

Nyabiheke Refugee Camp, Rwanda

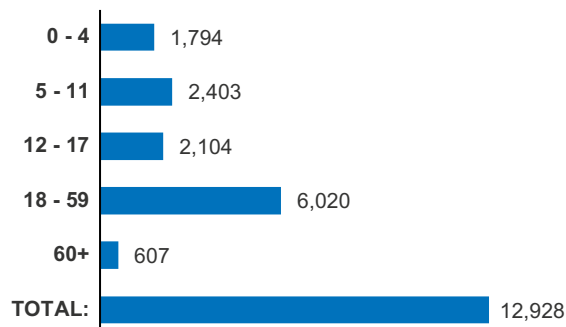
March 2023

12,928 refugees live in Nyabiheke refugee camp which is located in Gatsibo District in the Eastern Province of Rwanda.

The camp was established in **2005** mainly to reduce the overcrowding in Gihembe (North province) and Kiziba (Western province) camps.

80% of the camp's population are women and children below 18 years old.

POPULATION OF CONCERN (AGE COMPOSITION)



Joint MINEMA-UNHCR Livelihood monitoring mission at Nyabicwamba marshland

28 UNHCR STAFF BASED IN THE KABARORE FIELD OFFICE IN KABARORE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN NYABIHEKE REFUGEE CAMP

Staff:

- 21 National staff
- 7 International staff



Distribution of organic manure to the refugee and Rwandan farmers at Nyabicwamba marshland.

Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Nyabiheke Refugee Camp is managed by the Rwandan Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by Camp Program Manager, Social Affairs Officer and supported by immigration staff and the police. The camp is divided into eight quartiers (sectors) and each quartier consists of an average of four villages. In total, there are 29 villages.
- Each village elects eight Village Leaders, and each quartier elects eight Quartier Leaders. Among these leaders, the Executive Camp Committee is selected internally. Many religions are present in the camp, but majority of population are Christians (Adventists).
- UNHCR works with 12 implementing and operational partners in Nyabiheke camp: Alight, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Caritas, Food for the Hungry, Humanity and Inclusion (H&I), Inkomoko, PLAN International, Practical Action, Prison Fellowship Rwanda, Rwanda Red Cross, Save the Children International (SCI) and World Vision International (WVI).
- Nyabiheke refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its weather pattern and topographical nature. The absence of a well-planned drainage system, coupled with the frequent rains, has resulted in the creation of life-threatening gullies and ravines within and around the camp. Dealing with deforestation, caused by human activity, also poses a serious challenge. UNHCR, in partnership with MINEMA, has identified various areas to improve on in this regard including building drains and rehabilitating ravines within and around the camp.
- UNHCR in collaboration with partner Red Cross, has planted more than 30,000 forest and fruit trees since 2019. Despite this, challenges remain due to the type of soil and destruction by livestock reared in the camp.
- UNHCR Field Office Kabarore is part of the Gatsibo Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees to improve lives for both refugees and Rwandans. Together, UNHCR and Gatsibo district have implemented several projects including smart agriculture in Nyabicwamba marshland.

Protection

- UNHCR and partners in Nyabiheke camp provide a range of protection services to refugees and the Rwandan host community. These include individual case management, supporting survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation and preventing its occurrence, birth registration, issuance of birth certificates, ID documents and other civil status documents, supporting refugees' if they are detained, legal counselling and assistance/representation in the court if necessary, and psychosocial support.
- To ensure accountability to the refugee community in Nyabiheke, UNHCR and partners operate a range of complaint and feedback mechanisms including regular protection desk, individual counselling, hotlines, home visits, mass meetings and communication boxes.
- In partnership with Humanity Inclusion (HI), UNHCR provides support to people with specific needs through the Community-Based Rehabilitation services for children with disabilities. Psychotherapy services are provided to individuals with anxiety, depression, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Activities of Healing Groups and Sharing Groups are also provided to elderly individuals or people with serious medical conditions and consists of emotional/social

support. Currently, the registered number of people with specific needs is 2,751 representing 20.8% of Nyabiheke population.

