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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE JOINT UNHCR/WFP IMPACT EVALUATION ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE TO DURABLE SOLUTIONS IN PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS – RWANDA

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second in a series of impact evaluations of the contribution made by food assistance to durable solutions in protracted refugee situations. The series was commissioned jointly by WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Rwanda has hosted refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1994, following regional instability and insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. WFP has provided food assistance to 53,600 Congolese refugees living in three camps. Food assistance is part of a joint effort with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which provides protection, health, water and sanitation services and distributes non-food items; and with the Government of Rwanda, which provides policy and oversight support, and until 2009 implemented food distribution. The evaluation covered the 2007–2011 period.

Overall the contribution of food assistance to achieving planned outcomes was mixed. The evaluation found that food insecurity remained problematic for all refugees living in the camps. Nutrition results were mixed: global acute malnutrition rates were below alert levels, but chronic malnutrition rates exceeded the humanitarian threshold for critical. Negative coping strategies were found to be frequent and severe. Income-generating activities were minimal. Findings regarding protection and the protective environment were also mixed.

Funding shortfalls for both agencies resulted in input gaps and only partial achievement of planned outputs. WFP focused on meeting basic food needs according to the traditional care and maintenance model and did not support livelihood activities. WFP distributed slightly less than 2,000 kcal/person per day during most of the period; the planned level was 2,238 kcal. Shortfalls in non-food items, and high milling costs resulted in refugees selling food and using proceeds to obtain other basic needs. Only a small majority of refugee households attained acceptable food consumption scores, and refugee diets were very monotonous.

The overall context was not conducive to durable solutions. Few Congolese refugees moved permanently out of the camps during the period because of continuing insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, a lack of resettlement opportunities, and severe constraints to self-reliance and/or integration in Rwanda.

In testing the theory of change, the evaluation found that WFP's food assistance and partners' inputs and activities were insufficient to meet the refugees' basic needs (outputs); major assumptions regarding the refugees' use of food assistance did not hold, resulting in only partial achievement of planned short-term and intermediate outcomes. The conditions that would enable food assistance to contribute to long-term outcomes – the pathway to durable solutions – were not found in the refugee camps in Rwanda.

The evaluation makes ten recommendations aimed at both WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: five address implementation issues, management standards and improvements to programme approaches; and five address longer-term strategies requiring the agencies' engagement with the international community, donors and the governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in developing a way forward to achieve durable solutions to this protracted refugee situation.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board takes note of “Summary Report of the Joint UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluation on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations – Rwanda” (WFP/EB.2/2012/6-E) and the management response in WFP/EB.2/2012/6-E/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation Features

1. This impact evaluation was commissioned jointly by WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and conducted by an independent evaluation team of specialists in evaluation, food security, livelihoods, nutrition and gender, with appropriate experience of Rwandan and refugee contexts.
2. Serving both accountability and learning purposes, the evaluation was intended to:
 - assess and explain the outcomes and impact of food assistance interventions for Congolese refugees in protracted refugee camps within Rwanda from 2007 to 2011; and
 - identify the changes needed to improve the contribution of food assistance to self-reliance and/or durable solutions for protracted refugee populations in Rwanda.
3. A theory-based approach was taken to assess the extent to which activities carried out by WFP and UNHCR resulted in the expected outcomes, and how external factors and assumptions affected results. The *theory of change* derived from UNHCR and WFP policies and programme guidance posits that inputs and activities will produce:
 - short-term outcomes including increased food consumption, increased use of water, sanitation and protection services, increased school attendance, and improved livelihoods;
 - intermediate outcomes including improved or stabilized nutrition, an improved food basket, and successful income-generating activities; and
 - long-term outcomes resulting in self-reliance, resettlement, repatriation, or integration within Rwanda.
4. To examine this theory the evaluation examined four main questions:
 - i) Overall, what are the differential impacts of food assistance on the protracted refugee population in Rwanda?
 - ii) What are the impacts on food security and nutrition status?
 - iii) How does food assistance affect coping strategies?
 - iv) What are the impacts on protection and the protective environment?

5. The evaluation team employed a mixed-methods approach including:
 - a quantitative household survey of 1,200 randomly selected refugee households in Kiziba and Gihembe camps; 38 focus group discussions with refugees and members of the host population in/around all three camps; 54 key informant interviews with WFP, UNHCR, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs, partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors;
 - analysis of secondary data sources, including three joint assessment mission (JAM) reports,¹ agency reports, and various assessments, monitoring data and proposals; and
 - transect walks and observations of conditions in the camps.
6. As all refugees in camps received WFP and UNHCR assistance, analysis focused on cross-sectional differences among camps and, to a lesser extent, among socio-economic groups within the refugee population. Quantitative survey methods allowed statistical comparisons between two camps on some indicators.
7. There were limitations to the evaluation:
 - A lack of systematic nutrition data collection in the camps and surrounding areas affected nutrition analysis. An anthropometric survey conducted in May 2011² used survey sampling methods that did not allow the analysis of indicators by camp.
 - Although the interpretation of qualitative data applies to all three camps, quantitative data was collected and analysed only for the situation of refugees living in Kiziba and Gihembe camps; time and financial constraints precluded a quantitative survey in Nyabiheke camp.
 - Resource constraints compelled WFP to halve food rations for the general food distribution (GFD) in all three camps in September 2011. This situation may have influenced refugee interviews approximately one month later.

