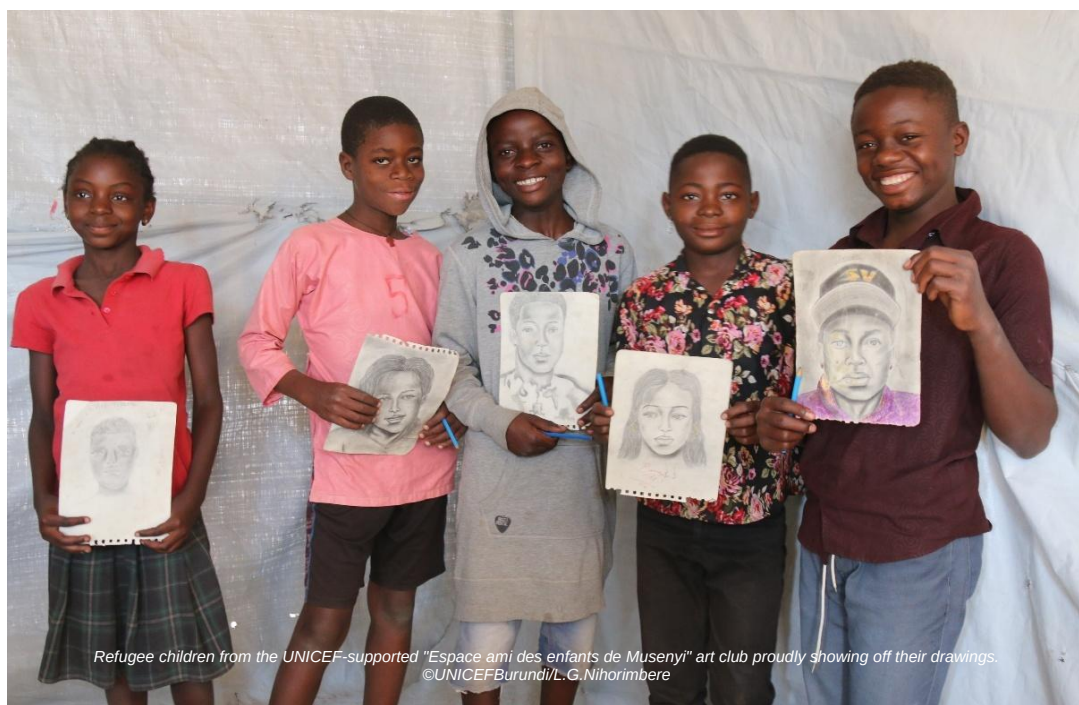




Refugee children from the UNICEF-supported "Espace ami des enfants de Musenyi" art club proudly showing off their drawings.
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Burundi Refugee Response: Impact of DRC Crisis

Flash Update No. 9

unicef 
pour chaque enfant

Flash Update 9: 07 June – 30 June 2025

Situation Update

- **70,000¹** people have crossed into Burundi since the beginning of 2025, fleeing the ongoing armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). An estimated 53% are children.
- The level 2 biometric registration launched in May 2025 reports 14,000 refugees registered in the Musenyi site. This level 2 registration continues for 3,900 people who are in transit centers, 15,809 pre-identified people in Cibitoke and for 3,000 former refugees from Musenyi. There is a reduction in the number of arrivals per week, which is below 200 people, but new influxes are expected if peace agreements are not reached².
- UNHCR is leading the overall response, while UNICEF is co-lead of the Education, Health, Nutrition, and WASH sectors and the Child Protection sub-sector according to the framework of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM).
- The Inter-Agency Response Plan on the Influx of People from Eastern DR Congo was officially launched on June 17, 2025, by the Government of Burundi and the UN agencies in presence of donors, NGOs, and other actors involved. On the occasion, an update was presented on the implementation of the response, including the collaboration with the country's authorities and advocacy for financing to cover gaps identified on the ground.

UNICEF Response

- At the onset of the refugee crisis, the UNICEF Burundi country office (CO) activated an immediate response, developed and adopted a multi-sectoral eight months Refugee Response Plan from February to September 2025, which also includes preparedness measures for a worsening situation considering the ongoing, significant influx.
- UNICEF effectively contributed to humanitarian coordination through the key sectors for which it provides the lead, the co-lead and actively participated in all sectoral actions and humanitarian coordination working groups.

¹ UNHCR, Burundi Emergency Update, DRC Refugee Situation, 06 June 2025.

