



Theodette, 3, washes her hands with soap with her friends near their home in Ngororero District.

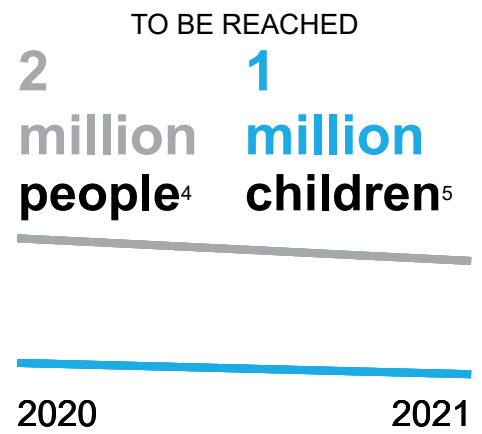
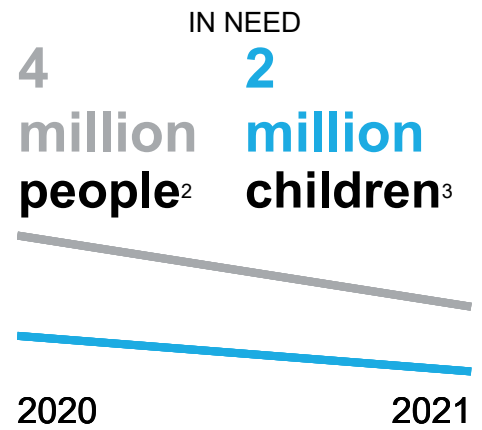
**unicef**   
for every child

## Humanitarian Action for Children

# Rwanda

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Rwanda first confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in March 2020. Although the number of cases has been low, health system resources are being redirected to respond and an increasing number of children are affected by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, including disruptions to schooling and heightened protection risks.
- While Rwanda remained Ebola-free during the outbreak, it remains a priority country and continues to maintain its Ebola preparedness. Rwanda is also home to 147,000 refugees, half of whom are children, who require assistance in and outside of camps.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2021, UNICEF will continue to deliver life-saving services to refugees and children and families affected by COVID-19 and its socio-economic impacts, and maintain its Ebola preparedness and contingency planning.
- UNICEF is appealing for US\$6 million to respond to the urgent needs of 1 million children, including with education, child protection and risk communication services.




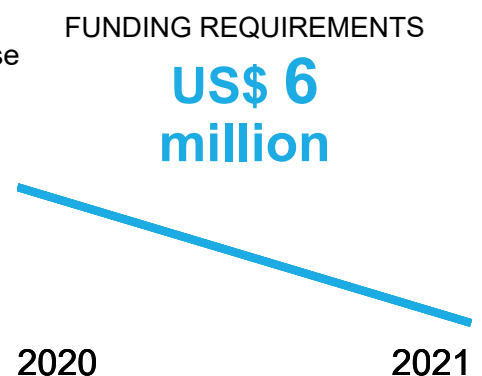
### KEY PLANNED TARGETS

 **200,000** children accessing water, sanitation and hygiene services in learning and safe spaces

 **500,000** women and children accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation/prevention/response

 **30,000** children accessing educational services

 **2 million** people reached through messaging on access to services



## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

While the humanitarian crisis in Rwanda is small in scale and magnitude, it remains complex. The country is affected by three overlapping emergencies: (1) the risk that the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will spillover into Rwanda; (2) the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) the 147,000 refugees in Rwanda who require urgent humanitarian assistance.

Rwanda remains extremely vulnerable to health epidemics – including COVID-19 but also Ebola – due to its shared border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its overstretched health system. Health centres with limited capacity will struggle to manage the surge in cases of COVID-19 and Ebola, should the outbreak spill over.

Rwanda confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on 14 March 2020, and since then, the Government has implemented strict prevention measures. As of 30 October, there were over 5,000 confirmed cases and 35 confirmed deaths.<sup>6</sup> COVID-19 prevention measures, such as the temporary closure of schools and early childhood development centres, supply disruptions, rising food prices, unemployment and the looming economic crisis, are intensifying risks and inequalities for the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Children – including refugee children, young children, girls and children with disabilities – require access to education through remote learning and home-based early childhood development and stimulation while the Government works to gradually reopen schools and early childhood development centres.

Vulnerable families and children living in overcrowded settings and dense living conditions are at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19. Women and girls have specific needs that if unaddressed may increase their vulnerability to protection risks and lead to the adoption of negative coping strategies. Stigma and discrimination tied to COVID-19 are also heightening children's vulnerability to violence and psychological distress that may have long-term impacts on their cognitive and emotional development if appropriate action is not taken.

## SECTOR NEEDS



### Health and nutrition

**55,000** community health workers need training<sup>7</sup>



### Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA

**75,000** refugee children need protection<sup>8,9</sup>



### Education

**75,000** refugee children need access to education<sup>10</sup>



### C4D, community engagement and AAP

**4 million** people need life-saving messages<sup>11</sup>

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



“After our morning meeting concludes, it’s straight to the field,” says Odette Mpugirehe.

Odette is one of four risk communication, community engagement and health promotion consultants hired by UNICEF and deployed to the Health Communications Division of the Rwanda Biomedical Centre to support effective coordination and reporting of communication for development interventions related to COVID-19 preparedness and response in Kirehe, Rwanda.

Like most districts in Rwanda, Kirehe began COVID-19 prevention measures early in March 2020. So far, risk communication activities have reached over 350,000 people.