Context

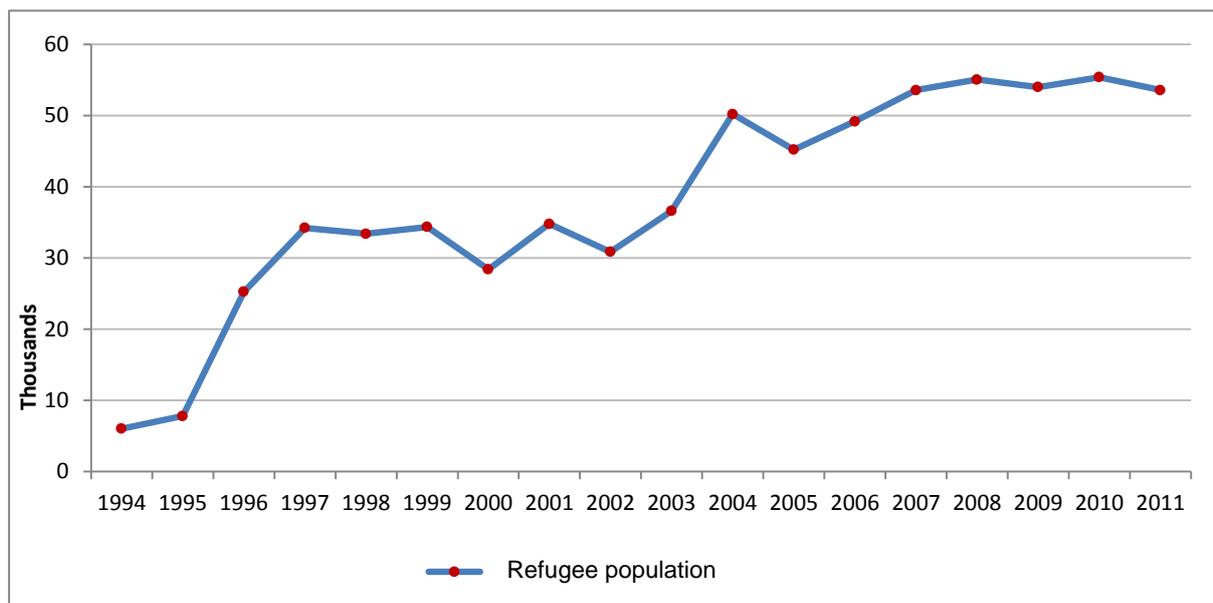
⇒ *Refugees in Rwanda*

8. As a Party to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the Government of Rwanda has an open policy of allowing refugees into the country and remains committed to implementing international agreements and protocols on the rights of refugees. Rwanda has hosted refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since 1994, following regional instability and conflict in eastern DRC.
9. Most of the 53,600 refugees (2011 data) reside in three camps: Gihembe in Northern Province, Kiziba in Western Province, and Nyabiheke in Eastern Province. Of these refugees, 74 percent have been displaced for more than ten years.³ Figure 1 shows the trend of refugee numbers from 1994 to 2011.

¹ The purpose of UNHCR/WFP JAMs is to build understanding of the situation, needs, risks, capacities and vulnerabilities of refugees and host populations with regard to food and nutrition needs, to inform joint decision-making (UNHCR/WFP. 2008. *Joint Assessment Mission Guidelines*. Rome).

² WFP. 2011. Rwanda pre-JAM household assessment report: Food security and nutrition survey. Kigali, WFP Rwanda Country Office.

³ American Refugee Committee (ARC) 2011. Intention Survey Preliminary Findings: Gihembe, Nyabiheke, and Kiziba Refugee Camps – Rwanda. 5 September. Kigali.

Figure 1: Historical trend in the refugee population in Rwanda (1994–2011)

Source: UNHCR Statistical Online population Database, 2011.

⇒ *WFP and UNHCR support to refugees 2007–2011*

10. WFP and UNHCR have been working jointly to support refugees in Rwanda since 2007, with complementary roles and responsibilities. From 2007 to 2011, WFP provided support under two protracted relief and recovery operations (105310 and 200030) budgeted at US\$93 million and funded at 63 percent – US\$58.5 million. About US\$38 million, or 65 percent, covered GFD.⁴ During the same period, UNHCR contributions to Rwanda refugee operations totalled US\$30 million, with annual contributions doubling from US\$4.2 million to US\$8.4 million.
11. WFP oversaw activities related to operation assessment, planning and monitoring as well as procurement, transport and storage of food assistance. GFD rations were distributed monthly to all refugees, by the Ministry of Local Government from 1994 to 2009 and by Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) from 2010. Targeted supplementary feeding programmes (SFPs) were implemented through American Refugee Committee in Gihembe and Nyabiheke and AHA in Kiziba.⁵
12. UNHCR oversaw all camp management and protection-related activities; ensured refugee registration; provided fresh foods for supplementary feeding activities; managed supplementary and therapeutic feeding; provided non-food items (NFIs); and supported, managed and monitored the partner NGOs implementing community education and health services, water system management, protection services combating sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), and livelihood promotion and environmental protection activities.

⁴ Both operations also supported mother-and-child health and nutrition and HIV activities for Rwandans.

⁵ ARC and AHA manage health and nutrition programmes in the refugee camps.

