376541817685020674>
2. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1376798727357235201>
3. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1376420832130564100>
4. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1375467936723374085>
5. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1375104397307428875>
6. <https://twitter.com/unicefrw/status/1374992360912908289>
7. <https://twitter.com/WateraidRwanda/status/1372423904724144130>

Facebook:

1. <https://www.facebook.com/unicefrw/posts/4126297874100474> (multiple posts in this same link)

Instagram:

1. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CNE4LAEAFu1/>
2. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CM2TNYZLjVr/>
3. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMAN51SAqOw/>
4. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CJGoQKQgZAh/>
5. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CL9WVWsqjX7/>

Next SitRep: 30 June 2021

UNICEF Rwanda Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/>

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Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Overall needs	UNICEF and IPs		
		2021 target	Total results*	Change since last report ▲▼
Health & Nutrition				
Children vaccinated against measles in refugee camps	20,000	10,000	1,884	N/A
Children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) admitted for treatment	6,000	6,000	1,000	N/A
Health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control	55,000	55,000	0	N/A
WASH				
Number of Children reached with hygiene promotion	1,000,000	500,000	25,480	N/A
Health facilities with adequate hygiene facilities *	200	100	54	N/A
Child Protection				
Women and Children accessing gender-based violence risks mitigations prevention/response	500,000	500,000	4,306	N/A
People with access to safe channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse ¹	30,000	30,000	29,674	N/A
Unaccompanied and separated children reunified with their primary caregiver or provided with family-based care/ alternative care services ²	2000	2,000	416	N/A
Education				
Refugee children reached with quality, inclusive education	75,000	30,000	27,527	N/A
Schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)	8,145	3000	2,635	N/A
Communication for Development (C4D)				
People reached through messaging on prevention and access to services	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	N/A
People engaged on EVD through RCCE actions	200,000	200,000	30,000	N/A

- Target for WaSH was increased to 100 health facilities based on the needs

¹ Includes all IZU trained on VAC + professionals

² This includes unaccompanied and separated children in camps

Annex B

Funding Status

Sector	Total Requirements	Funds available 2021		Funding gap	
		Funds Received Current Year	Carry-Over from 2020	\$	%
Health and Nutrition	1,750,000	423,162	128,967	1,197,871	68%
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	750,000	141,054	22,840	586,106	78%
Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA	1,000,000	141,054	82	858,863	86%
Education	1,000,000	141,054	195,872	663,074	66%
Communication for Development,	1,500,000	78,284	48,947	1,372,768	92%
Total	6,000,000	924,609	396,709	4,678,682	78%