

HIGHLIGHTS (12 Jun 2020)

- COVID-19 Update
- Victims of natural disasters in need of food assistance
- UNICEF provides emergency support to flood-affected community of Gatumba
- UNICEF supports the national response against COVID-19
- Leveraging behavioural change communication to advance the fight against malnutrition



Disaster victims are now fishing in flooded fields, which are also risk areas for water-borne diseases. © UNICEF Burundi/2020/Z.BOUJRADA

KEY FIGURES



FUNDING (2020)

\$168.4M Required **\$27.3M** Received



FTS: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/922/summary>

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BACKGROUND (12 Jun 2020)

COVID-19 Update

First case: 31 March 2020

Total cases: 83 (as of 6 June 2020)

Total deaths: 1

Flights/Borders: All international passenger flights were suspended on 22 March. Humanitarian aid, diplomatic and emergency medical flights are exempt from this suspension measure. The land borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, were reopened on 15 April to allow the movement of goods. The border with Tanzania has remained open for the movement of goods and for the return of Burundians.

Containment measures: Since 5 March, self-financed 14-day quarantine is mandatory for travellers and anyone who has had contact with symptomatic people.

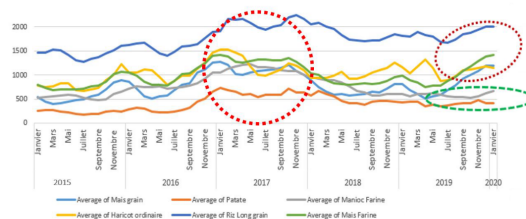


Screening session and temperature control. © OMS Burundi/2020/Dismas Junior

COORDINATION (12 Jun 2020)

Victims of natural disasters in need of food assistance

On 19 and 30 April 2020, heavy rainfall caused the banks of the Rusizi River to overflow in Bujumbura Rural province, flooding over 7,000 homes and affecting approximately 50,000 people according to the Government's figures. The humanitarian community, together with the Government and the private sector, swiftly mobilized to provide assistance to those most affected. This included relocating displaced families to temporary shelter sites, distributing food and non-food items, providing water, sanitation, and hygiene kits, psychosocial support, and more. In April, the World Food Programme (WFP) in Burundi provided lifesaving food aid to 1,804 families who lost their belongings during the floods. Also, 9,070 affected people received 2-month food rations, consisting of 321 tons.



Graph showing upward trends in cereal (corn in blue) and bean (in yellow) prices. © WFP Burundi/2020

Flooding has destroyed thousands of hectares of crops that were ready for harvest (mainly pulses and cereals), depriving the locals of essential food stocks for the coming year. With over 80 per cent of the population reliant on subsistence farming, already vulnerable communities will likely suffer a difficult lean season due to insufficient harvests, as well as increased market prices.

Over the past three months, there has been an upward trend in prices of basic food commodities in most markets. However, the prices of tubers and roots (mainly sweet potatoes and cassava) remain constant. In January 2020, the price of maize, the most consumed cereal, increased by 48 per cent compared to 2019 and by 20 per cent compared to the average of the last three years. The excessive rainfall could impact harvests during the 2020B growing season (Feb-Mar). Forecasts also indicate that the price of maize and beans could continue to rise as traders try to preserve their crops in anticipation of potentially poor harvests.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to also impact the food security sector. Due to increased prices increasing prices and lead times on procurement. The desert locust outbreak in the Greater Horn of Africa region has also reduced regional procurement opportunities. Overall, a low level of stocks across all sectors and lack of funding constrain the humanitarian response and limit humanitarian partners' capacity to respond to the consequences of these natural disasters.

Urgent additional funding is needed to ensure the capacity to respond to both sudden emergencies as well as to pre-existing needs.

FEATURE (12 Jun 2020)

UNICEF provides emergency support to flood-affected community of Gatumba

On 19 and 30 April 2020, heavy rainfall caused the banks of the Rusizi River to overflow in the Gatumba district of Bujumbura Rural province, affecting over 10,000 households. As a result, 11 of the 14 schools in the district have suspended classes. Over 1,000 people have sought refuge at the official shelter site being developed in Kinyinya II zone. These displaced people need urgent multi-sectoral assistance including shelter, access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, as well as food, medical care, alternative education for children, child protection and psychological care.

UNICEF Burundi has worked closely with the emergency unit of the Ministry of Education and Vocational and Professional Training and implementing partners such as Play International to provide emergency school kits to some 4,800 schoolchildren currently in official shelter sites. Together with the NGO Groupe de Volontariat Civil, UNICEF has also installed emergency latrines and a bladder to provide water at these sites. In addition, 12,216 people have received WASH kits including soap and jerry cans (to store water).

UNICEF Burundi requires an additional US\$1.3 million to cover the WASH, education, and child protection needs of the affected people.



In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, UNICEF Burundi is on the ground with its partners such as the Burundian civil protection, by installing hand washing stations in health centres and schools. © UNICEF Burundi/2020/Z.BOUJRADA

COORDINATION (12 Jun 2020)

UNICEF supports the national response against COVID-19

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF has conducted a series of rapid assessments to determine the level of knowledge and risk perception regarding COVID-19. The assessments were conducted through U-Report, an online survey platform aimed at adolescents and younger children to share their opinions on problems and topics that could affect their lives. The first evaluation saw 12,574 participants, 67 per cent of whom stated that they had heard about COVID-19. Also, 61 per cent of the respondents thought that violence within the household could increase with the current spread of COVID-19 due to isolation, stress, and anxiety.