13. Over the evaluation reference period, the policy orientation of both agencies shifted towards assisting refugees in attaining self-reliance.⁶ In Rwanda however, WFP and UNHCR continued to prioritize relief, care and maintenance activities within the constraints of funding shortfalls. These budget constraints meant that UNHCR was able to make only limited investments in income-generating activities for livelihood promotion to support durable solutions or refugee self-reliance.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF FOOD ASSISTANCE ON THE PROTRACTED REFUGEE POPULATION IN RWANDA

Impacts on Food Security and Nutritional Status

14. *Food security and nutrition status overview.* The evaluation found that food insecurity remained problematic for all the Congolese refugees, with no major differences among camps. Nutrition and health results were mixed: global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates⁷ were below alert levels, while chronic malnutrition levels exceeded the humanitarian standards' threshold for classification as critical. From 2008 to 2010, health centre records showed positive trends for mortality, supplementary feeding recovery and low birthweight rates, which surpassed the UNHCR/WFP standards for a stable situation (JAM guidelines) in all camps.⁸
15. *Food consumption.* Based on analysis of food consumption scores⁹ and household diet diversity scores,¹⁰ the evaluation found that food insecurity remained problematic for the refugee population. Quantitative survey results found that a narrow majority of refugees – 58 percent – attained acceptable food consumption scores.¹¹ However, there were significant differences among camps: 69 percent of refugee households in Gihembe households had acceptable scores, compared with only 46 percent in the remoter Kiziba camp.
16. *Dietary diversity.* The evaluation found that refugee diets were very monotonous and highly dependent on the food ration basket of maize, beans, oil and salt, all of which were consumed nearly every day. Meat, eggs, fish, fruit and dairy products were not consumed at all, or were consumed less than once per week; green vegetables, manioc or cassava were consumed one to three days per week. With a diet diversity score of 4.7 – from a maximum of 12 – Gihembe households consumed slightly more items than did Kiziba

⁶ The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNHCR and WFP (July 2002) states: “UNHCR and WFP will promote the use of assistance to encourage and build the self-reliance of beneficiaries.” This was elaborated in the 2011 MOU.

⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Rwanda. 2008. *Rapport d'évaluation de l'état nutritionnel dans 2 centres de transit et 4 camps de refugies au Rwanda*. Kigali, March.

⁸ The Sphere Project. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. 2011 Edition. Rugby, UK; UNHCR and WFP. September 2008. UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission Guidelines, Second Edition. Geneva/Rome.

⁹ WFP uses this score to measure the nutrient density and frequency of household consumption, enabling nutrition analysis based on the frequency and types of foods consumed, indexed by higher values for animal-protein foods, pulses and green vegetables, and lower values for oil and sugar. (WFP. 2009. *Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment Guidelines*. Rome.)

¹⁰ WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations use this score to represent the average number of food groups – from a total of 12 – consumed by households during a 24-hour period.

¹¹ Set at >38.5, based on the inclusion of oil as an integral part of the food assistance ration.

households, with a score of 4.4. The relatively diverse market for foodstuffs in the town next to Gihembe camp likely explains this difference in scores.

17. *Vulnerability groups.* Principal component and cluster analyses were used to compare refugee groups' vulnerability rankings and examine the differential effects of food assistance. The team found that the degree and intensity of chronic food insecurity varied by refugee group and type of household. A small group – 4 percent – of refugee households was found least vulnerable to food insecurity; a substantially larger 39 percent was moderately vulnerable; and the largest group, of 57 percent, was most vulnerable. Nearly two-thirds of the most vulnerable group were households headed by women with large numbers of dependents. Obstacles to obtaining food did not vary by vulnerability group, but other factors such as access to income-generating activities varied significantly.
18. *Nutrition.* A UNICEF 2008 survey⁷ revealed GAM rates of 5 to 10.6 percent¹² and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates of 0.7 to 3.5 percent (see table below). The survey revealed some differences among camps, but these were not statistically significant.
19. Stunting/chronic malnutrition rates in the 2008 nutrition survey were 45.4 percent in Gihembe, 48.1 percent in Kiziba and 49.3 percent in Nyabiheke – all exceeding the international humanitarian threshold for critical, of >40 percent.¹³ The 2011 pre-JAM² found that 60 percent of the 329 children aged 6–59 months tested were anaemic, exceeding the humanitarian threshold for severe, of >40 percent.¹⁴

PREVALENCE OF MALNUTRITION IN THE CAMPS, 2008			
(%)			
	GAM	SAM	Stunting
Gihembe	5.0	0.7	45.4
Kiziba	9.1	2.6	48.1
Nyabiheke	10.6	3.5	49.3

Source: UNICEF Rwanda, 2008.

20. Camp records revealed that the prevalence of low birthweight – <2.5 kg – has remained low, ranging from 0 to 5.6 percent between 2008 and 2011 in the three camps, well within the humanitarian standard of <15 percent. UNHCR health information system reports indicated low crude mortality and under-5 mortality rates in all camps between 2008 and 2010.
21. *Water and sanitation.* Against the international humanitarian standard of >20 litres per person per day, in August 2011, water access was found adequate only in Kiziba, where easily accessible water points provided refugees with approximately 33 litres per person per day. Access was problematic in Nyabiheke, with 14 litres per person per day, and Gihembe, with 6.5 litres. Depending on the camp, there were 22 to 24 people per communal drop-hole, slightly below the humanitarian standard of <20.

¹² The international humanitarian threshold for an alert is GAM of 10–14 percent.

¹³ The current estimate for the Rwanda population is 44 percent (Demographic and Health Survey 2010), unchanged since 2005.

