

# Evaluation Brief



## Rwanda: Joint UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluation on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations

### Context

Rwanda has hosted refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since 1994, following regional instability and insecurity in eastern DRC. Most of the 53,600 refugees reside in three camps located in Gihembe (Northern Province), Kiziba (Western Province) and Nyabiheke (Eastern Province). 74% have been displaced for more than ten years.

### WFP food assistance and UNHCR support to refugees

WFP food assistance was part of a joint effort with UNHCR, which supported refugees with protection, health, water and sanitation services and distributed non-food items, and with the Government of Rwanda that provided policy and oversight support. From 2007 to 2011 WFP provided support under two operations (PRRO 10531 and 200030) budgeted at US\$93 million, of which 63% or US\$58.5 million was funded. About US\$38 million (65%) covered general food distribution (GFD).<sup>1</sup> During the same period, UNHCR contributions to Rwanda refugee operations totalled US\$30 million with its annual contribution doubling from US\$4.2 million (2007) to US\$8.4 million (2011).

### Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

Serving both accountability and learning purposes, the evaluation intended to:

- Assess and explain the outcomes and impact of food assistance interventions to Congolese refugees within the protracted refugee camps of Rwanda from 2007 to 2011; and
- Identify changes needed to improve the contribution of food assistance to self-reliance and/or durable solutions for protracted refugee populations of Rwanda.

### Key Findings and Conclusions

#### Impacts on Food Security, Nutrition and Coping Strategies

Overall the contribution of food assistance to achieving planned outcomes was mixed. The evaluation found that food insecurity remained problematic for all of the refugees living in the camps. Nutrition results were mixed, with global acute malnutrition rates below alert levels; however, chronic malnutrition rates were beyond the humanitarian threshold for 'critical'. Negative coping strategies were found to be both frequent and severe. Income generating activities were

minimal. Findings regarding protection and the protective environment were also mixed.

### Contextual Factors

Funding shortfalls for both agencies resulted in input gaps and planned outputs not fully achieved. WFP focussed on meeting basic food needs according to the traditional care and maintenance model and did not support livelihood activities. The food basket consisting of five commodities never provided the planned 2238 kcals (but rather 1,976 to 2,112 kcal per person per day). The nutritional value of the food basket was reduced to 1,998 kcal per day when corn soya blend (CSB) was withdrawn in early 2010. However, shortfalls in non-food items, and high milling costs, resulted in food being sold and used as a currency to obtain other basic needs. Only a slim majority of refugee households attained 'acceptable' food consumption scores and refugee diets were very monotonous.

### Durable Solutions

The overall context was not conducive to durable solutions. There was little permanent movement of Congolese refugees out of the camps during the period due to continuing insecurity in eastern DRC, very few resettlement opportunities, and severe constraints for self reliance and/or integration in Rwanda.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Overall Assessment

Food assistance activities and outputs provided in combination with support from UNHCR, Government of Rwanda and the host community, were often insufficient to meet all refugees' basic needs, major assumptions did not hold regarding refugees' use of food assistance, and as a result the planned short and intermediate outcomes were only partially achieved.

The effectiveness of food assistance – its ability to generate intended short, intermediate and long term outcomes -- was limited by a number of external factors beyond the control of WFP and UNHCR. These included: the role of Government policy, limited local resources, insufficient donor resources for livelihood programming, and the uncertain political situation in DRC.

Together, these factors kept refugees reliant on food assistance and other basic relief services and supplies, and prevented them from attaining successful income-generating, agriculture production activities and asset-

<sup>1</sup> Both operations also supported mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) and human immunodeficiency virus activities for Rwandans.

building. Contextual factors also negatively affected their prospects for repatriation.

Government policy permitted refugees freedom of movement, access to local schools and to some forms of employment. Refugees were forbidden from livestock production, given the severe land shortages in and around the camps. Land constraints also precluded agricultural production opportunities for refugees.

Donor support over the reference period fell far short of estimated need, meeting only 63% of planned food assistance requirements<sup>2</sup>, resulting in little or no support for income generation activity (IGA) training or other programming activities to support livelihoods such as food for work/ cash for work. In some cases, donor funding regulations did not permit support for long-term livelihoods programming activities.

The evaluation found that virtually all refugees clearly stated that they have not returned to DRC due to instability, nor do they want to return unless there is peace and security.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1.

WFP should ensure that all refugees are provided a balanced and diverse ration that includes the necessary micronutrient content and sufficient kilocalories for health and development.

### Recommendation 2.

UNHCR should carry out methodologically sound nutritional surveys in each camp on an annual basis – namely, the Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey, implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Health, WFP, and if required, UNICEF.

### Recommendation 3.

UNHCR should mobilize funding to increase livelihood options for refugees in the camps, especially women.

### Recommendation 4.

Mechanisms to ensure follow-up to address the JAM recommendations should be established by WFP and UNHCR, according to a prioritized action plan.

### Recommendation 5.

UNHCR and WFP should minimize the use of firewood for cooking through intensified distribution of fuel-efficient or alternative-energy stoves and sufficient amounts of environmentally-friendly fuel.

### 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.

### 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.

### Recommendation 8.

UNHCR and donors should identify ways to increase access to educational opportunities, especially for girls, as a major strategy to achieve durable solutions.

### Recommendation 9.

Over the longer term UNHCR and WFP should pursue strategies to promote repatriation or integration within Rwanda.

### Recommendation 10.

Donors supporting the refugee programme should devote a larger proportion of funds to refugee self-reliance and durable solutions.



**Reference:**  
**Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at:**

[www.wfp.org/evaluation](http://www.wfp.org/evaluation)

**For more information please contact the Office of Evaluation [WFP.evaluation@WFP.org](mailto:WFP.evaluation@WFP.org)**

<sup>2</sup> WFP's approved operation included food-for-work support to host communities from 2010. With insufficient resources to cover planned activities, WFP prioritized GFD for refugees and did not undertake any activities with the host population.