² UNHCR, Réunion du Groupe de Travail Intersectoriel (réponse à l'afflux des réfugiés de la RDC), 23 juin 2025

UNICEF Burundi has carried out the following activities:

- **Enhance Child protection activities at refugee sites, particularly for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) and other vulnerable children.**
 - Since the start of the refugee influx, UNICEF's partner, local NGO *Social Action for Development* (SAD), has provided **mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)**, organized recreational activities through fixed and mobile child-friendly spaces, and supported **registration of refugees and documentation of UASC**, initially in arrival sites in Rugombo and Cibitoke; and currently at the Musenyi refugee site. Since the arrival of refugees in Burundi, a total of **20,219 refugee children** (9,899 girls and 10,320 boys), including 23 children with disabilities (10 girls and 13 boys) **received community-based MHPSS services** delivered through mobile and fixed child-friendly spaces and outreach activities at the community level, ensuring their psychological wellbeing and resilience-building. 52 child protection frontline workers (including NGO social workers and psychologists) were trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and on how to integrate PSS in their work.
 - During the current reporting period, 1,531 children (867 girls and 664 boys) benefited from community-based psychosocial support and MHPSS services through recreational and socio-educational activities in fixed child-friendly spaces and mobile strategy.
 - UNICEF is working with partners to ensure appropriate **referrals and multisectoral support to survivors of violence**, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV). During this period, an estimated number of 4,116 people (2,252 girls and women, 1,865 boys) were reached with messages on gender-based violence prevention and risk mitigation including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Coordination with the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and cross-border collaboration with UNICEF in the DRC to support family tracing and reunification is ongoing. A total of **1,282 unaccompanied and separated children** (approximately 41% girls) have so far been identified by child protection actors. Two actors are responsible for case management at the Musenyi site (SAD and SCI). As of June 30, 75 (37 girls and 38 boys) unaccompanied and separated children have benefited from alternative care, individualized case management, psychosocial support, and referrals to other life-saving services as needed.
 - To strengthen coordination and collaboration between child protection stakeholders, coordination meetings are held every Tuesday at national level and every Thursday at the Musenyi refugee site. In June, UNICEF organized a GBV pocket guide training for the benefit of 45 actors to strengthen the GBV response. During the same month, under the leadership of UNICEF, a joint mission composed of UNHCR, UNFPA, and NGOs such as Terre des hommes-Lausanne (Tdh-L), SAD, SCI, and IRC conducted a Safety and Inclusion audit on violence and accessibility to services at the Musenyi refugee site. The main purpose of this audit was to identify and analyze the GBV risks in the refugee site, in order to develop appropriate risk mitigation measures. Main concerns identified were around the lack of safe latrines and showers for women and girls, and the lack of privacy in the temporary shelters.
- **Ensure WASH interventions are scaled up to prevent disease outbreaks.**
 - **Four bladders** of 10,000 liters that were previously used in Rugombo stadium and Cibitoke site have been installed in Musenyi since April/May 2025, thanks to UNICEF's partner *Agence Burundaise de l'Hydraulique de l'Assainissement en Milieu Rural (AHAMR)*.
 - All 4 bladders are fully operational, with 48 distribution ramps, residual water management, and are protected and well identified. Following a field visit on June 25th, all bladders are operational. Free Residual Chlorine tests were conducted on various water points, and all registered positive results within norms and standards.
 - As from July 1st, water chlorination will be done twice a day, and chlorination levels will be monitored on a weekly basis. To assist the person responsible for chlorination and water system operation and maintenance, a second operator will be trained in July to guarantee continuity of WASH services.
 - UNICEF just finalized a strategic partnership agreement with two local NGOs, thanks to CERF funding. Seventeen durable latrines pits have been excavated, 7 of which are being lined up. Hygiene kits have been sent to both, and distributions will start in July. Both NGOs will also undertake a simplified KAP survey during the first week of July.

- The WASH sector coordination group has created a technical working group that is working on issues related to latrine desludging and water quality control in the Musenyi camp.
 - UNICEF, in collaboration with UNHCR, has organized a training session for water point management committees on water quality control via the Free Residual Chlorine measurements in the Musenyi camp. This training took place on June 25th. It included staff from UNHCR, NGOs, refugee volunteers, and the AHAMR water quality control manager.
 - A monitoring visit was organized between June 24th and 26th. The mission was able to note huge improvements in surface water management; the water management channels are now being rehabilitated.
 - The WASH sector coordination group has now terms of reference and is also drafting a Strategic Operational Framework for emergency WASH interventions in refugee camps, communities, schools, and healthcare facilities that will cover minimum norms and standards, indicative activities, harmonization of options, and technical guidance.
- ***Nutrition for children and pregnant and lactating women***
 - As of 30th June, 200 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases among refugee children as well as 15 cases pregnant and lactating women have been identified, referred and treated.
 - To strengthen community-based nutrition response, more than 600 community health workers and Light Mothers in the Gihofi and Cibitoke health districts—both refugee-hosting areas—received a one-day briefing on nutrition in emergencies during the week of 15 June. Following the training, from 25 to 27 June, these trained community actors conducted mass screening for acute malnutrition across communities of the two districts. The objective was to identify and refer children and women with acute malnutrition for timely and appropriate care. Preliminary screening results are expected this week.
- ***Provision of Education in Emergencies services***
 - Following the distribution of educational and recreational kits, UNICEF provided five mobile blackboards to the newly established high-performance tents at Musenyi Preschool. These resources are now being used by preschool children and educators, as well as final-year students (upper secondary school leavers) preparing for the national certification examinations in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
 - The Education Programme team visited the Musenyi site and two nearby potential host schools to discuss urgent back-to-school needs with local authorities and partners. During the visit, they briefly met with an African Development Bank (AfDB) delegation, with positive discussions on potential support for the education response. UNICEF is currently preparing remedial classes for around 3,000 primary-aged children, while the AfDB has expressed interest in strengthening this support starting November 2025.
- ***UNICEF BCO is enhancing efforts to prevent and respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), as well as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, including risk mitigation*** across the response. So far, GBV and SEA prevention efforts reached 26,336 individuals (10,667 males and 15,669 females) through information sessions on GBV and SEA risks and its consequences and available services organized by UNICEF's implementing partner SAD. Information cards in French and Swahili on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and existing reporting mechanisms have been made available in Musenyi to UNICEF partners for further distribution. As part of this response, efforts are underway to strengthen the practical application of PSEA principles, in order to support the adoption of the minimum standards, in a context marked by the diversity of actors involved.
- ***To enhance preparedness and response efforts*** of the Burundi CO, one support staff has been deployed for WASH, one Surge and one stretch for Child Protection. Additional staff support needs are being monitored, including Nutrition and Information Management.

- **UNICEF is also enhancing preparedness efforts – in close collaboration with UNHCR and partners - in neighboring countries at risk of a refugee influx.** The COs are developing 'light' contingency plans/ contributing to interagency level plans.

Preliminary Funding Requirement

According to the revised UNICEF Refugee Response Plan, UNICEF Burundi requires USD 16.8 million to deliver life-saving assistance to Congolese refugees over the next eight months. To address urgent needs, the Country Office reallocated internal resources and welcomes the support received through a Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding allocation of USD 400,000, along with an additional USD 500,000 for emergency preparedness. UNICEF also received USD 679,332.41 for WASH interventions following a successful CERF proposal led by UNHCR. The Burundi Office also received assistance from the Government of Aragon equivalent to USD106,184.17 and support of USD 15,927.62 from Spanish NatCom for the strengthening of the emergency response related to the influx of refugees and epidemics in the WASH sector. Despite these contributions, a critical funding gap of USD 15.2 million remains. Without immediate and flexible additional funding, UNICEF's capacity to continue delivering essential services to affected children will be gravely hindered. Urgent support is needed to enable a timely response in the key priority areas outlined below.

Area of intervention	Funding requirements (US\$)	Funds available (US\$)	Total Funding Gap (US\$)	Funding gap %
Child Protection	2 810 000	309 199	2 500 801	89,00%
WASH	4 686 000	1 164 444	3 521 556	75,15%
Health	2 820 000	276 000	2 544 000	90,21%
Nutrition	1 036 620	242 500	794 120	76,61%
Education	2 773 000	50 000	2 723 000	98,20%
Inclusion	225 000	21 500	203 500	90,44%
Livelihoods	2 431 943	0	2 431 943	100,00%
Risk communication and Community Engagement	500 000	32 000	468 000	93,60%
PSEA	100 000	5 000	95 000	95,00%
Total	17 382 563	2 100 643.00	15 281 920.00	87,92%

Human Interest Stories and External Media

UNICEF's response also focuses on restoring **hope and dignity** for the most vulnerable. In Musenyi camp, UNICEF supports **unaccompanied and separated children**, offering safe shelter and psychosocial care to help them rebuild a sense of normalcy.

[A home and hope for unaccompanied refugee children](#)

In the same camp, **theatre has become a powerful tool of resilience**, giving children a space to express their emotions, dream, and reclaim their voices—even in exile.

[Even in exile, children have the right to dream: theatre as a refuge in Musenyi camp](#)

Video: [UNICEF WeShare - Rebuilding dignity amid crisis](#)

Photos : [UNICEF WeShare](#)

Who to contact for further information: **France Begin**
Country Representative Burundi
Tel: +257 79 96 00 44
Email: fbegin@unicef.org

Mame Selbee Diouf
Deputy Representative Burundi
Tel: +257 79 37 21 62
Email: msdiouf@unicef.org

Fatou Tandiag
Chief Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships Burundi
Tel: +257 76 388 000
Email: ftandiag@unicef.org