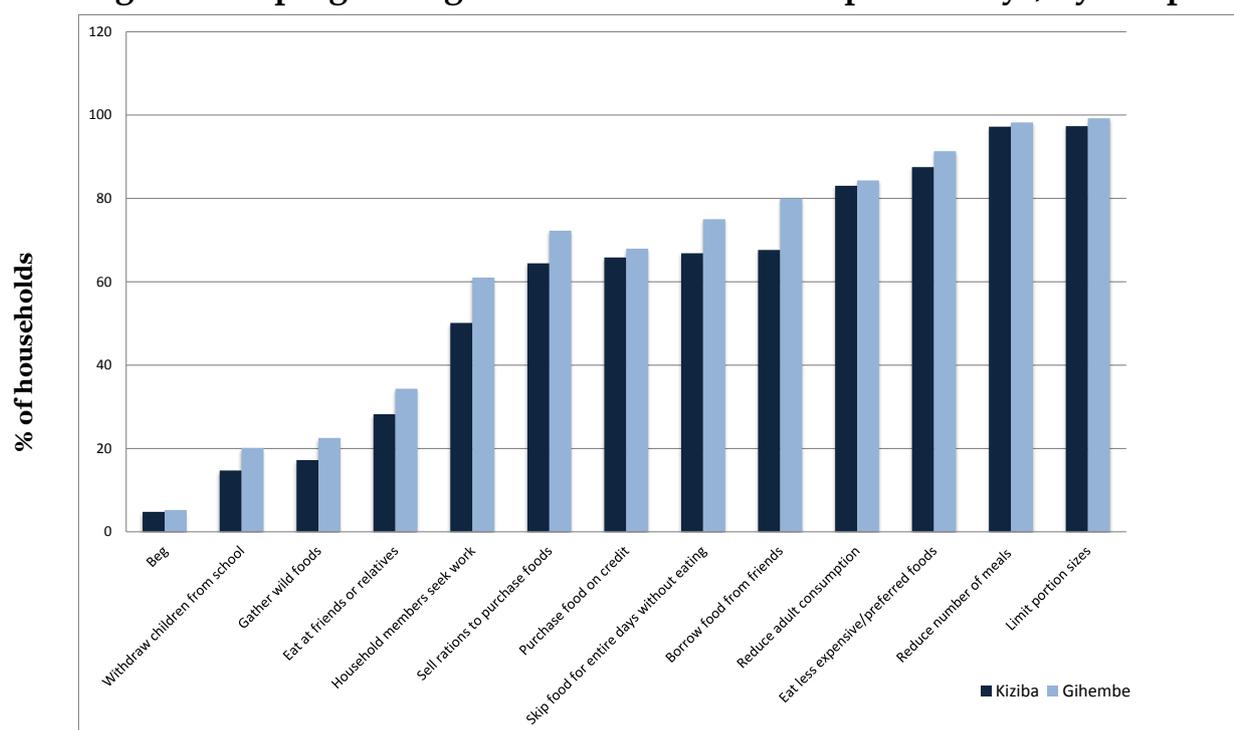
¹⁴ Anaemia in children aged 6–59 months in Rwanda is currently 38 percent, including 1 percent severe (Demographic and Health Survey 2010).

How Food Assistance Affects Coping Strategies

⇒ Coping strategies overview

22. Overall, negative coping strategies were found to be both frequent and severe, with a slightly worse situation in Gihembe than in Kiziba. Refugee households sold food rations to generate funds to cover other costs, including milling, cooking fuel and other foods. Coping strategies were found to have negative effects on refugee children's education. Income-generating activities were minimal, with fewer than half of households reporting any income in the previous year.
23. The quantitative survey found that camp residents deployed a variety of negative coping strategies. The aggregate coping strategies index scores averaged 38 for both camps¹⁵ – 35.7 in Kiziba and 40.4 in Gihembe. More than 80 percent of households limited portion sizes, reduced the number of meals, consumed less preferred foods and/or reduced adult consumption to allow children to eat more and more frequently. Between 50 and 80 percent of households borrowed food from neighbours, skipped food for entire days, purchased food on credit, and sought work or sold rations to purchase food (see Figure 2). Most refugee households ate 1.6 to 2 meals per day: children averaged 1.7 to 2.2 meals.¹⁶ In Kiziba 67 percent of households and in Gihembe 75 percent indicated that at least once in the past 30 days they passed an entire day without eating.

Figure 2: Coping strategies used at least once in past 30 days, by camp



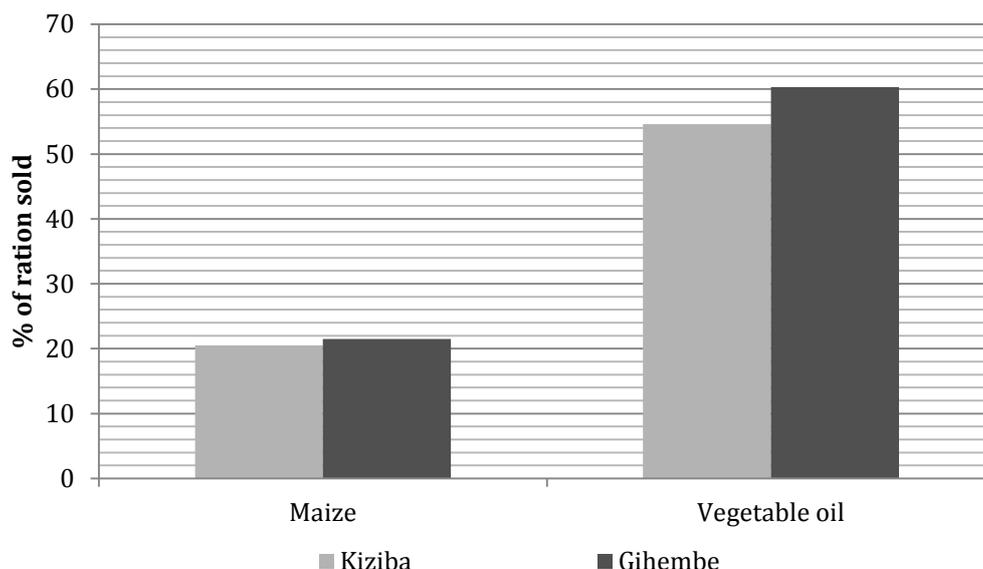
Source: Technical Assistance to NGOs (TANGO) International Household Survey 2011.

