

UNICEF RWANDA

Country Profile

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for every child



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| Capital: | Kigali | Head of State and Government: | President Paul Kagame, since 22 April 2000 |
| Official Languages: | Kinyarwanda / English / French / Swahili | Head of Government: | Rt. Honourable Edouard Ngirente Prime Minister since 30 August 2017 |
| Population (millions): | 11.9 (NISR estimate) | Permanent Representative to the UN: | Amb. Valentine Rugwabiza, since October 2016 |

RWANDA AT A GLANCE

Rwanda is a small landlocked country in East Africa. It is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, Tanzania to the east, Uganda to the north, and Burundi to the south. The population is rural and young; approximately 43% are under age 15.

Rwanda has made significant progress towards economic prosperity and human development over the past two decades. Rwanda has one of the fastest growing economies in central Africa, and was one of the few countries to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Political stability, strong governance, fiscal and administrative decentralization, and zero tolerance for corruption are among the key factors supporting the country's inclusive growth and development.

Rwanda still faces some significant development challenges. Chronic malnutrition (stunting), early childhood development, neonatal mortality, the quality of education, and prevention of violence against children require continued attention.

Poverty remains widespread in Rwanda; 39 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and 16 per cent live in extreme poverty. Children are disproportionately affected by poverty (44 per cent) and experience multiple overlapping deprivations of basic needs, compounding its impact. Despite steady economic growth, inflation is rising and development assistance for social sectors is declining, while national revenues, though growing, are insufficient to address the demands of social and economic sector growth.

KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

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| Population under 19: | 53% |
| Life Expectancy: | 68.4 years (F) 64.6 years (M) |
| Fertility Rate: | 4.2 |
| Births registered: | 56% |
| Electrification: | 23%/household |
| GDP per capita: | \$729 |
| Under-five mortality rate: | 50/1,000 |
| Under-five stunting: | 38% |
| Maternal mortality ratio: | 210/100,000 |
| % measles immunization: | 95.2% |
| % births attended by a skilled provider: | 90.7% |
| Access to improved drinking water source: | 73% |
| Use of improved sanitation facilities: | 72% |
| Pupil Teacher Ratio (Primary school): | 63:1 |
| Net primary enrolment: | 97.7% |
| Primary completion rate: | 65.2% |

UNICEF in RWANDA

UNICEF began its development work in Rwanda in 1986. After the 1994 genocide, UNICEF's assistance focused on emergency, recovery, and small-scale projects. In 2007, when the Rwanda Aid Policy was passed, and in 2008, with the beginning of the UN Delivering as One reform, UNICEF's work as part of the One UN programme shifted to larger scale projects and national policy support to the Government key programme areas.

The new 2018-2023 Country Programme will continue to support the realisation of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. Guided by the SDG principle 'leaving no one behind', the programme will contribute to five priorities under the social transformation pillar of the Government's National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024: (i) ensuring access to quality health for all; (ii) reducing malnutrition; (iii) increasing access to and improving the quality of education; (iv) moving towards a modern Rwandan household; and (v) enhancing graduation from poverty and promoting resilience.

UNICEF COUNTRY PROGRAMME

The UNICEF Rwanda Country Programme is fully integrated with the One UN UNDAF, and is also focused on supporting the social transformation pillar of the National Strategy for Transformation. UNICEF's work takes an integrated approach across the continuum of a child's life, from pregnancy through adolescence, and in the context of a strong and loving family environment. The new Country Programme cycle is from July 2018 to June 2023 to align with the Government of Rwanda's fiscal year.

The programme has seven main components:

Child Health

The Child Health programme supports the Government of Rwanda's efforts to reduce child mortality by increasing use of improved high-impact health and HIV interventions by young children, adolescents and women. UNICEF interventions will focus on:

- Strengthening health systems to ensure that young children, adolescents and women have equitable access to essential health services.
- Improving access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services.
- Accelerating health interventions with low coverage, including intrapartum care and management of sick newborns, postnatal care of healthy neonates, complete antenatal care, and paediatric HIV.
- Supporting the Ministry of Health to establish innovative web-based patient management systems.

Nutrition

The Nutrition Programme supports the Government to rapidly scale-up effective utilisation of a core package of high impact multi-sectoral interventions which address the immediate and underlying causes of child under-nutrition, particularly stunting. Focus is on the following areas:

- Strengthening health facility staff capacity to promote the "first 1,000 days" social and behaviour change initiative.
- Building technical skills to prevent and manage maternal and child under-nutrition cases, integrate child stunting management, and provide supportive supervision to community health workers.
- Supporting districts to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor nutrition-related activities.

Early Childhood Development

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme is based on the premise that "you cannot divide a child," acknowledging that the needs of children must be addressed holistically. UNICEF therefore uses an integrated approach to ECD programming that combines interventions from multiple sectors. Programming focuses on:

- Parenting education
- Promotion of play-based learning
- WASH, health, and nutrition
- Cross-cutting efforts in social protection and child protection

Education

UNICEF is working closely with the Government of Rwanda to implement its Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), with a focus on three key areas:

- Increasing access to education for vulnerable groups;
- Quality of education;
- Increasing access to quality pre-primary education.

There is also a consistent focus on ensuring gender equity and inclusion in all efforts.

Child Protection

Efforts are dedicated supporting the Government to build and maintain a system that safeguards children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, and that mitigates major risks to children in both regular and emergency settings. Focus is on the following pillars:

- Building and supporting strong coordination mechanisms among child protection partners
- Ensuring availability of quality, decentralized, multi-sectoral child protection services
- Strengthening capacities of CP service providers
- Supporting the Government to generate and use child protection data to formulate policies.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The WASH Programme aims to ensure that more Rwandan households and communities, particularly in rural areas, have access to safe and sustainable WASH services, and children and their families practice key hygiene behaviours. Focus is on:

- Strengthening monitoring to improve evidence-based decision making.
- Developing sustainable financing for WASH.
- Ensuring more families use basic sanitation services and practice handwashing with soap.
- Ensuring more families access and use safe, sustainable and reliable water supply services.
- Improve WASH in schools, including menstrual hygiene management.

Social Policy

Work in this area aims to ensure that children are prioritized during budget allocation processes so that their needs are adequately addressed, and that there is sufficient capacity to develop and implement policies that deliver quality services for children and their families. In partnership with the Government, UNICEF works to improve equity-focused programming in three critical areas:

- Child-sensitive social protection
- Child-friendly policies and budgeting
- Applied research, evaluation and evidence generation, with a focus on reducing poverty and disparities among children.

UNICEF IN ACTION – KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

CHILD HEALTH

- Measles-Rubella supplementary activities have reached 100% of children aged 9-59 months.
- New guidelines and tools for post-natal care and the RapidSMS system have been developed to help increase access to antenatal and postnatal care visits.
- A new clinical mentorship programme was initiated to reduce neonatal mortality by improving the quality of neonatal care at the facility level.
- In 2017, over 231,000 boys and girls were educated on HIV and gender-based violence, over 29,400 boys and girls were tested for HIV, and over 11,383 boys were circumcised.

NUTRITION

- An increased number of children 6-59 months are receiving appropriate treatment for severe acute malnutrition, from 23% in 2015 to 67% in 2017.
- In 2017, 432,620 children aged 6-23 months received micronutrient powders, and over 1.5 million children younger than five received Vitamin A supplementation and deworming.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Approval and implementation of the 2016 ECD policy has increased demand and utilisation of ECD services.
- A UNICEF-supported 2017 national ECD mapping report revealed that 18% (13% in 2014/15) of children (3 – 6 years) are receiving ECD services from 3,949 centres and 138,274 families are utilising quality ECD services.
- Availability of ECD services increased due to the construction of additional ECD model centres, provision of play and learning materials, and training of caregivers to enhance delivery of quality home and centre-based ECD services.

EDUCATION

- Participation of education has improved, as evidenced by an increase in access to pre-primary education and a reduction in dropout rates.
- In 2017, more than 20,000 refugee children, children with disabilities, and out-of-school children had opportunities to access quality education in an inclusive environment.
- With UNICEF support, more than 25,000 teachers have been supported on the competency-based curriculum, resulting in strengthened capacity to deliver quality education.
- UNICEF supports the newly developed National Communications Strategy on Gender to address negative social norms.

CHILD PROTECTION

- Services which respond to violence services for children and women are available in all 30 districts through One Stop Centres.
- In birth registration, the country has transitioned from paper- to web-based birth registration.
- UNICEF is supporting case management, child-friendly spaces, and psychosocial support for children in the Burundian refugee camp.
- UNICEF supported the Government with capacity building of 29,674 community-based child and family protection workers (Friends of the Family/Inshuti z'Umuryango) in all 30 districts.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

- In 2017, enhanced access to WASH services resulted in over three million people receiving sanitation and hygiene messages through bulk SMS, over 38,896 people provided access to improved water supplies, and 32,450 people gaining access to improved sanitation.
- The proportion of the population using an improved drinking water source increased from 71% in 2012 to 78%.
- The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility increased from 59 per cent to 62 per cent.

SOCIAL POLICY AND RESEARCH

- Coverage by social services has increased, along with the Rwanda's capacity to implement child-sensitive social protection measures.
- Expanded public works programmes have been included in the Government's Graduation from Extreme Poverty Package.
- UNICEF contributed to expanding the social protection system through support to the UBUDEHE Management Information System, used by over 3,000 Government officials at all levels and is the Government source for targeting of core and complementary social protection programmes.