Registration and documentation

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees living in the camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. UNHCR is currently following up on the cases of 55 asylum seekers and in the meantime provides the individuals with a “Proof of Registration” that serves as an identification document and Machine-Readable Convention Travel Documents are issued upon request.
- A biometric capturing exercise was held in Nyabiheke camp in 2022 by MINEMA, Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE), National Identification Agency (NIDA) and UNHCR targeting 16 years old and above, an estimate of 1,600 to 1,800 of refugee IDs were produced. The distribution is continuous and so far, 1,500 have been distributed to refugees.

Education

- Refugee children in Nyabiheke camp are integrated into the national education system. A primary school (satellite school of Groupe Scolaire (G.S) Nyabicwamba) is based in the camp and follows the curriculum of the Rwandan Ministry of Education and is open to both refugee children and Rwandan children who live in the surrounding area. Other refugee pupils and secondary students attend national schools outside the camp.
- As of the beginning of the academic year 2022/2023, 729 children benefitted from the Early Childhood Development program, 2,556 children were enrolled in primary school, and 2,492 pupils were enrolled in and attended secondary school. 11 refugee pupils (five females, six males) with special education needs are also enrolled in the Umutara Deaf School (U.D.S) which is a specialized boarding school.
- The ultimate self-reliance of young refugee adults is closely linked to refugee youth’s access to tertiary education. As of January 2023, only 27 refugees have scholarships (15 females and nine males), with 20 supported by DAFI, four sponsored by Kepler University and three by African Leadership University from Nyabiheke camp are attending university in Rwanda.
- To assess the tertiary education opportunities for refugees, UNHCR collaborates with the Mastercard Foundation and their scholarship programs which aim at providing 100,000 scholarships to youth in Africa of which 25,000 will be for refugees. This will be done in partnership with universities such as African Leadership University, United States International University-Africa, University of Pretoria, ASHESI University and Universite D’Abomey-Calavi.

Health

- There is a Health Centre in operation in the Nyabiheke camp, run by UNHCR and Save the Children. The Rwandan Ministry of Health also supports the centre through providing medical equipment. The centre primarily provides primary health care services including laboratory tests, dental care, sexual and reproductive health, HIV services, family planning services and post-natal care. An average of 2,500 individuals benefits from such services every month, including hundreds of members of the local host community. In addition, the prevention of mother-to-child HIV+ transmission program (PMTCT) has been successful with zero transmission among infants born from HIV+ mothers for the past three years.

- In support of secondary and tertiary health care interventions, UNHCR and Save the Children also facilitate medical referrals to the District Hospital in Ngarama and to hospitals in Kigali for additional or specialized care as needed.
- Routine and mandatory childhood immunization vaccines are provided for children under five, including measles and polio. COVID-19 vaccinations are also administered by Save the Children to all eligible refugees within the camp. Currently, 85% of the eligible refugee population have received three doses (18 years and above) of the COVID-19 vaccines, provided by the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC).

Food Security and Nutrition

- WFP provides support to refugees through cash for food, which is transferred to refugees on a monthly basis, via bank cards, and sometimes via cash agents in the camp in cases where bank cards have errors. Refugees are divided into three vulnerability categories, whereby the highly and moderately vulnerable groups receive food assistance of 10,000 RWF and 5,000 RWF respectively.
- UNHCR and partners in the camp, through the financial support of WFP, provide nutrition services which include education on a balanced diet, infant and young children feeding practices, therapeutic feeding, supplementary feeding, and anaemia programs targeting children under five years and pregnant/lactating women.

Water and Sanitation

- UNHCR and the WASH partner World Vision work with the national Rwandan Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC) to provide safe drinking water to all refugees living in the camp. In total, there are 27 water points, 60 latrine blocks, 18 garbage collection blocks, 42 shower blocks, 14 washing stands and 75 handwashing facilities. On average, the camp's residents receive 13.1 litres of water per person per day, which is below the minimum water supply of 20 litres per person per day. Nyabiheke camp's water is supplied by a borehole in the camp - the only camp in Rwanda that uses boreholes for fetching the water - and there are an additional three boreholes in the local host community. Mechanical condition of the boreholes, alongside flooding at the treatments site, has significantly impacted the water supply in Nyabiheke during 2022 and early 2023. The long-term problems with the water pumps were, however, resolved in March 2023.