¹⁵ This index is used by WFP and is composed of the 13 indicators shown on the horizontal axis in Figure 2. High scores indicate that households have frequently employed comparatively severe coping strategies. (See footnote 9.)

¹⁶ Refugee households traditionally consume two meals per day according to focus group participants and corroborated by key informants from implementing agencies.

24. Refugees used the food rations as currency. Overall, households sold 20 to 21.5 percent of the maize and 55 to 60 percent of the vegetable oil – slightly more in Gihembe than in Kiziba (see Figure 3) – to purchase other livelihood needs. Food was sold at poor terms of trade. Refugees used the cash generated from sales to buy cooking fuel and clothing and to cover maize milling costs¹⁷ and education expenses for high school students attending schools outside the camp.

Figure 3: Mean percentages of maize and vegetable oil rations sold, by camp



Source: TANGO International Household Survey 2011.

⇒ Education

25. Coping strategies were found to have negative effects on refugee children's education. Total enrolment rates in primary and lower secondary schools for boys and girls aged 5–18 years were high, with only 7.8 percent of children in Kiziba and 5 percent in Gihembe never enrolling – percentages were higher among girls than boys.¹⁸ However, attendance was affected by the availability of food in the household, and records indicate falling attendance in the fourth week following monthly food distributions. Survey findings found that 15 percent of households in Kiziba and 21 percent in Gihembe had withdrawn children from school at least once in the previous month (see Figure 2).
26. Qualitative interviews reported that adolescent girls faced cultural and financial restrictions to pursuing secondary-level education. NGOs stated that it was unusual for girls attending secondary school to become pregnant and drop out; in contrast, many of those who were unable to pursue secondary level became pregnant.

¹⁷ Milling costs required an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the cereal ration and were higher in Kiziba, at Rwandan Franc (RWF) 1,300 per month, than Gihembe, at RWF 796 per month. RWF 604.25 = US\$1 (July 2012 United Nations exchange rate).

¹⁸ In Kiziba, 6.8 percent of boys, and 9.6 percent of girls; in Gihembe, 4.4 percent of boys, and 5.7 percent of girls.

⇒ *Indebtedness overview*

27. Focus group discussions revealed that refugees were compelled to sell rations to buy food and NFIs, ran out of food the last one to two weeks of the month, borrowed to buy food to cover this gap and used the new ration to repay the loan. This kept many refugee households in a cycle of recurring debt.

⇒ *Indebtedness and gender*

28. Qualitative analysis revealed a gendered aspect to retaining ration cards.¹⁹ In line with WFP guidelines, women were encouraged to retain the ration cards and collect the food. Women also obtained the credit to manage their households' food and other needs throughout the month. This resulted in the unintended consequence of refugee women bearing the debt burden.

⇒ *Income-generating activities*

29. Most refugees were farmers prior to seeking asylum. In the camps, however, only 0.7 to 5.7 percent of households cultivated, and about 5 percent owned livestock. Some refugees engaged in income-earning activities, but these were very limited. Fewer than half of households reported any income in the previous year; of these households, nearly two-thirds worked inside the camp. Gihembe camp adjoins the town but had only slightly more households reporting earned income, at 44.6 percent, than the much more isolated Kiziba camp, at 40.3 percent.
30. Among women reporting earned income, the most frequent activity was petty trade, mainly buying fruit and vegetables in town for resale in the camps. Profit margins were reported to be very small. Men were predominantly employed in the camps as non-agricultural day labourers, engaging in such activities as emptying latrines, digging pits and undertaking construction work. Focus group discussions reported that daily rates of RWF 400/US\$0.67 had not changed since 1997.

Impacts on Protection and the Protective Environment

31. *Protection overview.* Overall results regarding protection and the protective environment were mixed. Refugees appreciated the physical security and freedom of movement accorded by the Government of Rwanda, but women and girls were vulnerable to GBV when they ventured outside the camp for fuelwood, and to sexual exploitation when they sought casual employment. Mutual benefits, such as improved local markets, roads and health care services affecting both the host population and refugees, helped to create a protective environment. However, environmental damage from the camps and competition for fuelwood between the host population and refugees were major sources of tension, marring an otherwise cordial relationship.
32. *Gender and protection.* Women and girls faced protection risks when rations were sold and NFIs were insufficient, which – as reported previously – was the norm. Camp administrative records in both Gihembe and Kiziba registered declines in reported GBV cases over the period,²⁰ but the evaluation found that GBV was underreported for cultural reasons. Cultural constraints and ascribed gender roles were also found to limit women's participation in the activities of camp committees.

¹⁹ The quantitative survey found that women were ration cardholders in 60 percent of households: 59.1 percent in Kiziba and 61.7 percent in Gihembe.

²⁰ UNHCR/ARC/AHA programme information.

33. *Impacts on the host community.* The benefits that the host community derived from the refugee camps fostered a protective environment. In interviews, members of host communities reported positive impacts on local markets and labour availability from the refugees' presence. Markets were held more frequently and were more active, and there was a supply of cheap food, especially maize and oil, from resales. Host communities provided refugees with casual labour opportunities, although these were often low-paid, and opened their schools to refugee children. In several host communities, primary and secondary school infrastructure was expanded to accommodate refugee children. Host communities realized some ancillary benefits from the services provided to refugees, notably in Kanyege town, near Kiziba camp, which now has improved roads, access to health care services, safe drinking-water, and expanded employment opportunities.
34. *Impacts on the natural environment.* The host population considered the refugee camps to be detrimental to the natural environment. In interviews, all communities reported deforestation of communally owned land outside the camps, caused by refugees harvesting fuelwood. Residents around Kiziba camp reported that they now have to purchase fuelwood because there is none left to harvest. Every community reported significant environmental damage caused by camp houses and structures.
35. *Durable solutions.* The evaluation found that WFP food assistance did not contribute to the long-term durable solutions of self-reliance, resettlement, repatriation or local integration in Rwanda. WFP had not planned activities for achieving durable solutions. In interviews, UNHCR reported that it had not promoted voluntary repatriation because DRC remained insecure, although repatriation was deemed to be the most viable durable solution.²¹ UNHCR reported that 1,268 refugees – 2.3 percent of the total – resettled in the 2007–2010 period, mainly in Finland and the United States of America. As reliable work at reasonable wages and land for cultivation and livestock rearing were severely limited, there was little permanent movement of refugees out of the camps leading to self-reliance or local integration in Rwanda. In the quantitative survey, 8 percent of refugee households in Gihembe and 4.8 percent in Kiziba indicated a preference for staying in Rwanda, reflecting the difficulty of aiming for self-reliance through local integration.