The assessment findings indicate a need to continue promotion of prevention measures. UNICEF, as focal point for inter-agency communication on COVID-19 and as co-leader of the Sub-Committee on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) in Burundi, created brochures and posters, and used radio and TV spots, to standardize collective messaging on prevention. Aimed at local communities, these advocacy messages were approved by the government in Kirundi, French, and English, and are available to all stakeholders.

Over recent weeks, videos, posters, and infographics targeting the general public were disseminated by UNICEF and partners at the national level and through the media. To date, 20,000 flyers and 11,000 brochures have been printed and distributed to reach more than 4,000 schools, 60 NGOs and health facilities. The RCCE sub-committee estimates that 9,035,000 people have already been reached by radio messages on COVID-19 prevention. This figure is based on frequency of broadcasts, number of messages, number of radio stations (20) and radio penetration.

Some communications have proven innovative. For example, UNICEF worked with partners such as AuxFin, an organisation that has developed a mobile application called UMVA that is accessible to 200,000 rural households through community programmes. The application, available on Android, provides information on the modes of transmission of COVID-19 and information on prevention (in video format). Another innovative tool used by UNICEF, which became popular in Burundian schools, is a video on how to make a [Honyorukarabe](#) (tippy tap), a simple and inexpensive way to maintain hygiene through frequent handwashing.



UNICEF Burundi supports the Ministry of Education to get flood-affected children back to school. © UNICEF Burundi/2020/ Uwamahoro

COORDINATION (12 Jun 2020)

Leveraging behavioural change communication to advance the fight against malnutrition

In a workshop held on 24 February 2020, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the National Integrated Food and Nutrition Programme (PRONIANUT) presented the results of their joint qualitative research on key behavioral and attitudinal factors towards nutrition (conducted in January 2020). The aim of this study was to inform the Government of Burundi's national strategy to combat the high levels of chronic malnutrition in the country. The study considered the factors that determine nutritional knowledge, attitudes, and practices on the choice and consumption of food. About 30 key stakeholders and experts in the field of nutrition attended the workshop.



© WFP Burundi/2020/Irénée Nduwayezu

Burundi has the second-highest level of chronic malnutrition in the world - 56 per cent, per the Joint report (by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO) on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (JANSFA 2019). The report also shows that boys are more affected by malnutrition than girls (59.4 and 52.4 per cent respectively). According to the 2018 Global Nutrition Report,[1] Burundi has the second highest level of stunting worldwide with more than half of children under five being stunted.

"Stunting varies greatly depending on the nutritional status and education level of the mother, according to our research. The highest rates of stunting are found in the children of women who are underweight, malnourished, and have not completed high school" said the Director of PRONIANUT, Dr. Fidèle Nkezabahizi, in his opening remarks.

According to the WHO, malnutrition covers two broad groups of conditions. One is 'undernutrition'—which includes stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age) and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals). The other is overweight, obesity, and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer). The joint qualitative study, undertaken by WFP and PRONIANUT, was based on focus groups of over 90 people in total across 4 provinces (Ngozi, Kirundo, Rutana, and Cankuzo) in eastern Burundi. Participants included pregnant or lactating women, parents with children under five years old, adolescents (boys and girls), people living with HIV/AIDS, and community health workers. Results of the study show that information gaps and local perceptions contribute to the high prevalence of chronic malnutrition. The research also reveals perceptions about food and nutrition in Burundi. For instance, knowledge of the five food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits, milk and dairy, meat, and beans) is generally low, and people cannot classify foods into the correct groups. They tend to believe that what they eat is a complete diet, while some parents do not acknowledge that their children are malnourished. As a result, the local administration needs to persuade them to seek treatment.

The study considered an equal percentage of male and female participants. Although adolescent girls (representing 17 per cent of the 90 people surveyed) have specific nutritional needs, neither boys nor girls recognize that fact. During the focus groups, one participant said that boys should eat more since they are the ones who need the strength. Girls said it would be gender discrimination to get more or different food than boys and prefer the same food ration as boys. Also, children from rural areas in Burundi are likely to suffer more from acute and chronic malnutrition than those from urban areas. Indeed, the JANSFA 2019 study confirms that rural children are more at risk of being stunted than their urban counterparts, 58.8 and 27.8 per cent respectively.

The main determinants of malnutrition are linked not only to the scarcity of land, which leads to poverty but also to inadequate infant and young child feeding practices. High fertility, as well as short intervals between births, which are both strongly linked to gender issues, are also considered to be driving factors of malnutrition. The study concluded with several recommendations on changing attitudes and perceptions to nutrition, including (among others):

- To sensitize adolescents - especially girls - to promote a change in eating habits,
- To promote the participation of men in nutrition education,
- To promote vegetable gardens as a key element in the fight against malnutrition,
- To work with other programmes that aim to address malnutrition.

In a speech during the workshop, Ms. Virginia Villar Arribas, WFP Country Director in Burundi, applauded the Government's efforts in the last 18 months to contribute to the fight against malnutrition. WFP has supported Burundi's extraordinary drive to reduce chronic malnutrition by supporting the drafting of a multiannual strategy, the development of the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, assisting capacity-building at the SUN Secretariat, carrying out food security and nutrition assessments (JANFSA, Fill the Nutrient Gap/FNG), and supporting advocacy, among other activities.

"Along with programmes to prevent stunting and treat malnutrition, the change in nutritional behavior is a major factor in the fight against malnutrition", she emphasized.

Closing her remarks during the workshop, WFP-Burundi's Representative said that this research will help create appropriate strategies and programmes to address the issues required to influence social and behavioral change in a way that will improve nutrition.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official recognition or acceptance by the United Nations.

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/burundi>

<https://www.unocha.org/burundi>

<https://www.hpc.tools/plan/721>

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