Shelter and NFIs

- Nyabiheke refugee camp covers 35 Hectares of land and has a total of 2,325 shelters occupied by refugees. On average five people live in every shelter, although some 221 families do not have their own home and are hosted by other families.
- UNHCR provides shelter assistance to all refugees living in Nyabiheke. Activities include construction, rehabilitation and upgrading of shelters, replacing plastic sheeting with corrugated iron sheets on roofs and maintenance of communal facilities. By end of 2022, 280 shelters have been repaired and 52 new shelters have been constructed.
- Within the camp, UNHCR operates a 'Shelter Ownership' approach to promote refugee ownership of their homes. Under this initiative refugees are encouraged to participate in community meetings to discuss their housing needs and where necessary, UNHCR is able to support with construction material and even labour for refugees who are vulnerable and unable to undertake construction or rehabilitation works by themselves.
- In Nyabiheke Refugee camp, UNHCR supports refugees have access to clean energy for cooking, lighting, and power through the provision of monthly cash assistance for energy. To

support clean cooking, Practical Action has contracted two local companies which provide subsidised improved cookstoves and pellets for refugees at a reduced price.

- Under the Renewable Energy for Refugees (RE4R) project phase one and other interventions, 1,195 solar home systems and 110 solar streetlights were installed by Practical Action and Alight in communal areas to make the camp safer after dark.
- In the camp, offices, water pumping stations, business centres, and areas of worship are also connected to the main national grid as the main source of electricity paid by UNHCR. Refugee businesses are also able to connect to the national grid.

Livelihood and economic inclusion

- Since April 2021, UNHCR, MINEMA and Gatsibo District partnered to support 228 refugees and 228 host community (in total 456 families) to develop agricultural project on 23 hectares of land in Nyabicwamba marshland. By the end of 2022, soybean and maize crops were planted, and the entire harvest was successfully sold on the market for 14.4 million RWF. The marshland project has included the construction of a horticultural building, a drying building, and an irrigation and drainage system to support optimal production in the marshland. Agricultural season B-2022-2023 is ongoing and farmers are preparing their plots and receiving organic manure, after which follows the distribution of seeds and chemical fertilizers.
- To promote business and job creation in the camp, UNHCR has constructed two business centres within which 13 rooms have been allocated to 24 refugee business owners. In addition, the market constructed by UNHCR supports 64 refugee businesses. An additional business centre to be used by 35 refugee business owners, has also been constructed by Practical Action in Nyabiheke camp. All businesses are connected to national electricity grid.
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an important part of supporting the next generation of refugees find meaningful employment. In 2022, 222 refugee youth (102 female and 120 male) were supported to attend TVET schools by various partners taking courses in areas such as tailoring, hair dressing, culinary arts, plumbing and construction.

Durable Solutions

- In 2022, a total of 1,569 refugees were submitted for resettlement from Nyabiheke, making a 25% contribution towards the total submissions from Rwanda. In 2023, Nyabiheke has been allocated a quota of 1,603 submissions to different countries, although the number may change during the year.
- Apart from resettlement, UNHCR is looking to support refugees to safely migrate to third countries through other legal complementary pathways, such as economic and labour mobility opportunities. One such project is the Economic Labor Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) targeting skilled refugees who might be eligible for labour migration to Canada. The project has been rolled out in Nyabiheke camp during the first part of 2023.
- Refugees in Nyabiheke camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is currently neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation to the DRC.
- Legal and policy provisions exist to facilitate the local integration of refugees throughout Rwanda, including in Nyabiheke camp. Despite this, requests to locally integrate are few and the majority occur due to marriage between refugees and Rwandan nationals. UNHCR remains available to support refugees pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.

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