EXPLANATORY FACTORS FOR IMPACT

Contextual Factors beyond the Control of WFP/UNHCR

36. The effectiveness of food assistance – its ability to generate intended short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes – was limited by external factors beyond the control of WFP and UNHCR. These included government policy, the limited local resources, the insufficient donor support for livelihood programmes and the uncertain political situation in DRC.
37. Together, these factors kept refugees reliant on food assistance and other basic relief services and supplies, and prevented them from realizing successful income-generating activities, agricultural production and asset-building. Contextual factors also negatively affected their prospects for repatriation.
38. Government policy permitted refugees freedom of movement and access to local schools and some forms of employment. However, refugees were forbidden to engage in livestock

²¹ Although UNHCR did not track people who spontaneously repatriated, in the quantitative survey 3.6 percent of households in Kiziba and 8.8 percent in Gihembe reported having a member return to DRC. In interviews, refugees reported visiting family members or checking on their land as the reasons for returning to DRC.

production, given the severe land shortages in and around the camps. Land constraints also precluded agricultural production opportunities for refugees.

39. Donor support over the reference period met only 63 percent of planned food assistance requirements,²² resulting in little or no support for training in income generation or other programme activities to support livelihoods such as food/cash for work. In some cases, donor funding regulations did not permit support for long-term livelihoods programme activities.
40. During the evaluation, virtually all refugees clearly stated that instability had kept them from returning to DRC, and that they did not want to return until peace and security were established.

Implementation Factors within the Control of WFP/UNHCR

41. The evaluation team analysed the programme delivery and coordination of WFP and UNHCR to assess how these factors affected outcomes. The team found that the mix of activities undertaken was dominated by care and maintenance support and had not progressed beyond providing basic needs, with few or no supporting activities to promote refugee self-reliance and durable solutions.
42. With some interruptions, WFP provided a stable supply of food assistance to the camps. However, the food basket of five commodities did not provide the planned 2,238 kcals per person per day, achieving only 1,976 to 2,112 kcal. The nutritional value was reduced to 1,998 kcal per day when corn-soya blend was withdrawn in early 2010. The ration lacked essential micronutrients, fulfilling only 54 percent of vitamin A requirements and 44 percent of calcium, and providing no vitamin C.
43. Recognizing that refugees sell significant quantities of food and bear high milling costs, WFP is exploring alternative forms of food assistance. A recent feasibility study on the use of cash and/or food vouchers in the camps found that these alternative food assistance tools could be effective and efficient, but further analysis of local markets, including their potential to adjust over time, is needed.
44. Budget constraints compromised UNHCR's efforts to distribute and replenish NFIs systematically. Refugees and the agencies confirmed that there were shortages of many NFIs, including fuelwood and soap.
45. Supplementary feeding programme activities supported by UNHCR and WFP reached potentially malnourished and moderately malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women and other vulnerable groups. However, the effectiveness of the SFPs in the three camps was difficult to assess because they were not specifically treating moderate acute malnutrition as intended; there were inclusion errors.
46. Few UNHCR resources were devoted to livelihood programme activities that could create economic opportunities for refugees.²³ Income-generating activity programmes enabled 3 percent of adult refugees to start small businesses, 5.6 percent to undertake professional training, and 38.5 percent to form savings and loan associations. These programmes built the vocational skills needed to generate reliable income and contributed to durable solutions by preparing refugees to pursue more diverse livelihoods.

²² WFP's approved operation included food-for-work support to host communities from 2010. As resources were insufficient to cover planned activities, WFP prioritized GFD for refugees and did not undertake any activities with the host population.

²³ UNHCR in Rwanda devotes approximately 90 percent of its budget to care and maintenance activities.

47. UNHCR ensured that quality basic education was available to all children through grade 9 of secondary school; however, financial support for grades 10 to 12 was discontinued after 2007 because of budget constraints.
48. UNHCR offered several programme activities to protect refugees from violence and abuse, including child protection activities, counselling and referral services for victims of GBV, and household conflict resolution initiatives. Qualitative interviews reported that GBV would have been much worse without the commitment of UNHCR and its partners to prioritizing activities to protect women and children. Although the evaluation found underreporting, as mentioned above, NGOs noted a decrease in the number of reported GBV cases between 2008 and 2011.
49. WFP and UNHCR carried out effective monthly coordination with the Government of Rwandan Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs and other implementing partners, including NGOs working in the camps. The agencies engaged in JAMs in 2006, 2008 and 2011, but follow-up on JAM recommendations was inconsistent and insufficiently prioritized, especially regarding activities related to annual nutrition assessments, vocational training, livelihood support and improvements to the food ration and NFI provision.²⁴

