

# Rwanda

## The UNHCR-WFP Joint Hub Country Support Brief

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Rwanda hosts **120,000 refugees**, and **90 percent** of them live in six refugee camps: **Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Kigeme, Mugombwa, and Mahama** (UNHCR, 2024). The country faces a **protracted refugee situation**. Most refugees are from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—many of whom have lived in Rwanda for more than 20 years—as well as from Burundi. Under the Government’s progressive protection framework, refugees have freedom of movement, the right to work, and access to financial services.

### SHIFT TO NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE

For many years, UNHCR and WFP provided assistance to **all refugees living in camps**. Over time, both agencies and the Government recognized that not all refugees in Rwanda share the same level of vulnerability, and that some do not require regular humanitarian support.

In 2021, severe funding shortfalls led to **WFP food ration cuts of up to 60 percent**, accelerating **the shift towards prioritized assistance**. Since May 2021, a **needs-based and protection-sensitive approach has been in place**, identifying and supporting the most vulnerable refugee households with humanitarian assistance, while less vulnerable refugees with higher capacities no longer receive basic assistance.

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

UNHCR and WFP Country Offices jointly requested support from the **Joint Hub** to help establish a **targeting approach for basic needs assistance**.

Between **2020 and 2022**, the Joint Hub provided **remote technical support, several in-country missions**, and a **long-term deployment** of one staff member based in Rwanda for **18 months** to coordinate the joint response. Throughout this period, the Joint Hub sought to **build capacity** within the country offices, enabling teams to continue carrying out **joint assessments, analysis, and implementation** of the targeted approach after the end of the Hub’s support.

### KEY SUPPORT AREAS



Assessment and Analysis



Targeting



Accountability to Affected People



Learning



Coordination

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

In collaboration with the country offices, the Joint Hub supported the development of a **needs-based targeting strategy**, data analysis, and programme design in line with the [global UNHCR-WFP Targeting Principles](#) and the [Joint Guidance on Targeting of Assistance to Meet Basic Needs](#).

The Joint Hub guided the development of **data collection tools** and an **analysis framework**. Three **UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring (JPDM)** exercises were carried out, providing a comprehensive overview of household needs and vulnerability in the camps. The first exercise established a baseline to inform the targeting strategy, while the second and third exercises enabled a comparative analysis of the impact and effectiveness of the targeting approach, as well as changes in key outcome indicators over time.

**Refugee households were grouped into three vulnerability categories:** highly vulnerable, moderately vulnerable and least vulnerable. A profiling exercise identified the key characteristics of each group, to inform the definition of eligibility criteria for food assistance. Based on this robust analysis, the Joint Hub led the **design of the targeting approach** and supported **implementation and monitoring** of outcomes, as well as the development of tools to address **inclusion and exclusion errors**.

## ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

**Community participation and engagement were instrumental throughout the targeting process** in Rwanda. A wide range of refugees were consulted to ensure that the proposed eligibility criteria reflected vulnerability as defined by the refugees themselves, as well as to identify any additional protection risks linked to the targeting exercise. Forty-one **community consultations** were carried out in all six refugee camps and **feedback was incorporated** to inform the final eligibility criteria, which was **validated collaboratively** by the Joint Hub, UNHCR and WFP country teams and MINEMA (Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management).

Support from the Joint Hub ensured that **protection was mainstreamed** throughout all aspects of the targeting process:

- The **vulnerability analysis** considered protection needs and reliance on high-risk coping strategies that expose refugees to protection risks.
- A detailed **risk assessment** of the targeting strategy identified potential protection risks and put in place appropriate mitigation measures.
- **Community consultations** validated the eligibility criteria and approach and captured protection concerns.
- Eligibility criteria were included to ensure the approach was **protection-sensitive and inclusive of people with specific protection needs**.
- **Appeals and feedback mechanisms** allowed beneficiaries to appeal decisions on their eligibility for assistance, update their data, and provide complaints and feedback.
- **Joint monitoring** includes both qualitative and quantitative modules to assess whether there was increased exposure to protection risks.

## SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP AND NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Throughout the targeting process, there was close coordination and partnership with the Government of Rwanda, which ensured government buy-in, guidance, and support.

As a result of the Joint Hub's support, UNHCR and WFP country offices made significant changes to their ways of working. Together they established the **Rwanda Targeting Governance Group** to assist senior management in overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the joint targeting approach. This approach strengthened dialogue and joint activities, and staff began to carry out a wider range of tasks and to use new tools and processes in their daily work.

The Joint Hub also supported the two agencies through an in-depth **Lessons Learned exercise**, which reviewed collaboration over the previous 18 months and identified what worked well and what could be improved in future joint efforts.

## PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION

- An **evidence-based shift** from delivery of assistance based on refugee status to **needs-based targeting** for food assistance for refugees in camp settings, based on three categories of vulnerability.
- A **more efficient use of resources**, with the provision of a full food assistance package for refugees with the highest vulnerability.
- **Protection mainstreamed and prioritised** throughout the targeting process, with time and resources invested in community engagement, the successful management of risks, and appeals mechanism establishment as well as complaint and feedback management. This included the avoidance of security incidents, which had been identified as a significant risk.

## OUTCOMES FOR REFUGEES

UNHCR and WFP continually monitored the situation of refugees in Rwanda between 2020 and 2022. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the economic crisis, and significant funding constraints that led to reduced transfer values, the proportion of highly vulnerable refugee households remained stable at 60 percent. According to the UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring conducted in April and May 2022, **no substantive deterioration in refugee vulnerability levels** had been observed since the targeting approach was introduced one year earlier prior ([UNHCR-WFP Joint Post Distribution Monitoring, April/May 2022](#)).

### Further Information:

Joint Hub (2021) [Rwanda joint post distribution monitoring and needs assessment](#)

Joint Hub (2022) [Community consultations to inform targeting and prioritisation](#)

UNHCR and WFP (March 2021) [Joint post distribution and needs assessment for refugees in Rwanda](#)

UNHCR and WFP (September 2021) [Rwanda joint UNHCR/WFP post distribution monitoring](#)

UNHCR and WFP (2022) [Moving to Needs-Based Assistance Delivery for Refugees](#)

UNHCR and WFP (2022) [Lessons on UNHCR-WFP Collaboration in Rwanda, July 2020 – December 2021](#)

UNHCR and WFP (2023) Third UNHCR/WFP Joint Post Distribution Monitoring for Refugees in Rwanda, April/May 2022 ([Full Report](#) and [Brief](#))



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