**[Read more about this story here](#)**

Odette briefs youth volunteers on how they can help prevent COVID-19 in their communities, including by encouraging handwashing and physical distancing in markets.

# HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In Rwanda, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health to prepare for and respond to health epidemics and the refugee situation.

As part of the health response, UNICEF will work through community networks and local non-governmental organization partners, including religious leaders, to maintain essential community-based Ebola prevention activities for families and children.

UNICEF will also continue to support the COVID-19 response in Rwanda. This will include supporting the Government to mitigate the secondary impacts of COVID-19 on children and families, in line with the National COVID-19 Response Plan, which was developed with the support of key health partners. UNICEF will also lead risk communication activities and specific engagement actions; support the WASH components of infection prevention and control; and facilitate community-based surveillance efforts in targeted districts, including capacity building of community health workers.

To support children's access to learning while schools are closed, UNICEF will support the Government to provide remote learning opportunities, including home-based early childhood development activities. When schools reopen, UNICEF will support a remedial learning programme to help students regain lost or missed learning. This intervention will emphasize reaching marginalized girls.

In line with the Blueprint for Joint Action – a commitment to accelerate joint efforts to protect the rights of refugee children and the communities that host them – UNICEF will respond to the humanitarian needs of refugees from Burundi who are living in and outside of camps in Rwanda, in close collaboration with the Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This will include providing critical child protection and education services to children and adolescents, and supporting access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in schools serving refugee children.

UNICEF will also continue to include all refugee children and adolescents inside and outside of camps in vital social services, including services addressing gender-based violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. To strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of national services for refugees and all crisis-affected communities, UNICEF will continue to support the Government to leverage existing partnerships and work through community-based mechanisms and networks in its emergency response.

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports:

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/rwanda/situation-reports>

# 2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS<sup>12</sup>



## Nutrition

- **6,000** children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment
- **31,000** facility staff and community health workers trained on maternal, infant and young child feeding, including in the context of COVID-19



## Health

- **10,000** children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against measles
- **55,000** health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control



## Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **200,000** children accessing appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces
- **25** high-risk health facilities with adequate hygiene facilities and capacities for COVID-19 infection prevention and control



## Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **500,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions
- **30,000** people with access to safe channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse
- **2,000** unaccompanied and separated children reunified with their primary caregiver or provided with family-based care/alternative care services



## Education

- **30,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **3,000** schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)

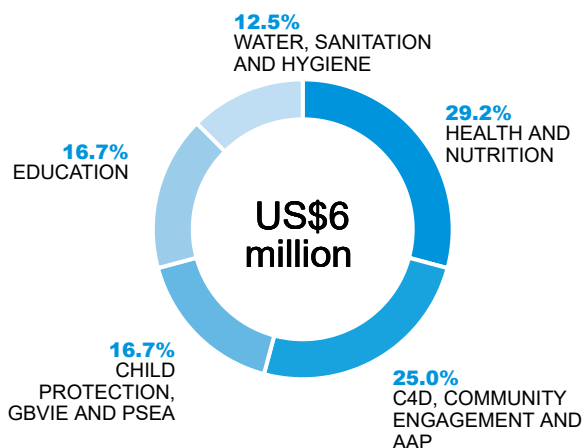


## C4D, community engagement and AAP

- **2,000,000** people reached with messages on access to services
- **200,000** people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change

## FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is appealing for US\$6 million to meet the urgent needs of 1 million children in Rwanda in 2021. In line with the Blueprint for Joint Action, UNICEF will work closely with UNHCR to operationalize a fairer deal for refugee children and host communities in Rwanda. UNICEF will also continue to support the Government to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including disease outbreaks.<sup>13</sup> 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 and COVID-19 preparedness and response nationwide. This funding will also be vital to UNICEF's ability to reach up to 2 million people with essential risk communication and community engagement interventions; support 500,000 people with gender-based violence risk mitigation; provide 30,000 children and adolescents with access to learning and child protection services; and reach 200,000 children with essential WASH services in schools serving refugees.



Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
Health and nutrition	1,750,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	750,000
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	1,000,000
Education	1,000,000
C4D, community engagement and AAP	1,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>

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## ENDNOTES

1. UNHCR, October 2020.
2. UNICEF estimate as part of the joint United Nations COVID-19 programme, July 2020.
3. Ibid.
4. This includes people to be reached in targeted districts, including refugees and host communities, with risk communication and community engagement interventions, as agreed with the Government. Women represent 51 per cent of the population, according to the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda, 2020. Five per cent of the population has a disability, according to a 2018 Government report. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
5. This was calculated based on the percentage of the population to be reached with with communication and community engagement interventions that are children (45 per cent), including refugee and host community children, based on the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda, 2020. The remaining children in need will be reached by the Government with support from other donors as part of the COVID-19 response plan. Girls represent 51 per cent of the population, according to the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda, 2020. Five per cent of children have a disability, according to a 2018 Government report.
6. Rwanda Biomedical Center, 'Update COVID-19 30 October 2020', 31 October 2020.
7. This is a UNICEF estimate based on consultations with the Government and UNHCR, 2020.
8. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBVIE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).
9. UNICEF estimate based on consultations with the Government and UNHCR, 2020.
10. Ibid.
11. The sector need was agreed to with the Government and includes the populations of the districts at highest risk and bordering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania, including the three districts of Kigali, Rusizi, Rubavu and Kirehe.
12. The programme targets cover refugees and non-refugees.
13. These figures are provisional pending the adoption of 2021 response plans, and are currently aligned with the 2020 COVID-19 Response Plan and the 2020 Rwanda Preparedness Plan.