Interactions among Factors

50. The main factors that interacted to influence the impact of food assistance on durable solutions were the under resourced food and NFI provision, and the limited livelihood and asset-building opportunities supported by the agencies and donors. The combined resources of WFP and UNHCR were designed to provide refugees with an adequate, balanced food basket and NFIs that met essential needs. However, the food basket had to be reduced, and was monotonous and lacking in sufficient kilocalories and micronutrients, which – coupled with shortages in essential NFIs – forced refugees to convert food assistance to cash to cover other essential needs. The result was a situation of food insecurity, chronic malnutrition and the adoption of negative coping strategies, involving particularly women in a cycle of indebtedness. These factors reduced the impact of food assistance on short-term outcomes, and undermined the intermediate outcomes of successful income-generating activities or asset building, thereby blocking the pathway to the long-term outcome of self-reliance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

51. In testing the theory of change, the evaluation found that WFP food assistance activities and outputs, in combination with support from UNHCR, the Government and the host community, were often insufficient to meet all refugees' basic needs; major assumptions regarding the refugees' use of food assistance did not hold; and as a result the planned short-term and intermediate outcomes were only partially achieved. The pathway for ensuring that food assistance can contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes – durable solutions – was not found in the refugee camps in Rwanda.

²⁴ Following JAMs, UNHCR and WFP are expected to fine-tune the ongoing operation in line with recommendations, including by updating complementary strategies for food and related assistance and for self-reliance.

52. *Short-term outcomes.* The evaluation team found that food insecurity remained problematic for all refugees living in camps. Most refugees were categorized as either most vulnerable (57 percent) or moderately vulnerable (39 percent) to food insecurity, with only 4 percent falling in the least vulnerable category. Of the most vulnerable group, nearly two-thirds were households headed by women with large numbers of dependents.
53. *Intermediate outcomes.* Nutrition and health results were mixed, with GAM rates below alert levels while chronic malnutrition rates exceeded the threshold for critical. Overall, negative coping strategies were found to be both frequent and severe. Income-generating activities were minimal. Results regarding protection and the protective environment were mixed. Women and adolescent girls were highly vulnerable to GBV, although there was a decline in reported GBV cases over the period.
54. *Long-term outcomes.* The evaluation found that WFP food assistance did not contribute to the long-term durable solutions of self-reliance, resettlement, repatriation or local integration in Rwanda. UNHCR's activities promoting small business and professional training reached a small proportion of refugees, and contributed to durable solutions by preparing this group to pursue more diverse livelihoods. However, durable solutions and self-reliance for most refugees were not achieved, largely because of external factors beyond the agencies' control. Continuing insecurity in eastern DRC, severely limited resettlement opportunities, and severe constraints to self-reliance and/or integration in Rwanda resulted in few refugees moving permanently out of the camps during the period.
55. There was little variation in the results among different refugee camps or socio-economic groups; when differences existed, they were marginal. Gihembe camp performed slightly better than the more remote Kiziba camp regarding overall food security, income-generating activities and children's school enrolment rates. However, it scored worse on overall negative coping strategies and water availability.
56. This impact evaluation tested the theory of change, which provides the rationale and expected short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes for programme activities. The agencies achieved some of the outputs, but others have not been fully achieved. WFP provided refugees with a monthly ration of 1,998 kcal per person per day, which falls short of the planned 2,238 kcal; UNHCR did not systematically provide refugees with NFIs on a timely basis; and income-generating activities were accessible to only a very small percentage of refugees.

Recommendations

⇒ *Implementation, Management Standards and Programme Approach*

57. **Recommendation 1: WFP should ensure that all refugees are provided with a balanced and diverse ration that includes the necessary micronutrient content and sufficient kilocalories for health and development.** In addition to implementing GFD and blanket and targeted supplementary feeding in line with set standards, WFP, in cooperation with UNHCR, should identify opportunities for optimizing the use of food-, cash- or voucher-based approaches. Building on WFP's feasibility study, a market assessment followed by a pilot should be conducted, to provide evidence of the effects of a cash/voucher programme on the local economy and markets, and on intra-household food availability.

58. **Recommendation 2: UNHCR should carry out methodologically sound nutrition surveys in each camp on an annual basis – namely the standardized expanded nutrition survey implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Health, WFP and, if required, UNICEF.** In addition, UNHCR and WFP, in partnership with UNICEF, should ensure adherence to joint UNHCR/WFP guidelines and national protocols for the provision and management of curative nutrition programmes.
59. **Recommendation 3: UNHCR should mobilize funding to increase livelihood options for refugees in the camps, especially women.** This should include scaling up income-generating programme savings and loan activities with adequate financial, material and technical support. Women refugees should be targeted to increase the equity of income-earning opportunities.
60. **Recommendation 4: Mechanisms to ensure follow-up to address JAM recommendations should be established by WFP and UNHCR, according to a prioritized action plan.**
61. **Recommendation 5: UNHCR and WFP should minimize the use of firewood for cooking through the intensified distribution of fuel-efficient or alternative-energy stoves and sufficient quantities of environmentally friendly fuel.** Alternatives exist and should be tapped as important strategies to enhance protection for women and girls.

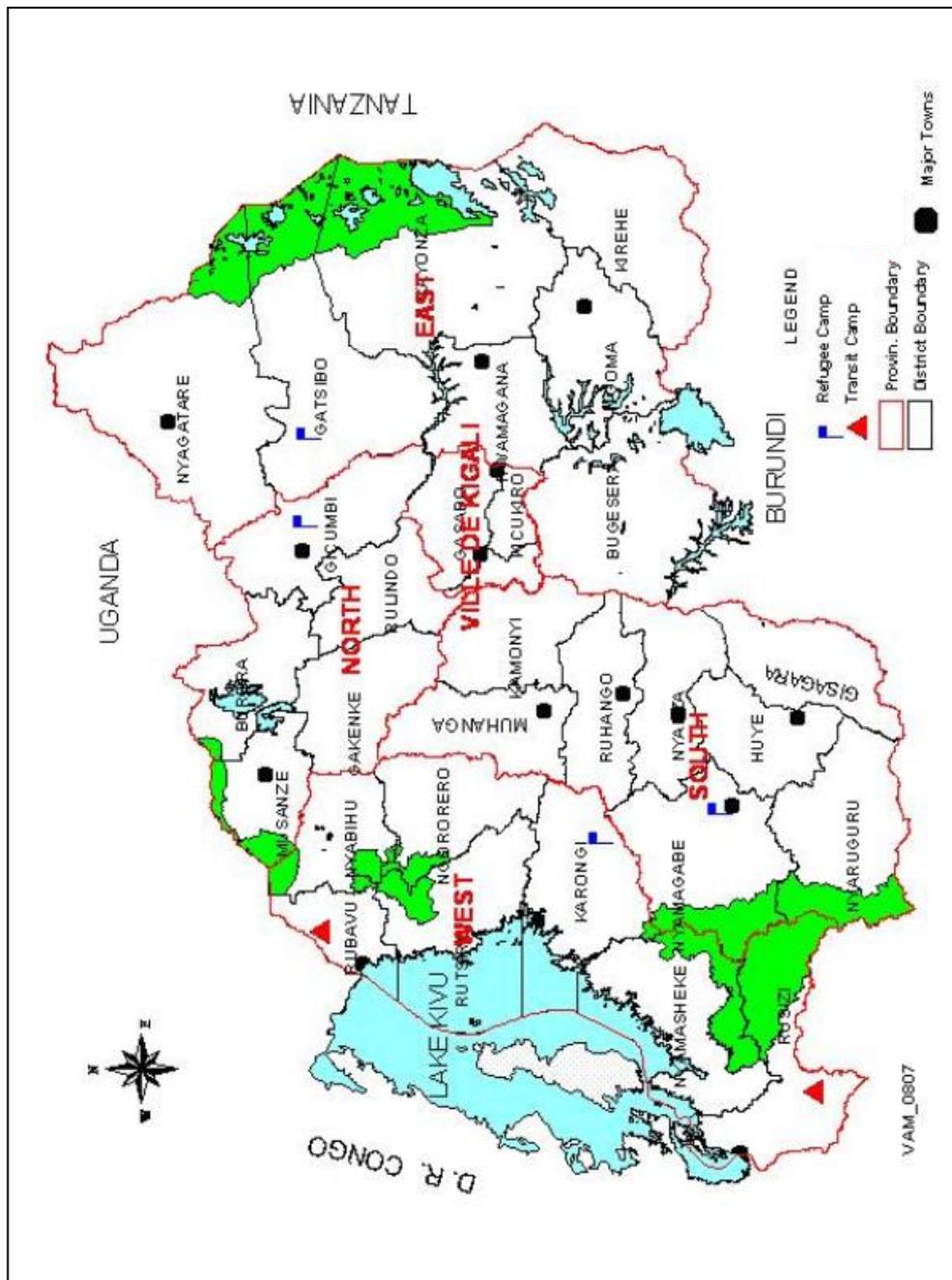
⇒ *Longer-Term Strategy and Durable Solutions*

62. **Recommendation 6: UNHCR and WFP should collaborate and coordinate more effectively in pursuing joint programming, funding and advocacy activities to ensure international support for durable solutions.** UNHCR and WFP should pursue a joint funding strategy with donors, and seek ways of diversifying the donor base.
63. **Recommendation 7: WFP should initiate food-for-work/cash-for-work programming to broaden income opportunities for refugees, especially for households headed by women and unemployed youth, and to improve social and economic relations between refugees and host communities.**
64. **Recommendation 8: UNHCR and donors should identify ways of increasing access to educational opportunities, especially for girls, as a major strategy for achieving durable solutions.** UNHCR and donors should prioritize funding to enable families to meet the costs of a full secondary school education – grades 10 to 12 – in accordance with the Government of Rwanda’s policy of universal access. Increasing girls’ access to education is a strategy for reducing the GBV and discrimination experienced by adolescent girls. The overall strategy should include creating greater access to national vocational and technical training schools and linking training to market needs and livelihood opportunities in Rwanda and DRC.
65. **Recommendation 9: Over the longer term, UNHCR and WFP should pursue strategies for promoting repatriation or integration within Rwanda.** Notwithstanding the complexities of the situation, it is important that the international community engages with the governments of Rwanda and DRC, together with UNHCR and WFP, to pursue strategies for promoting repatriation. Repatriation would require the Government of DRC’s commitment to ensuring that land for cultivation and homesteads is returned to repatriated refugees and their security is assured. Similarly, the international community, with the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR and WFP, should develop strategies for overcoming constraints to local integration, including donor funding to facilitate integration through livelihood support for refugees.

66. **Recommendation 10: Donors supporting the refugee programme should devote a larger proportion of funds to refugee self-reliance and durable solutions.** Donors are urged to overcome barriers related to funding restrictions, to support long-term durable solutions in both DRC and Rwanda. Strong, proactive donor support would help to overcome the limitations encountered by UNHCR and WFP in implementing activities aimed at achieving durable solutions and refugee self-reliance.

ANNEX

Map of Rwanda Showing Locations of Refugee Camps



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WFP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AHA	Africa Humanitarian Action
ARC	American Refugee Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
GAM	global acute malnutrition
GBV	gender-based violence
GFD	general food distribution
JAM	joint assessment mission
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFI	non-food item
NGO	non-governmental organization
SAM	severe acute malnutrition
SFP	supplementary feeding programme
TANGO	Technical Assistance to NGOs
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund