



kuri buri mwana



Budget brief on child-focused sectors: 2026–2027

Financing Rwanda's Future Through
Investments in Children

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Financing Rwanda's Future Through
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This Budget Brief was developed by UNICEF Rwanda through consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and relevant sector institutions, whose technical inputs helped strengthen the accuracy, contextual relevance and interpretation of the analysis.

Front cover page: On 5th December, 2024 at Ecole Primaire Muyenzi Adventist in Mayange sector of Bugesera district. During class time, 9-year-old Jean-Marie Vianney Mbyayingabo is being escorted home by one of his classmates.

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Executive summary

Rwanda continues to demonstrate strong economic resilience despite a challenging global environment. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth reached 9.4 per cent in 2025, exceeding expectations, although growth is projected to moderate to 6.8 per cent in 2026 as external conditions remain uncertain.

The national budget for 2026/27 rises to Frw 7,796.3 billion, representing a 12.1 per cent increase from the revised 2025/26 budget. Rwanda is also becoming increasingly self-reliant, with domestic resources financing 67.6 per cent of total expenditure while external grants have fallen to 7.0 per cent. Although public debt remains sustainable and largely concessional, debt-servicing costs continue to rise.

At the same time, **households face growing cost-of-living pressures. Inflation was projected to peak at 10.5 per cent, yet urban prices were already 15.7 per cent higher in August 2026 than a year earlier.** Rising food, energy and housing costs are placing particular pressure on poorer households, for whom food accounts for nearly two-thirds of total consumption expenditure, according to the seventh integrated household living conditions survey (EICV7).

Maintaining investment in child-focused sectors is becoming more important as fiscal pressures increase. While the overall national budget grew by 12.1 per cent, the combined allocation to education, health, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) increased by only 4.2 per cent to Frw 1,711.3 billion, below the rate of inflation. As a result, the share of the national budget allocated to these sectors has declined from 26.8 per cent to 22.0 per cent over the past five years, and from 8.1 per cent to 5.8 per cent of GDP. In real terms, the 2026/27 allocation remains below its 2023/24 level.

Progress is uneven across the sectors that matter most for children. The Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) recorded the strongest growth, increasing by 15.8 per cent, while education remained relatively protected with a budget of Frw 907.3 billion. Health and social protection allocations remained broadly stagnant in nominal terms, resulting in real declines once inflation is considered. **Given the projected reduction in grants, sectors with greater dependence on external financing, particularly social protection, will require increasingly sustainable and diversified financing strategies.**

The rationale for protecting these investments remains compelling. Rwanda has achieved significant progress in reducing poverty and improving child well-being. EICV7 shows poverty declining from 39.8 per cent to 27.4 per cent and extreme poverty from 11.3 per cent to 5.4 per cent, while the Seventh Demographic and Health Survey (DHS7) records a reduction in stunting from 33 per cent to 27 per cent. **Nevertheless, one in four Rwandans and approximately three in ten children still live in poverty, eleven districts continue to report stunting rates above 30 per cent, and ambitious sector targets will require sustained investment to be achieved.**

Climate financing presents a similar challenge. While Frw 761.8 billion has been tagged for climate-related interventions, relatively little of this funding reaches sectors that directly support children's development and well-being. Climate-tagged spending accounts for only around 2 per cent of the education budget, less than 1 per cent of social protection spending, and none of the health budget. WASH is the notable exception, with climate-related investments accounting for nearly half of its allocation, reflecting its importance as a key adaptation sector.

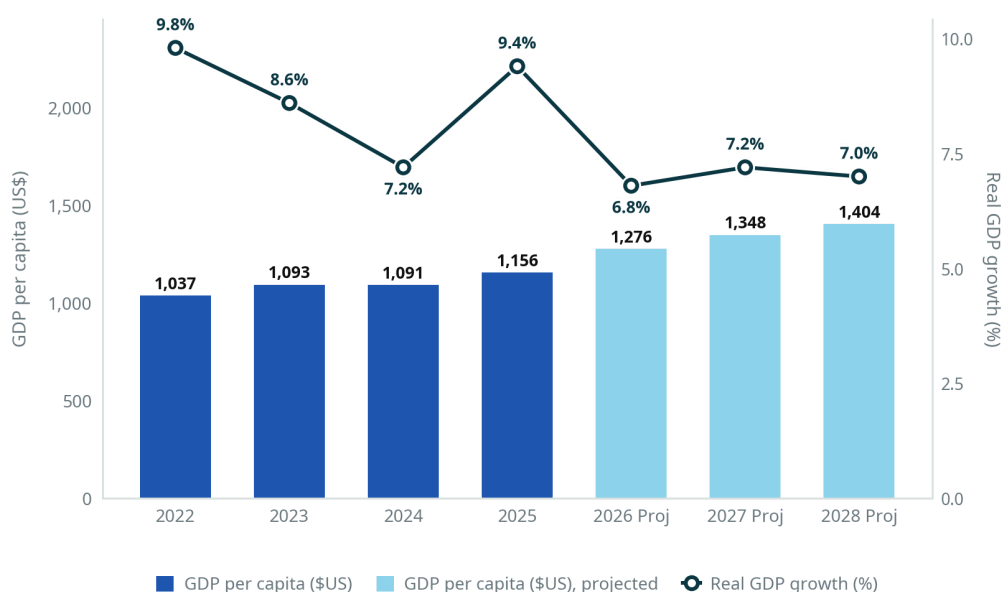
Rwanda's development achievements demonstrate the value of sustained public investment in people. As the country advances its ambitious economic transformation agenda, maintaining an appropriate balance between investments in economic infrastructure and investments in children will be critical. The latter may yield returns over a longer timeframe, but they are fundamental to building the healthy, skilled and productive workforce required to achieve Rwanda's long-term development aspirations. This will require continued efforts to mobilize domestic resources, strengthen financing for child-focused sectors, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure.



Macroeconomic performance and national budget trends

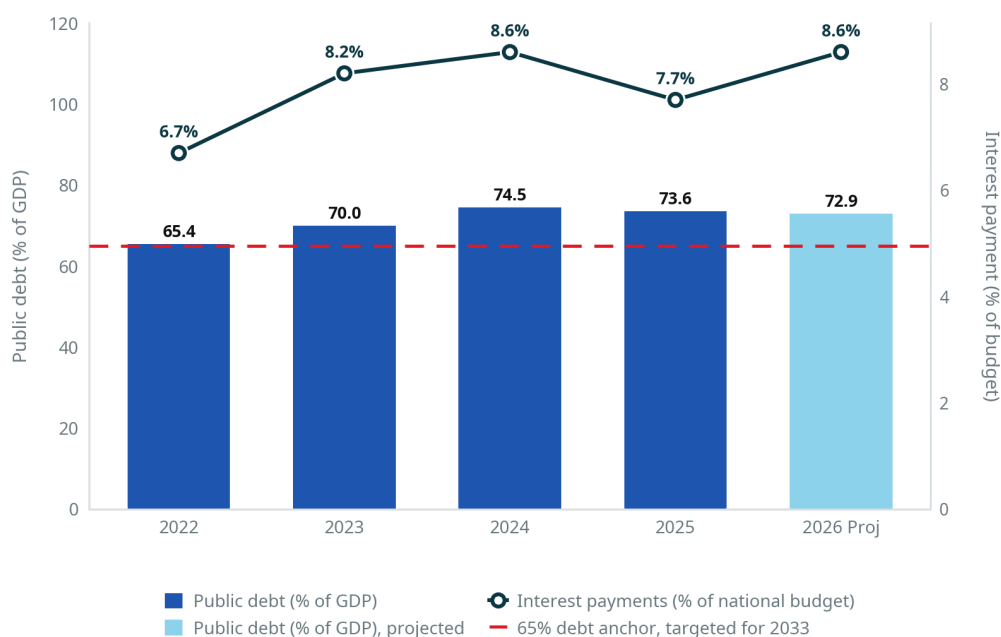
Rwanda's economy continues to grow steadily, and domestic resources are financing an increasing share of the budget. However, debt service costs are rising, inflation remains elevated, and the share of the budget allocated to child-focused sectors continues to decline.

Rwanda's economy continues to grow steadily despite geopolitical crises. Real GDP grew by 9.4 per cent in 2025, exceeding the projected 7 per cent, but is expected to slow to 6.8 per cent in 2026 as the conflict in the Middle East drives up oil, fertilizer, and transportation costs. GDP per capita is projected to surpass US\$1,400 by 2028.



Source: MINECOFIN, Budget Framework Paper 2026/27. CY = calendar year.

Debt pressures are easing, but servicing debt is becoming more expensive. Public debt remains high at 73.6 per cent of GDP in 2025 but is projected to decline gradually to 65 per cent of GDP by 2033, supported by fiscal consolidation and prudent debt management. However, the rising cost of debt servicing remains a key concern, with interest payments increasing from 6.7 per cent to 8.6 per cent of the national budget.

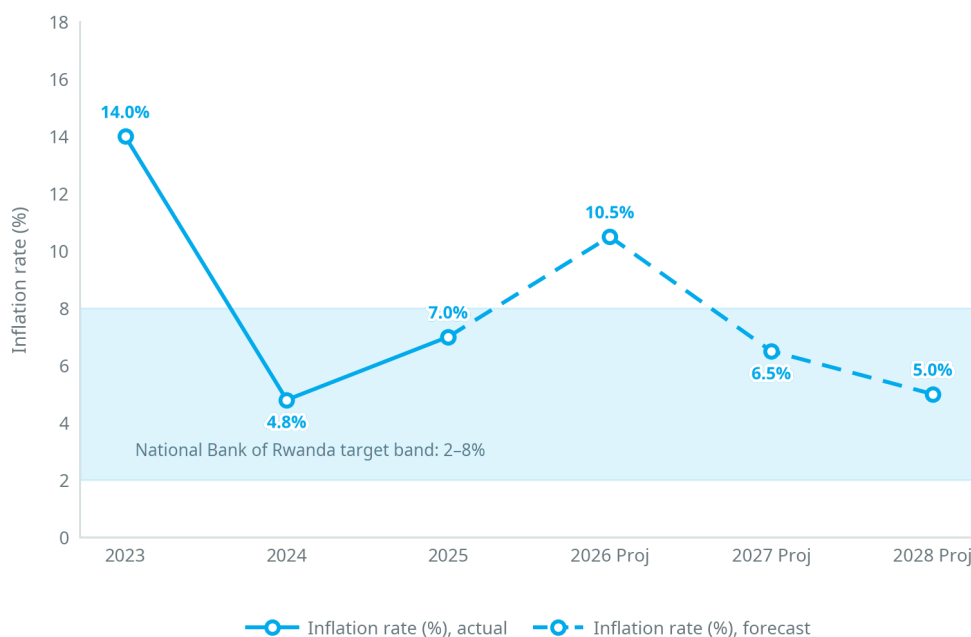


Source: MINECOFIN, Budget Framework Paper 2026/27; State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



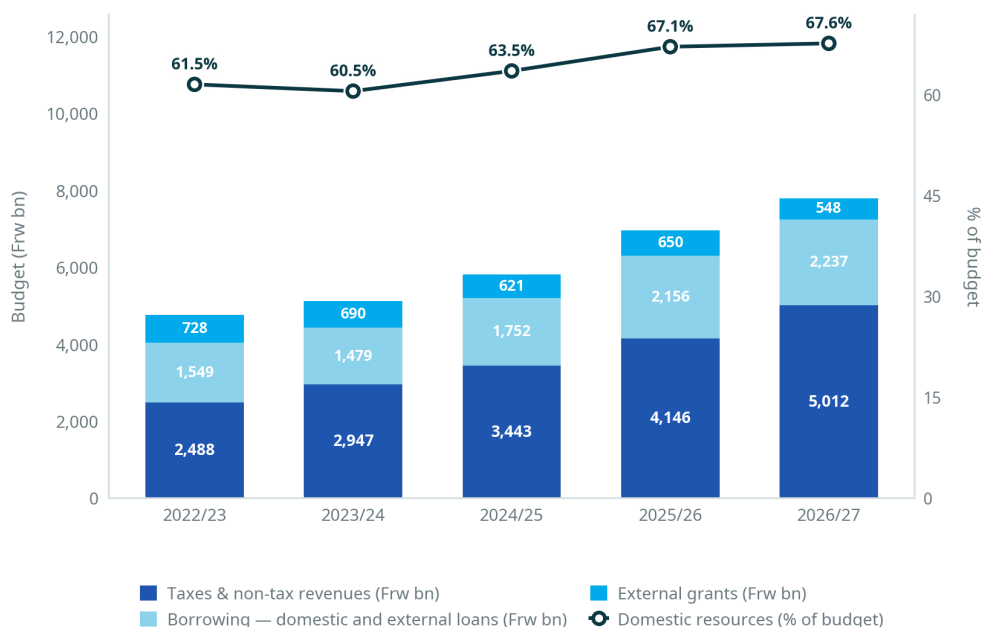
Macroeconomic performance and national budget trends

Inflation is projected to exceed the National Bank of Rwanda's 2–8 per cent target band in 2026. After easing to 4.8 per cent in 2024, inflation is forecast to reach 10.5 per cent in 2026 before declining to around 5 per cent by 2028. Recent data suggest stronger pressures than expected, with the August 2026 Consumer Price Index (CPI) reporting prices 15.7 per cent higher than a year earlier. Poor households will be most affected, as EICV7 shows that nearly two-thirds (63.6 per cent) of their spending goes to food, energy, and housing, where prices have risen fastest. Higher prices therefore erode real incomes and make it harder for families to afford a nutritious diet for their children.



CPI, period average % change. 2026, 2027 and 2028 are forecasts, not outturns.
Source: MINECÔFIN, Budget Framework Paper 2026/27.

Rwanda is increasingly financing its budget through domestically generated resources, driven by stronger revenue mobilization, as external grants continue to decline. Domestic resources are projected to increase from 61.5 per cent of the budget in 2022/23 to 67.6 per cent in 2026/27, fueled by a near doubling of tax revenue, which will account for 56.8 per cent of the budget. Meanwhile, external grants have fallen by half to 7.0 per cent, while external loans now finance approximately one-quarter of the budget.

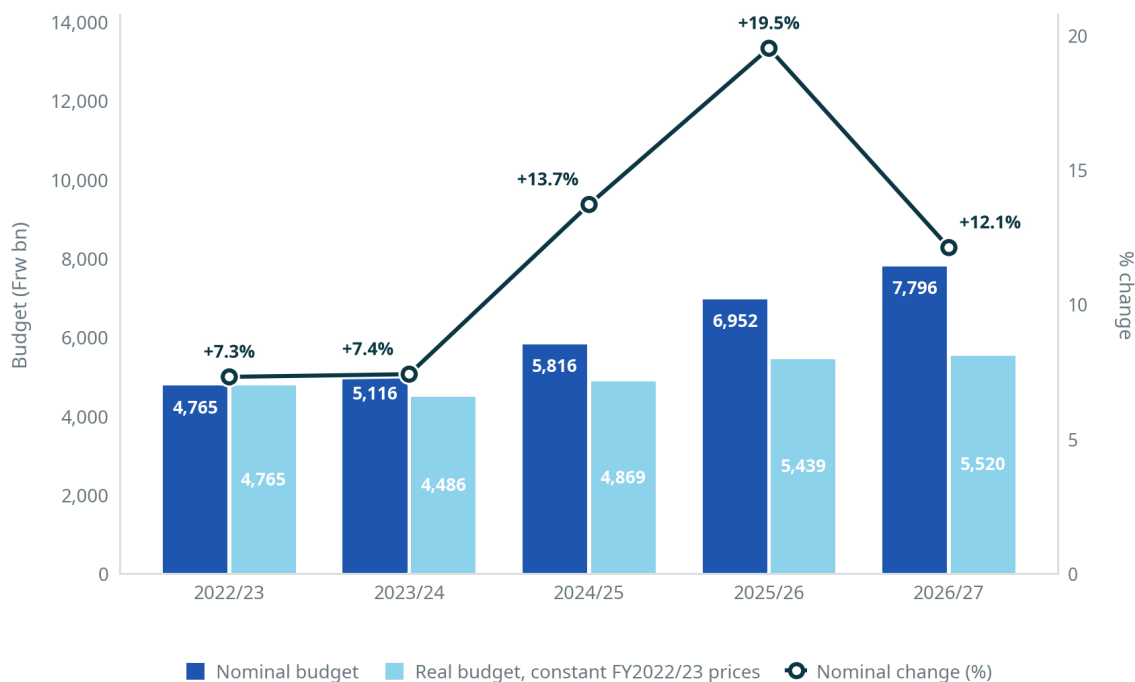


In FY2026/27 borrowing is 3.4% of the budget domestic and about 25.3% external loans.
Source: MINECÔFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



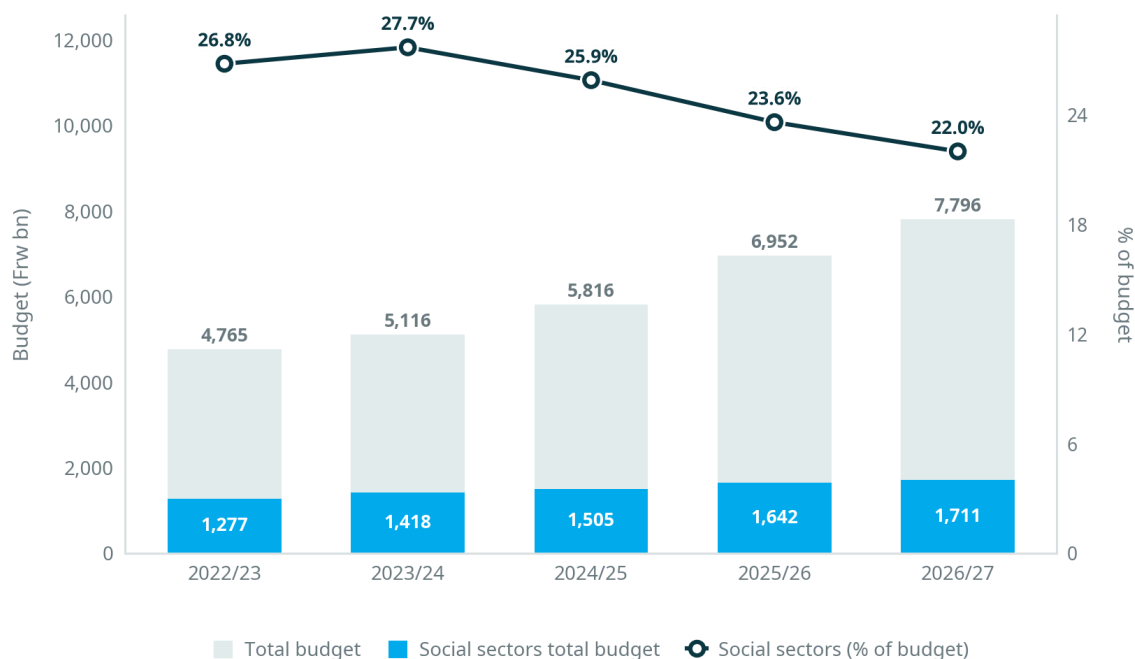
Macroeconomic performance and national budget trends

The budget continues to grow, but not as much as it appears. The national budget is projected to reach FRW 7,796.3 billion in 2026/27, representing a 12.1 per cent increase from the previous year and about 64 per cent growth over five years. However, once inflation is taken into account, the increase is much smaller. In 2022/23 constant prices, the budget is worth approximately FRW 5,520 billion.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27). Real values deflated by the consumer price index for the calendar year in which each financial year ends.

The share of the budget allocated to child-focused sectors continues to shrink. Although the four child-focused sectors will receive FRW 1,711.3 billion in 2026/27, their share of the national budget has declined from 26.8 per cent to 22.0 per cent over the past five years, reaching its lowest level during the period.

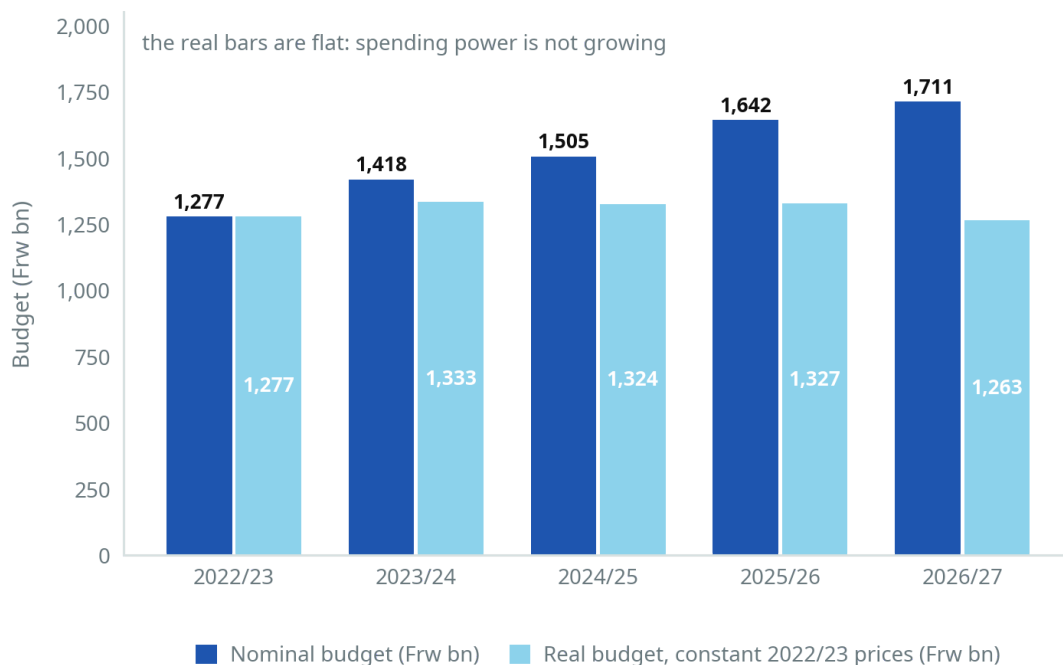


Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



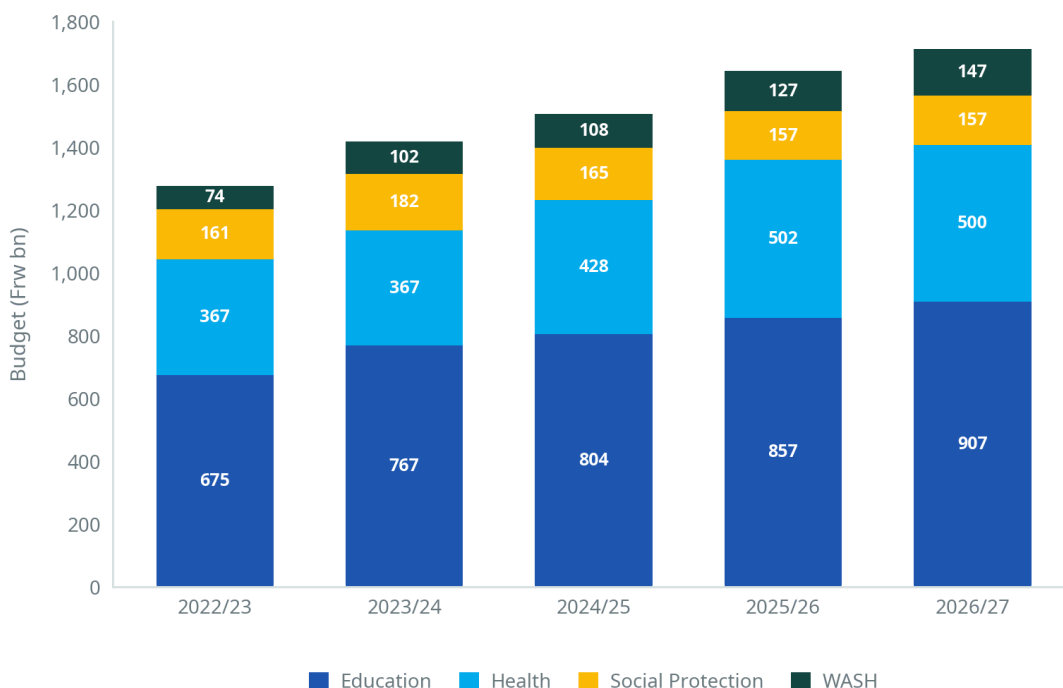
Macroeconomic performance and national budget trends

In real terms, the child-focused sectors envelope is shrinking. In constant 2022/23 prices, the 2026/27 allocation (FRW 1,263 billion) is lower than its 2023/24 level, even though overall government spending has increased by 34 per cent over the past five years.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27), in constant 2022/23 prices.

Education has absorbed most of the growth, while the other three sectors have not. Education has received the largest share of additional funding, increasing from FRW 674.9 billion to FRW 907.3 billion over the past five years, and now accounts for more than half of the child-focused sectors budget. Health spending has remained relatively flat, WASH funding has nearly doubled from a low base, and social protection is the only sector with an allocation below its starting level.



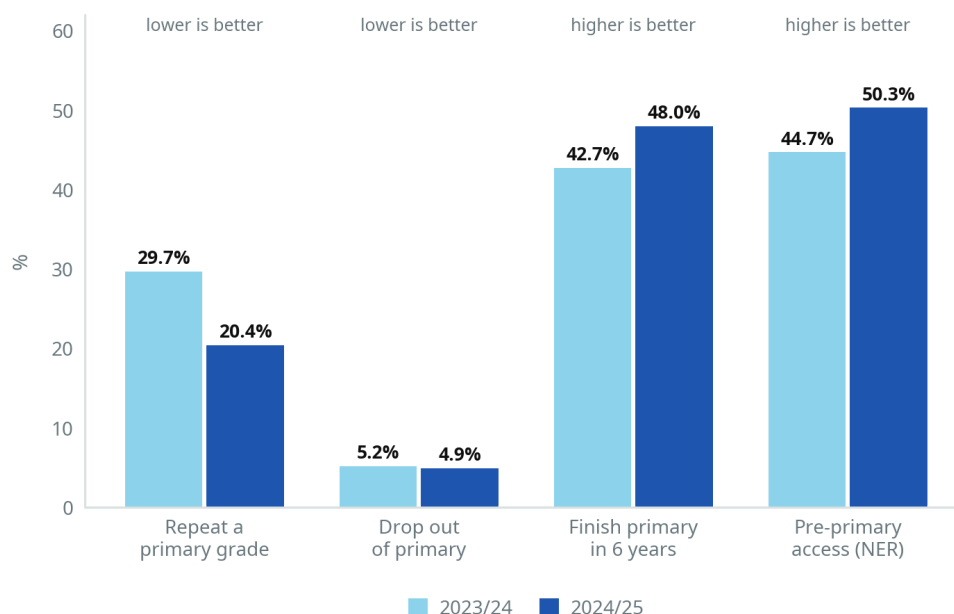
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



Education

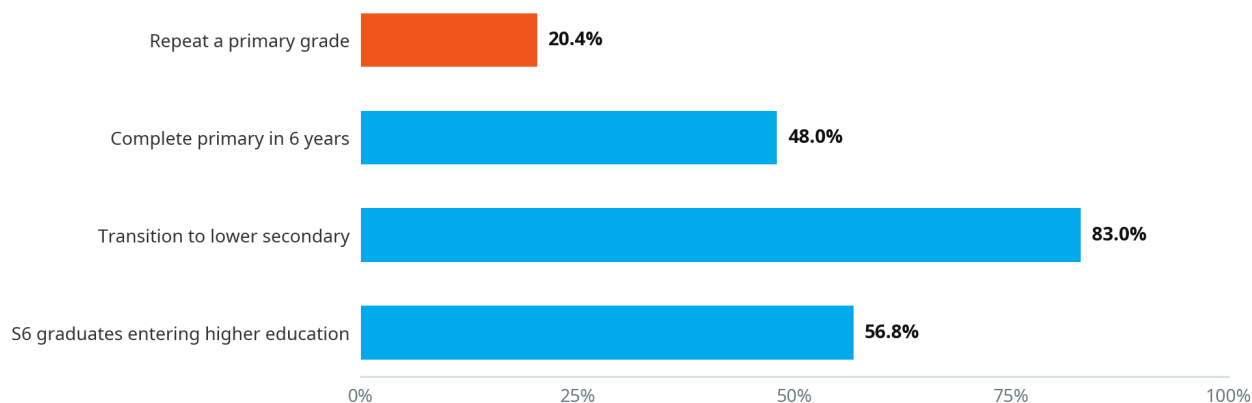
More children are completing primary school on time, and pre-primary enrolment has nearly doubled. Yet poverty continues to shape educational opportunities, and sustained investment will be needed to achieve the sector's 2028/29 targets.

More children are staying in primary school and completing it on time. Since 2023/24, fewer children have repeated grades, fewer have dropped out, and more have completed primary school within the expected six years. Pre-primary net enrollment rate has grown faster than at any other level of education. The repetition rate fell sharply, from 29.7 per cent to 20.4 per cent.



Pre-primary access is a net enrolment rate for children aged 3-5, not a share of pupils.
Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbook 2024/25. Repetition, dropout and completion lag one year (2022/23 to 2023/24); pre-primary NER is current-year.

One in five primary school pupils still repeats a grade. One in five primary school pupils repeats a grade, resulting in significant inefficiencies in the education system. Fewer than half of pupils complete primary school within the expected six years. In addition, the transition to lower secondary education has become more challenging, with the share of pupils progressing to the next level falling from 94.2 per cent to 83.0 per cent in a single year.

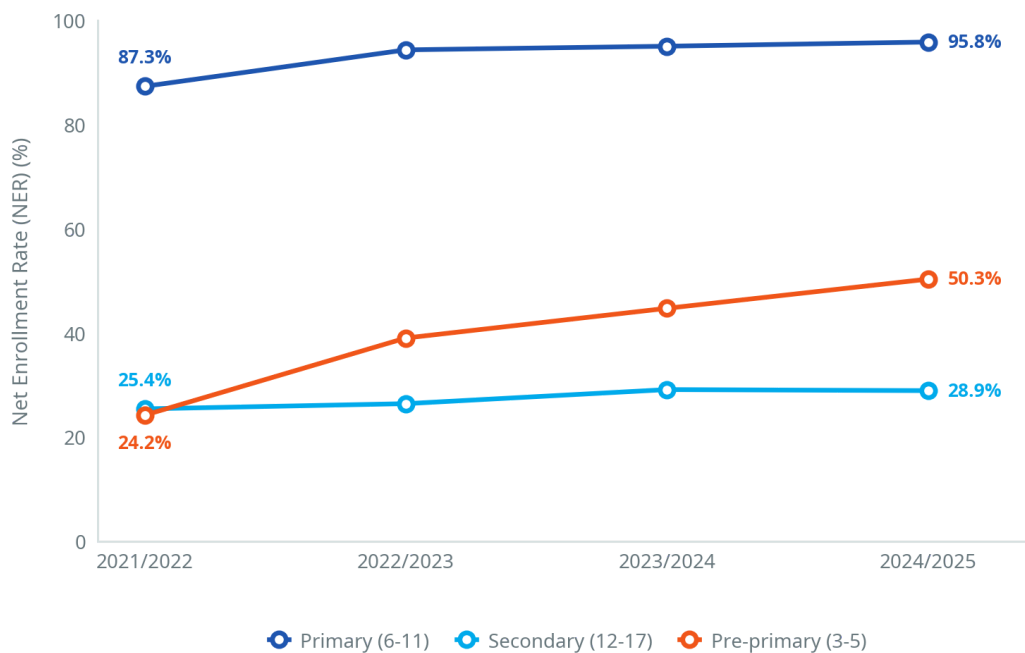


orange = a problem to reduce · blue = progress to increase
Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbook 2024/25.



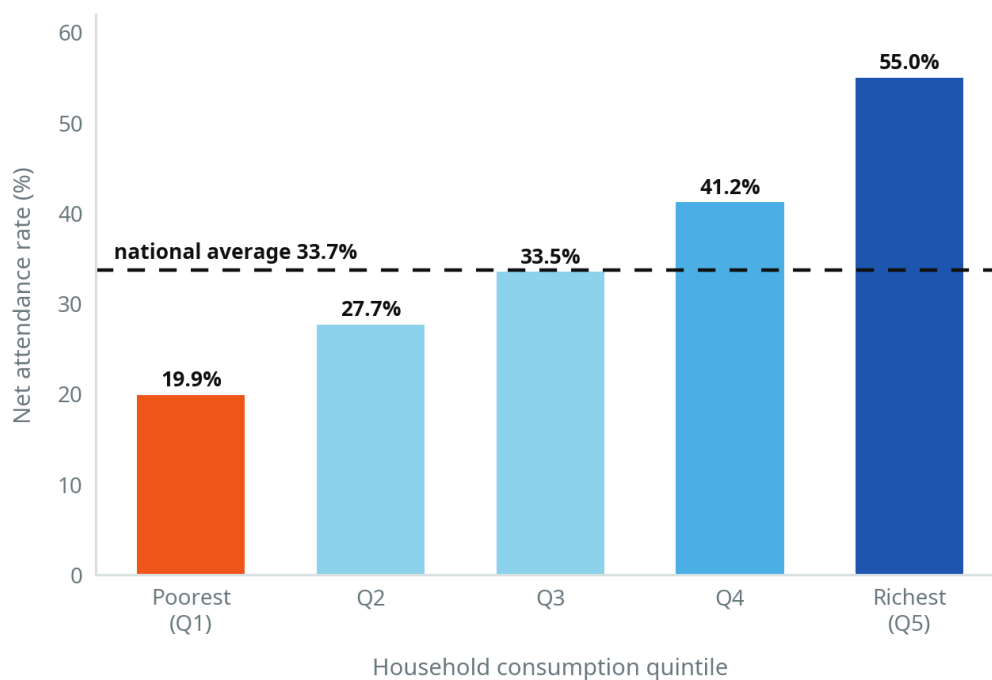
Education

Investments in the early years are delivering results, but similar progress has yet to be achieved in secondary education. Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, pre-primary net enrollment rate more than doubled from 24.2 per cent to 50.3 per cent, while primary net enrollment rate increased from 87.3 per cent to 95.8 per cent, approaching universal coverage. In contrast, secondary net enrollment rate rose only modestly, from 25.4 per cent to 28.9 per cent, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen pathways for children to continue learning beyond primary school.



Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbook, 2024/2025.

Poverty is the strongest determinant of school attendance. Only 20 per cent of secondary school-age children from the poorest fifth of households attend secondary school, compared with 55 per cent of those from the richest fifth, a gap of nearly three to one. The national average of 33.7 per cent largely masks this disparity.

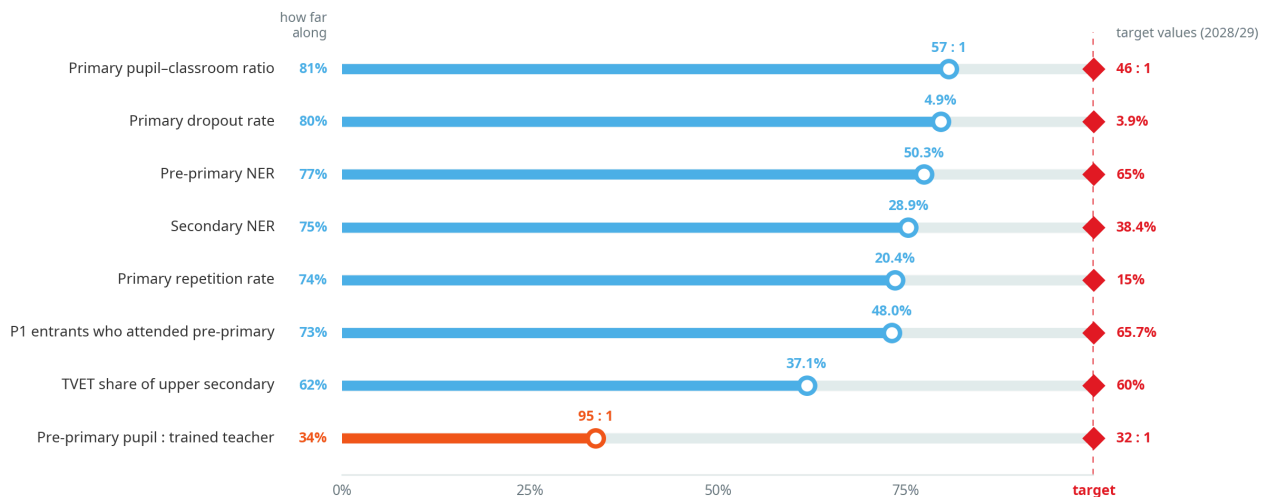


Quintiles are EICV7 consumption quintiles.
Source: NISR, EICV7 Poverty Profile (2025), Table 4.1.



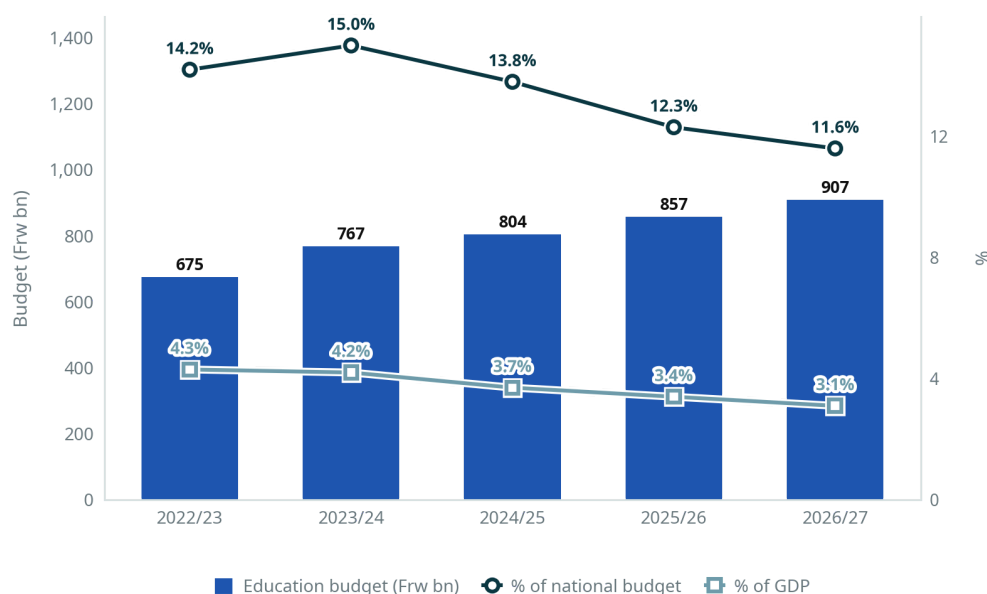
Education

Education is making progress toward its targets, but none of the targets have yet been achieved. The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) set targets for 2028/29, and several indicators are showing positive progress. The primary pupil-to-classroom ratio is the closest to its target. Pre-primary net enrollment rate has reached 50.3 per cent, the dropout rate stands at 4.9 per cent, repetition is 20.4 per cent, and secondary net enrollment rate is 28.9 per cent. However, the pre-primary pupil-to-trained-teacher ratio remains high at 95:1, compared with the target of 32:1.



NER = net enrolment rate. Secondary enrolment is falling, not rising, and the TVET share is below its 2023/24 baseline. Primary classrooms hold 57 pupils on average and 71 in P1.
Sources: MINEDUC, ESSP 2024–2029 M&E matrix (targets); Education Statistical Yearbook 2024/25 (status).

Education funding is increasing in nominal terms, but its share of the budget is declining. The education budget increased from FRW 674.9 billion to FRW 907.3 billion over the past five years. Over the same period, its share of the national budget fell from a peak of 15.0 per cent to 11.6 per cent, while its share of GDP declined from 4.3 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

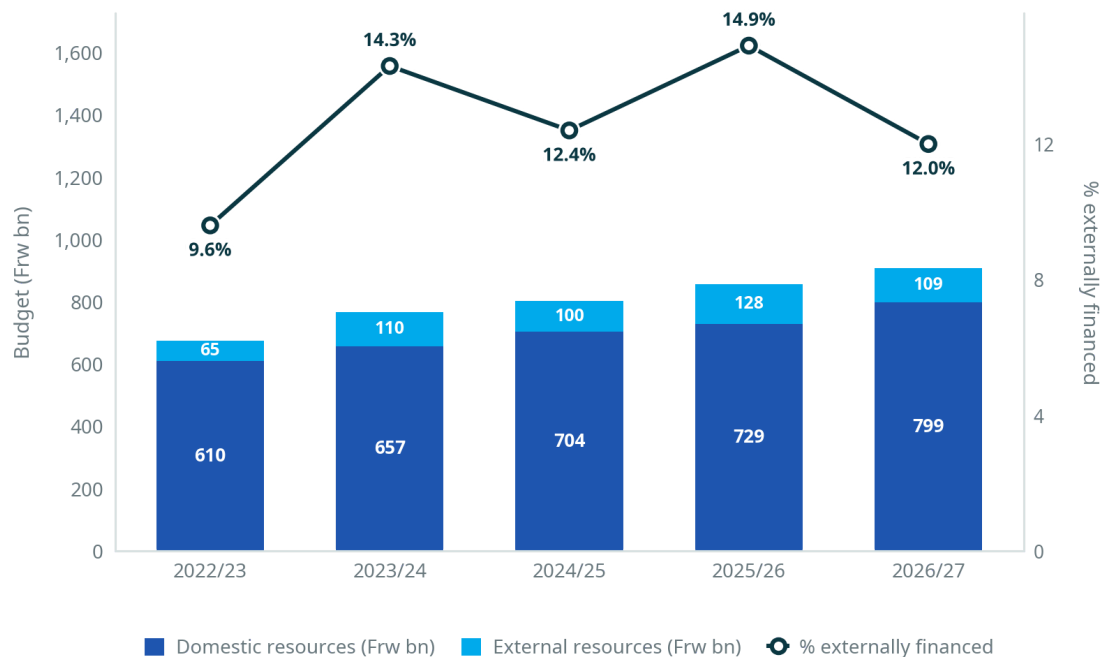


Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



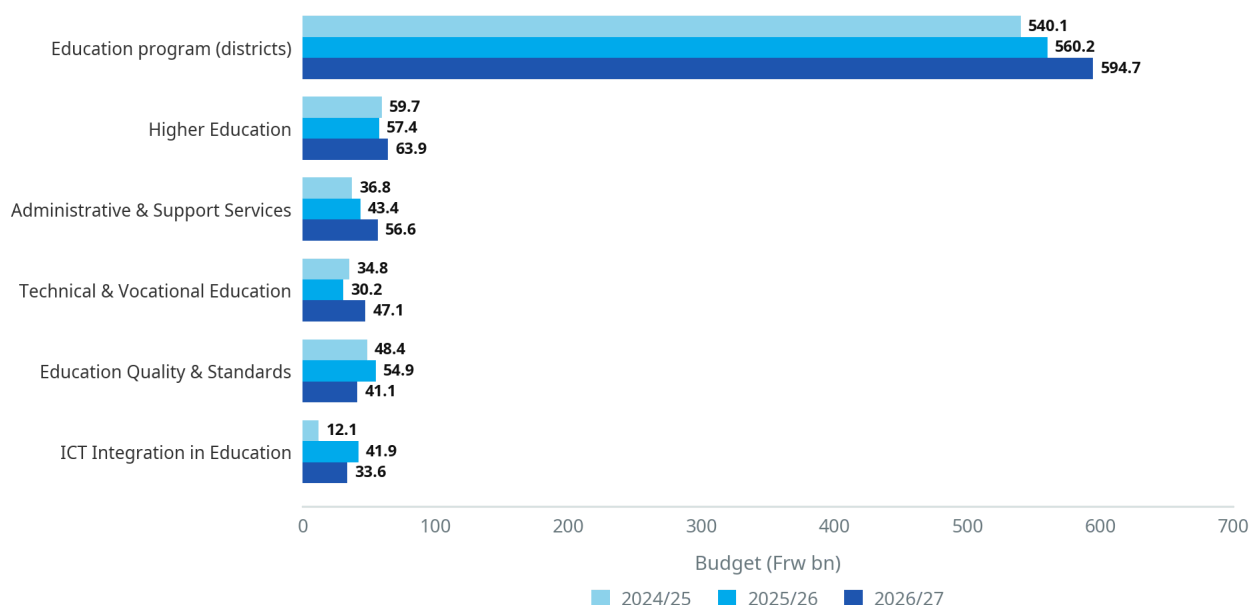
Education

Education is the social sector best protected from funding pressures. Approximately 88 per cent of the education budget is financed through domestic resources, the highest share among the four child-focused sectors. In 2026/27, donor funding declined by roughly 15 per cent, but a 9.6 per cent increase in domestic financing more than offset the shortfall and sustained growth in the sector.



External resources are grants and loans combined.
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).

Most education funding is channelled through the districts. The District Education Program, which finances teachers' salaries, capitation grants, and school feeding, accounts for the largest share of education spending. Its budget increased by about 10 per cent over the past three years to FRW 594.7 billion, making it roughly ten times larger than any other education program. In contrast, the Education Quality and Standards Program, which is most directly linked to learning outcomes, experiences a decline in 2026/27.

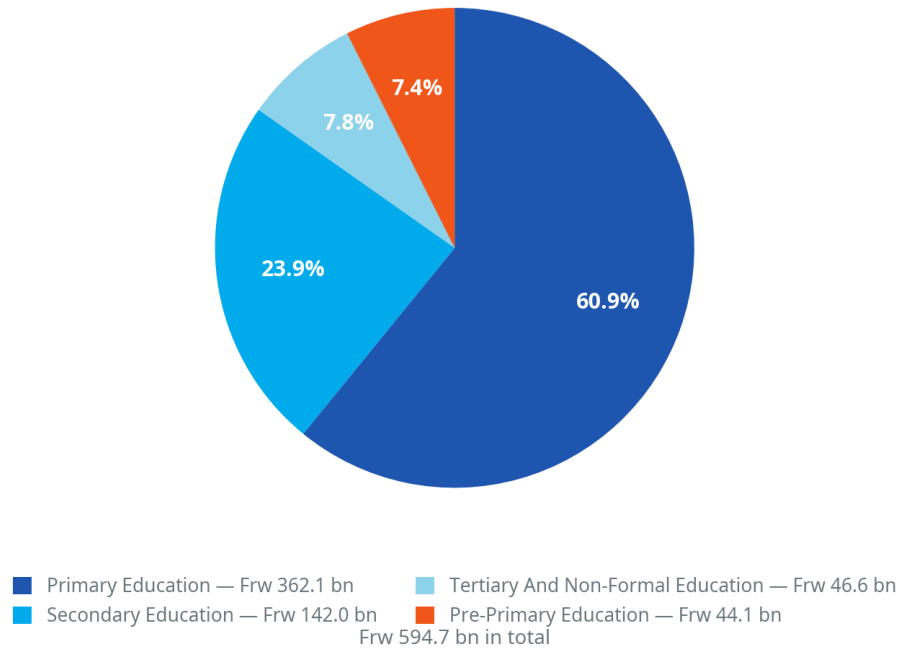


Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2024/25–2026/27).



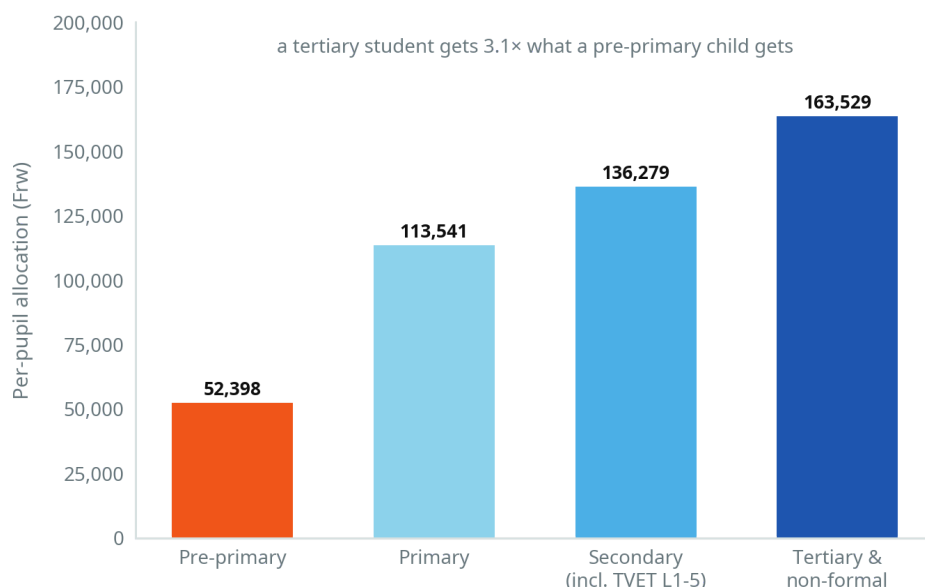
Education

Primary and secondary education absorb nearly 85 per cent of district education funding. Primary education alone receives FRW 362.1 billion, accounting for 60.9 per cent of the district education budget, while secondary education receives a further FRW 142.0 billion (23.9 per cent). Tertiary and non-formal education (7.8 per cent) and pre-primary education (7.4 per cent) share the remainder, each receiving less than FRW 50 billion. Despite recording the fastest growth in net enrollment rate, pre-primary education receives the smallest allocation of the four levels.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Law 2026/27.

Spending per learner increases substantially as students progress through the education system. A pre-primary learner is allocated FRW 52,398 per year, compared with FRW 113,541 for a primary school pupil, FRW 136,279 for a secondary school student, and FRW 163,529 for a tertiary or non-formal education student. This represents a spending ratio of approximately 1:3.1 between the first and final levels of education.



Source: Authors' calculations based on MINECOFIN, State Finance Law 2026/27, and MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbook 2024/25.

On 4th December, 2024, 9-year-old Fabrice Iranzi likes to read his notes and do homework when he gets back home from school. This helps him to perform well in his studies.
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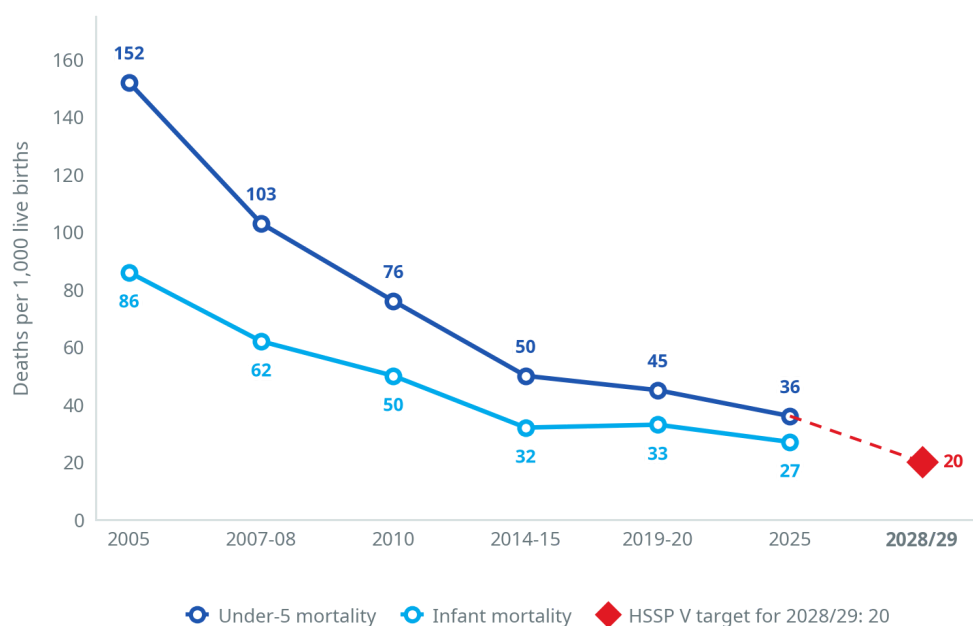




Health

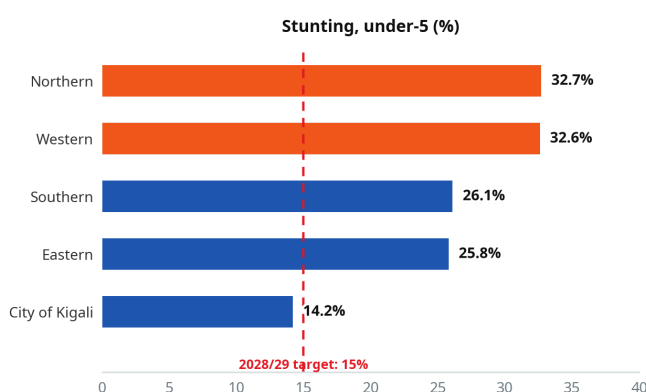
Child mortality is declining again after a decade of slower progress. However, children from poorer households are still less likely to be covered by health insurance and less likely to access healthcare services. At the same time, the budget supporting these gains is shrinking and becoming increasingly dependent on donor funding.

Child mortality is declining again after a decade of slower progress. Under-5 mortality dropped from 45 to 36 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2025, putting Rwanda within 1 death of its target.

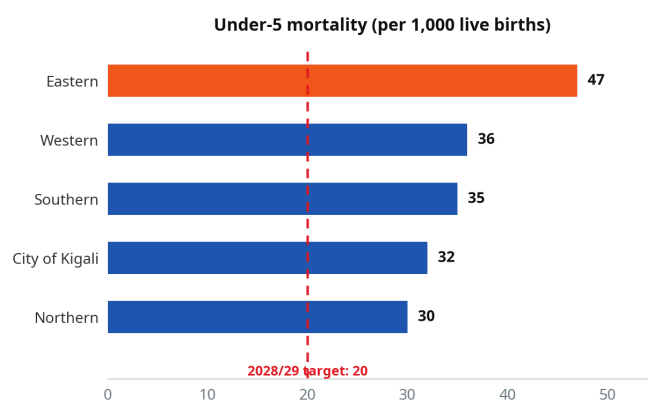


Rates are per 1,000 live births, not percentages.
Source: NISR, Demographic and Health Surveys (2005–2025). Rates refer to the five-year period preceding each survey.

National averages conceal wide regional disparities in child outcomes. Stunting rates range from 14 per cent in the City of Kigali to approximately 33 per cent in the Northern and Western Provinces, while under-five mortality ranges from 30 to 47 deaths per 1,000 live births. No province has yet achieved either of the 2028/29 targets.



Source: NISR, Rwanda DHS 2024/25 (DHS7).

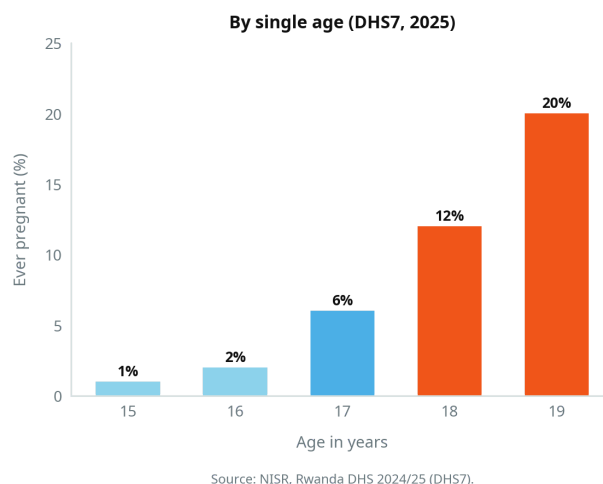
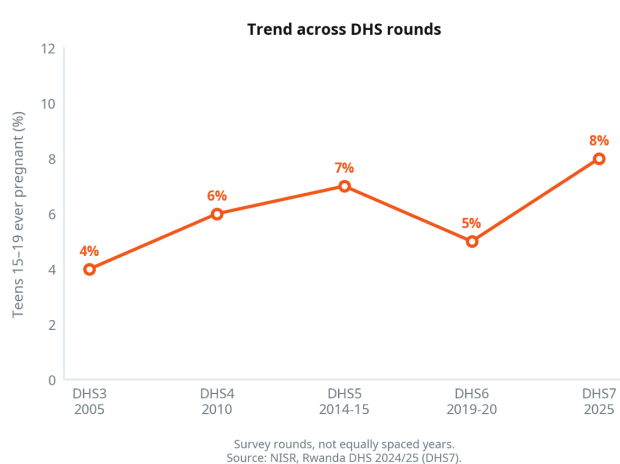


Source: NISR, Rwanda DHS 2024/25 (DHS7).

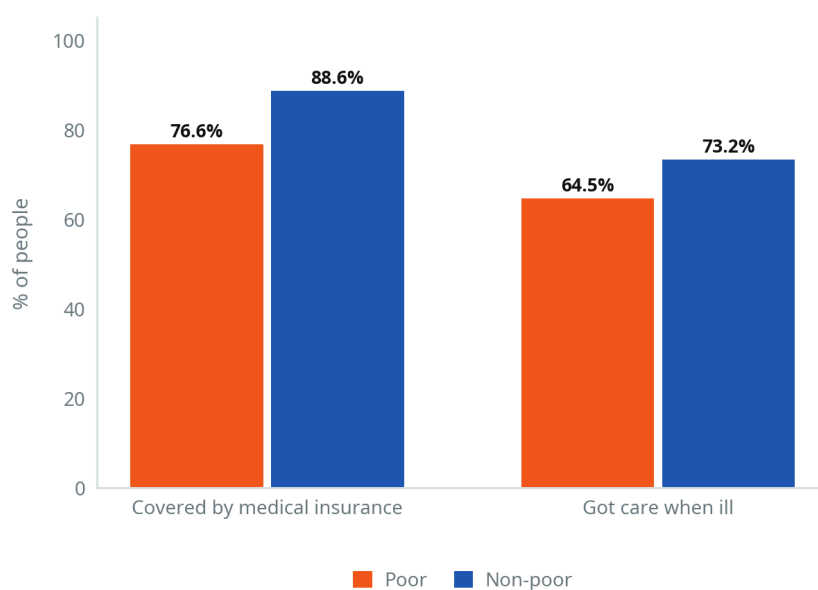


Health

Teenage pregnancy is rising again and is increasingly concentrated among older adolescents. The share of girls aged 15–19 who have ever been pregnant rose to 8 per cent in 2025, the highest level recorded in the survey series. The risk increases sharply with age, from 1 per cent among 15-year-olds to 20 per cent among 19-year-olds. These findings underscore the need for prevention and support efforts targeted specifically at older adolescent girls.



Poorer households are less likely to be insured and less likely to access healthcare services. Only 76.6 per cent of people living in poverty have health insurance, compared with 88.6 per cent of those who are better off. Among the urban poor, coverage is even lower, at just 67.3 per cent. When they fall ill, only 64.5 per cent of people living in poverty seek or receive care, compared with 73.2 per cent of the non-poor. They also spend more time travelling to reach a health facility, averaging 34.8 minutes compared with 30.4 minutes for the non-poor.

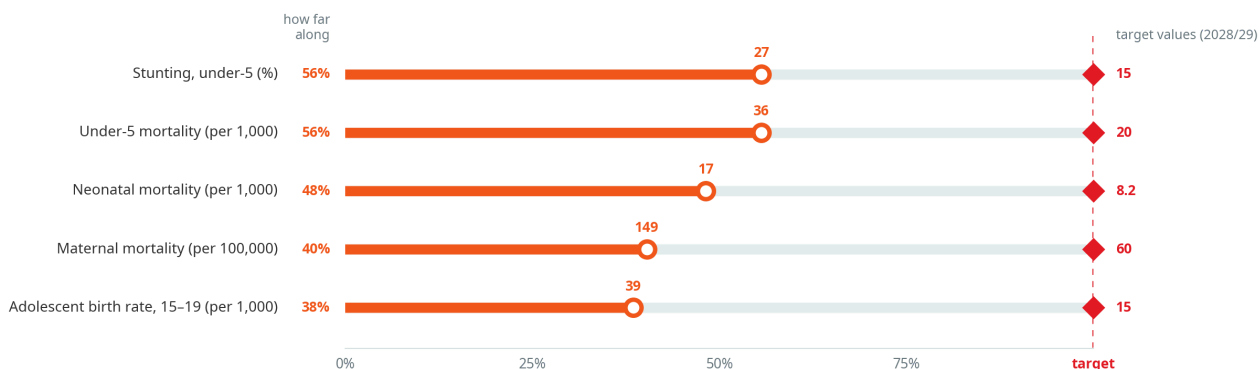


Shares of people, not households.
Source: NISR, EICV7 Poverty Profile (2025), Table 6.6.



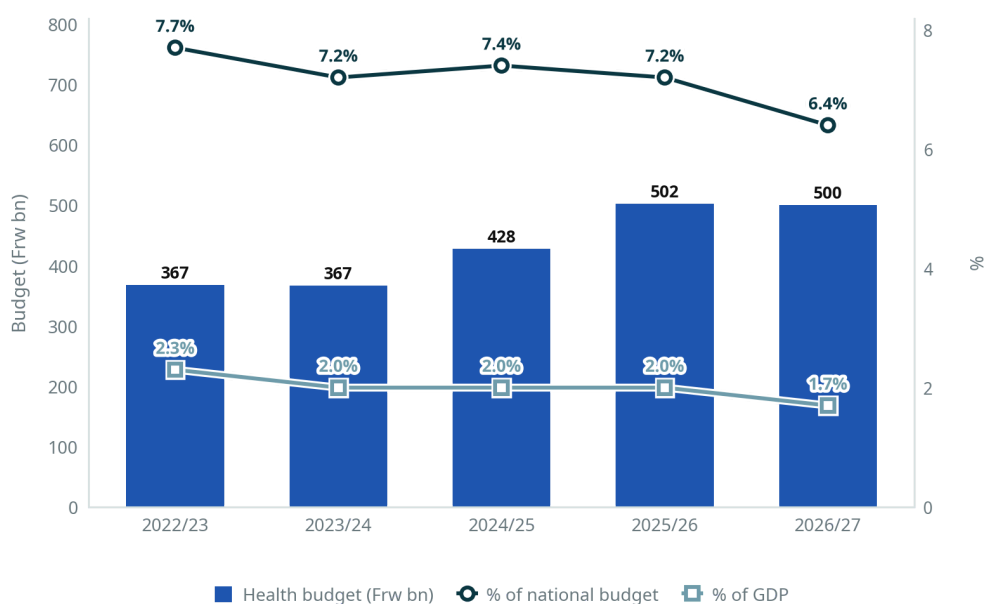
Health

The targets ahead are ambitious, but the budget is not keeping pace. Every major health target for 2028/29 remains well beyond Rwanda's current performance levels. Stunting must decline by 12 percentage points, under-five mortality by 16 deaths per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality by 89 deaths per 100,000 live births, the largest reduction required among the key indicators. Achieving these targets will require sustained support for the programmes that drive improvements in maternal and child health.



The adolescent birth rate is rising, not falling — the only indicator here moving away from target.
Sources: MoH, HSSP V 2024–2029 M&E matrix (targets); NISR, Rwanda DHS 2024/25 (current status).

Health funding was marginally reduced this year, and its share of the budget continues to decline. At FRW 500.2 billion, the health budget is 0.3 per cent lower than last year in nominal terms, at a time when inflation is running at around 10 per cent. Its share of the national budget has fallen from 7.7 per cent to 6.4 per cent since 2022/23, while its share of GDP has declined from 2.3 per cent to 1.7 per cent.



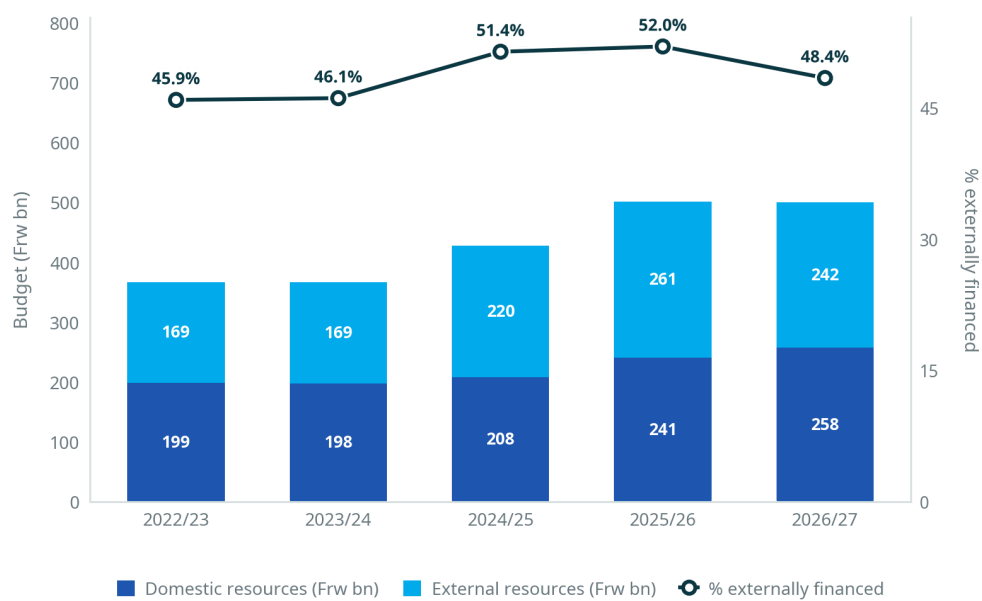
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



Health

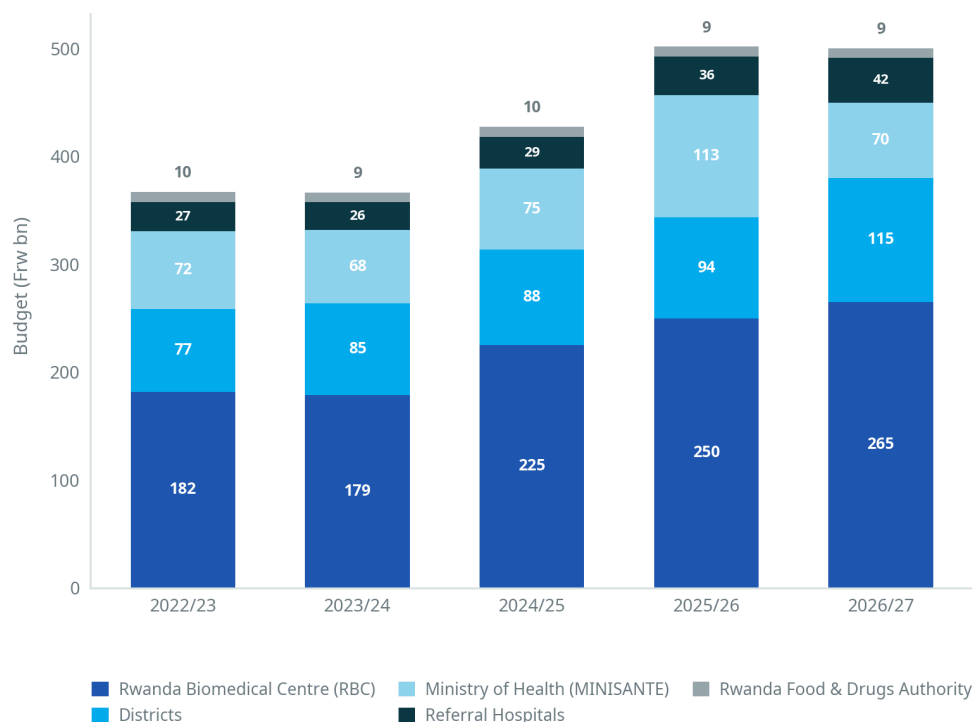
Health remains heavily dependent on donor funding at a time when external assistance is becoming less

predictable. Donors are expected to finance 48.4 per cent of the health budget in 2026/27, down from a peak of 52.0 per cent in the previous year, but still above the 45.9 per cent recorded five years ago. Donor funding fell by about 7 per cent this year to FRW 242 billion, while domestic funding increased by a similar amount to FRW 258 billion, leaving overall sector funding broadly unchanged.



External resources are grants and loans combined.
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).

The Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) receives nearly half of all health-sector funding. In 2026/27, the Rwanda Biomedical Centre remains the largest spending agency, receiving FRW 265 billion of the sector's budget. Allocations to districts, which deliver the primary healthcare services used by most families, increased significantly this year, rising from FRW 94 billion to FRW 115 billion.



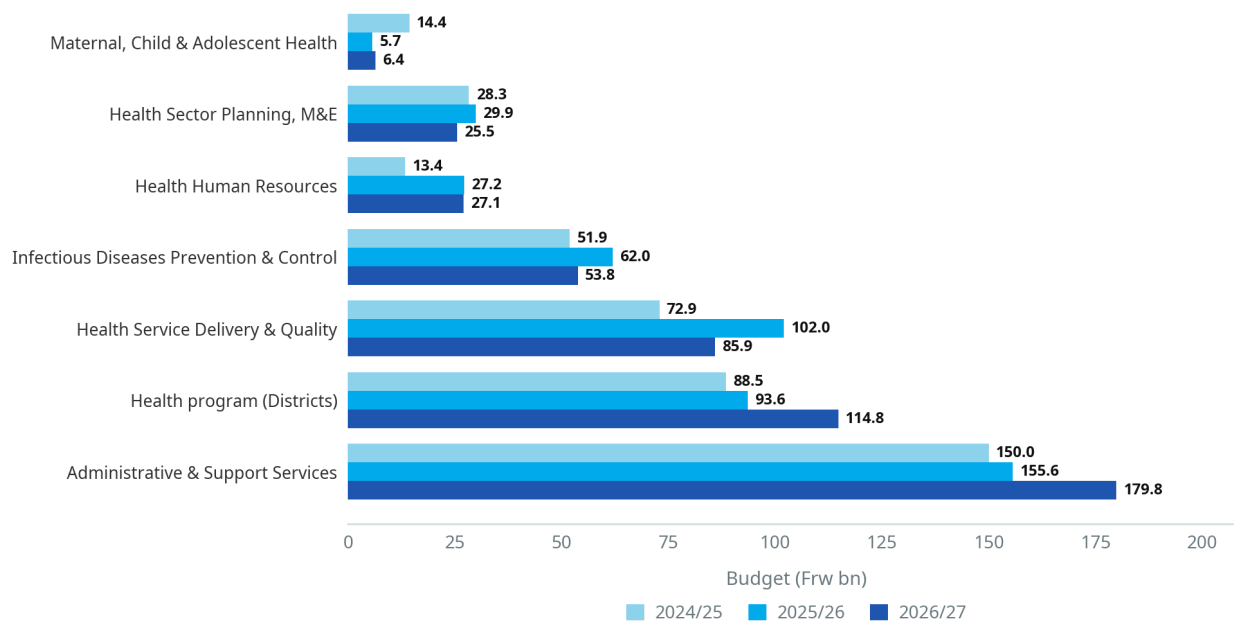
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



Health

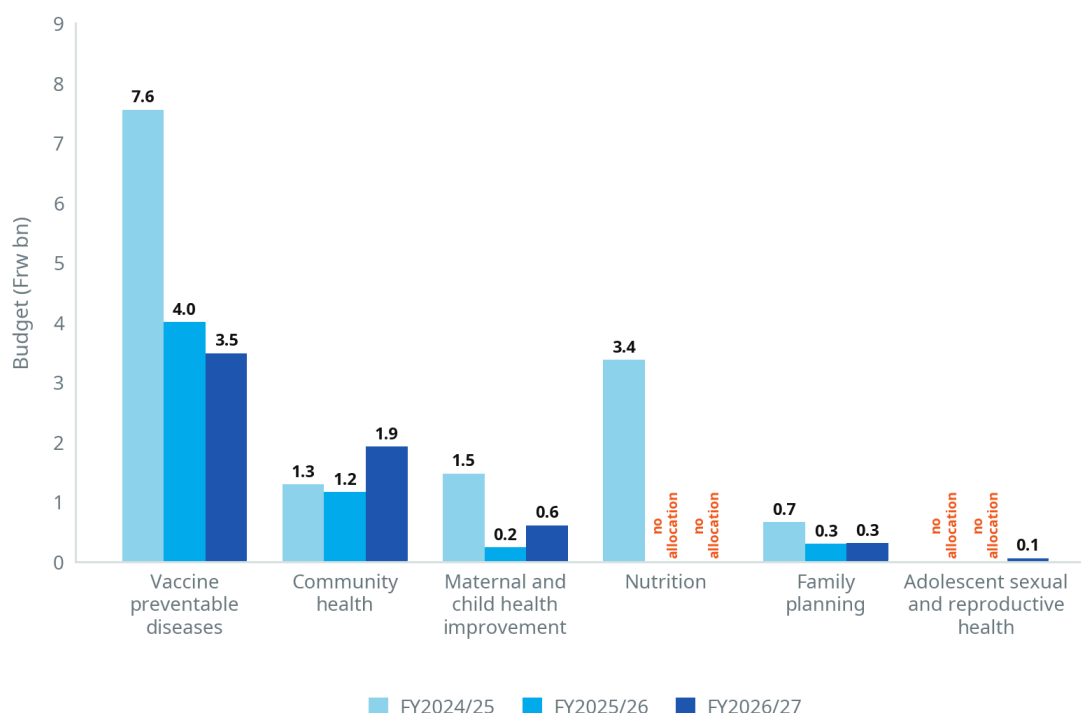
Sustained investment in maternal, child and adolescent health will be critical to maintaining gains in child survival.

Funding for maternal, child, and adolescent health has fallen by more than 50 per cent, from FRW 14.4 billion in 2024/25 to FRW 6.4 billion in 2026/27. Funding for infectious disease prevention has declined by 13 per cent, while allocations for health service delivery and quality have fallen by 16 per cent. Meanwhile, administration and support services remain the largest budget line, receiving FRW 179.8 billion.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2024/25–2026/27).

Budget allocations for nutrition and immunisation have evolved in recent years. Funding for vaccines and immunisation has declined from FRW 7.6 billion to FRW 3.5 billion over the past two years, partly reflecting Rwanda's near-universal immunisation coverage, with 94 per cent of children aged 12–23 months fully vaccinated according to DHS7 (2025). Nutrition funding, meanwhile, has not appeared as a standalone allocation since 2024/25 and may have been integrated into other programmes.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2024/25–2026/27).
Nutrition funding may be recorded under other programmes after 2024/25.



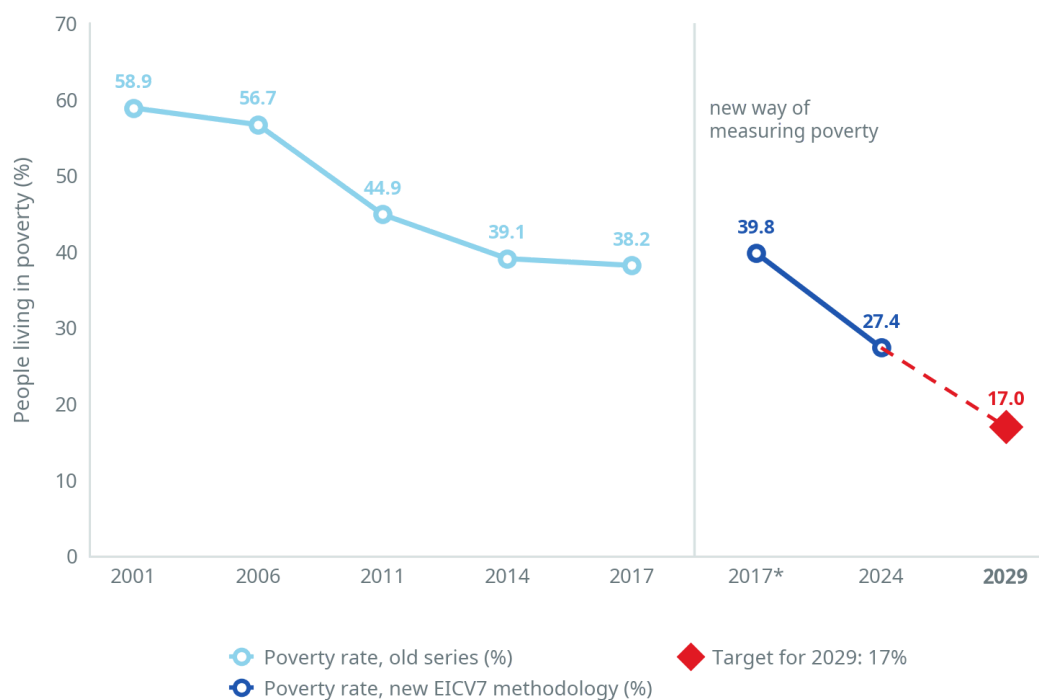
On 12th December, 2024 at Muhoza Health Center in Musanze district. 38-year-old Eugenie Dukuzumuremyi is vaccinating Shami Twaza Owen who is just two months old.
© UNICEF/UNI724909/Iyakaremye



Social protection

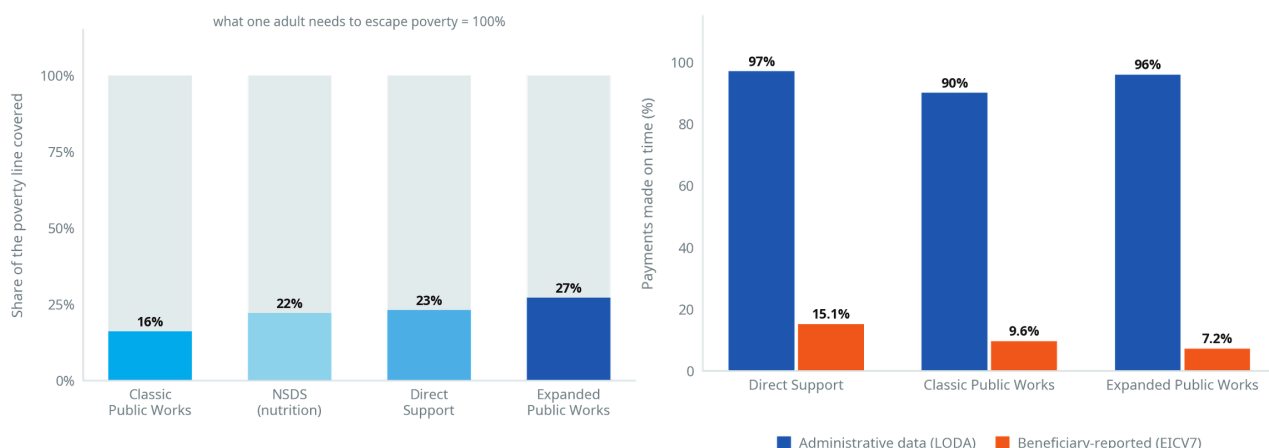
Social protection has contributed to Rwanda's progress in reducing poverty and vulnerability, but significant challenges remain. Expanding coverage and strengthening sustainable financing will be essential to ensure that social protection can play a greater role in helping vulnerable children and families thrive.

Poverty fell sharply during the same period that the social safety net expanded. Poverty declined from 39.8 per cent to 27.4 per cent, while extreme poverty fell from 11.3 per cent to 5.4 per cent. These figures do not establish that the social safety net caused the decline, as Rwanda's economy also experienced strong growth during this period. However, the timing is consistent with the Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) having made a meaningful contribution.



* 2017 recalculated on the new EICV7 method; the old and new series are not directly comparable.
Source: NISR, EICV7 Poverty Profile (2025).

However, cash transfers remain insufficient to lift households out of poverty on their own. None of the main transfer programmes comes close to covering the income needed for one adult to escape poverty. Direct Support covers 23 per cent of the poverty line, classic public works 16 per cent, expanded public works 27 per cent, and the nutrition transfer approximately one-third of the cost of a basic food basket. Meanwhile, administrative records and beneficiary reports present markedly different accounts of whether payments are delivered on time.



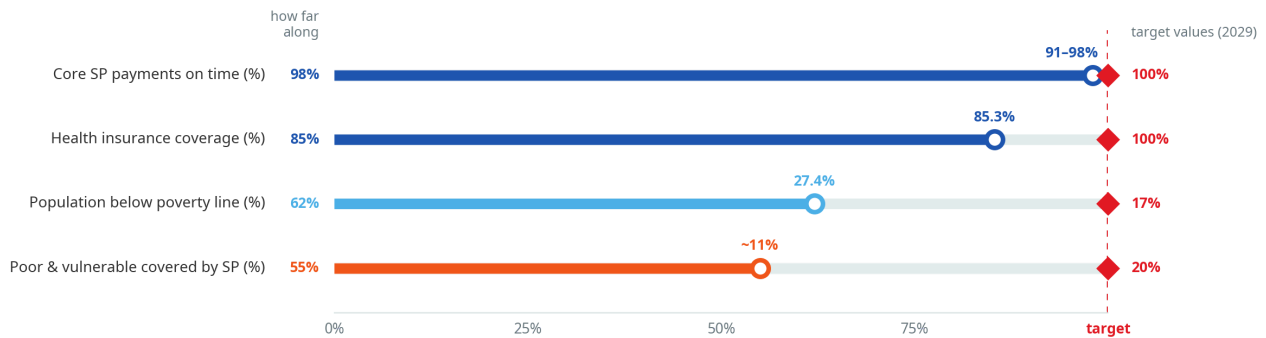
NSDS = Nutrition-Sensitive Direct Support. The source measures NSDS against the food poverty line (about one third of it); shown here as the equivalent share of the total poverty line.
Sources: NISR, EICV7 VUP Thematic Report; EICV7 Poverty Profile (poverty line Frw 560,127 per adult per year).

Sources: LODA Annual Activity Report FY2023/24 (administrative); NISR, EICV7 VUP Thematic Report, 2023/24 (beneficiary-reported).



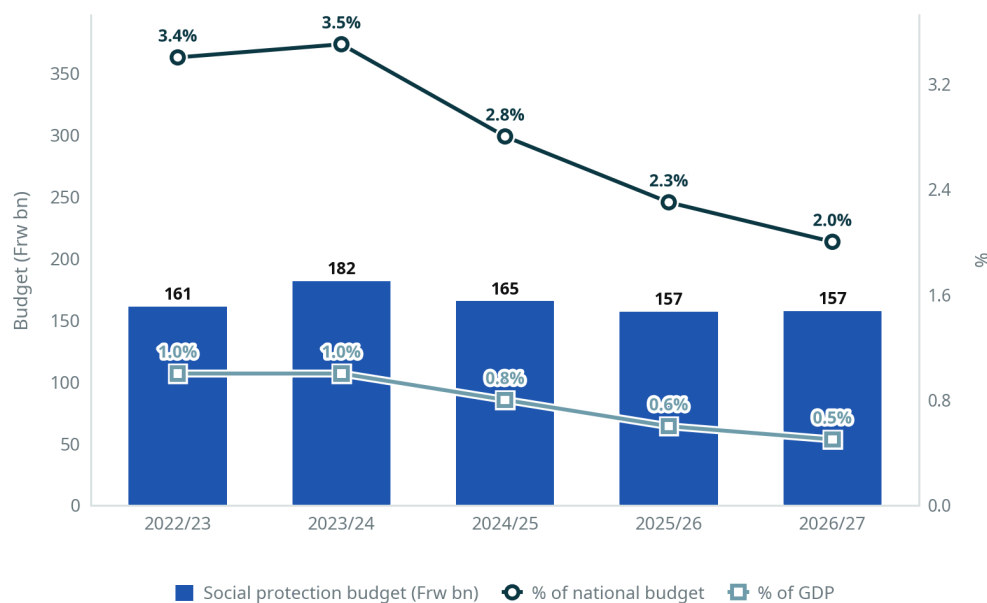
Social protection

Achieving social protection targets will require accelerated expansion. Coverage needs to nearly double, increasing from around 11 per cent of poor and vulnerable people to the target of 20 per cent. Core social protection payments on time is the indicator closest to its target, with 91 per cent to 98 per cent of payments arriving on time. Health insurance coverage, reaching 85.3 per cent, while poverty reduction will need to accelerate by roughly two percentage points per year to achieve the target of 17 per cent by 2029.



Sources: MINALOC, SP-SSP 2024-2029 M&E framework (targets); NISR, EICV7; LODA FY2024/25.

Social protection is the only sector receiving less funding than it did five years ago. At FRW 157.3 billion, the social protection budget increased by just 0.4 per cent this year. However, once inflation is taken into account, this represents a real decline of about 10 per cent, leaving the budget below its 2022/23 level of FRW 160.7 billion. Over the same period, its share of the national budget fell from 3.4 per cent to 2.0 per cent, while its share of GDP declined from 1.0 per cent to 0.5 per cent.

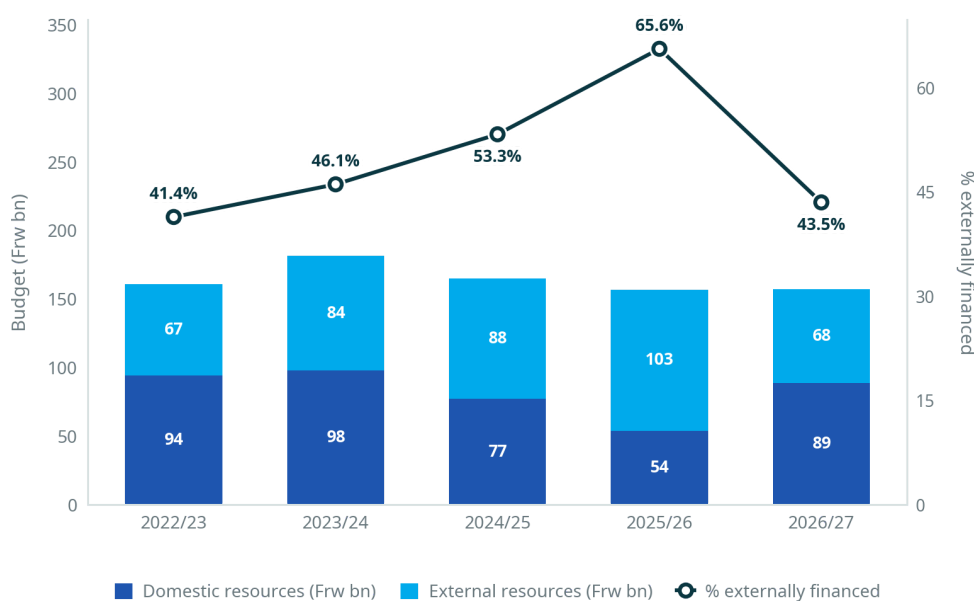


Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23-2026/27).



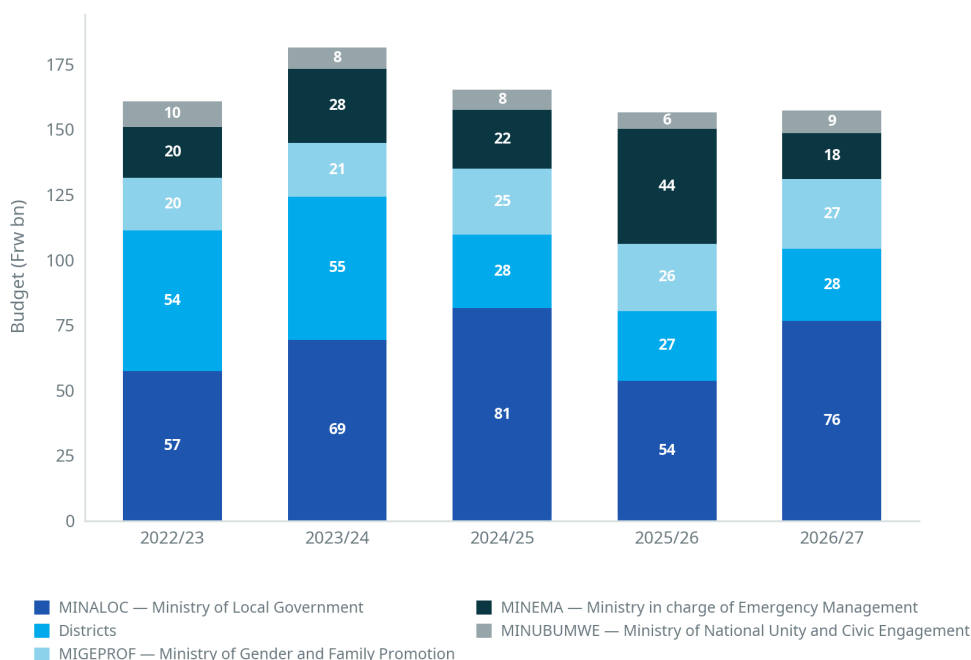
Social protection

The sector remained broadly stable only because domestic funding increased sharply. Donor funding fell by about one-third, from FRW 102.6 billion to FRW 68.4 billion. Domestic funding increased by roughly two-thirds to offset the shortfall, leaving overall sector funding broadly unchanged. However, this represents a short-term adjustment rather than a resolution of the sector's underlying vulnerability. External resources support programmes targeted at children and the most vulnerable households, including nutrition-sensitive transfers, home-based early childhood development, and shock-responsive cash transfers. These programmes are most at risk unless domestic resources are deliberately redirected to sustain them.



External resources are grants and loans combined.
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).

District-level funding has been volatile and has declined overall. Funding channelled through districts fell by nearly half between 2023/24 and 2024/25, dropping from approximately FRW 55 billion to FRW 28 billion, and has remained close to that lower level since then. Spending on emergency management fluctuates significantly from year to year, reflecting the scale of disasters in a given year rather than a predictable or stable funding pattern.

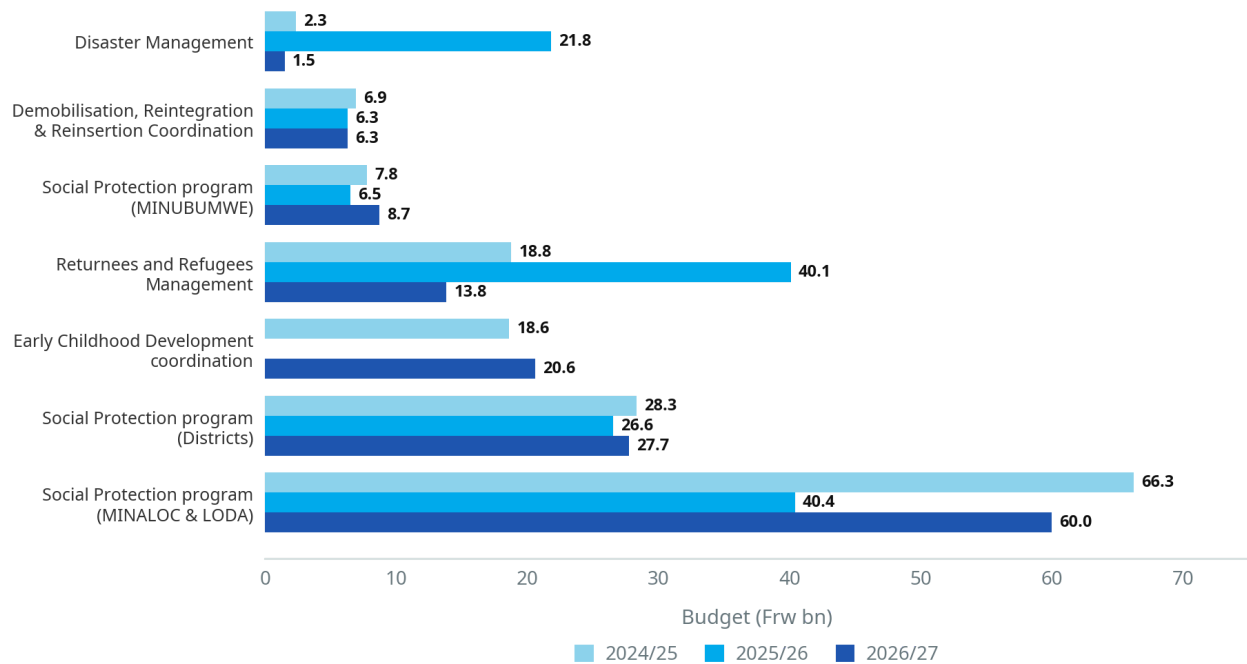


Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



Social protection

The VUP safety net remains by far the largest programme. Managed by MINALOC and LODA, the core VUP safety net is the sector's largest programme, with an allocation of FRW 60.0 billion in 2026/27. This represents an increase from FRW 40.4 billion in the previous year, although it remains below the FRW 66.3 billion allocated in 2024/25. District-level social protection is the second-largest programme. Meanwhile, funding for early childhood development coordination has returned to FRW 20.6 billion after no allocation was recorded in 2025/26.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2024/25–2026/27).

On 4 December 2024, 11-year-old Vanco Christella Irakoze loves being interactive with her mother when they are all at home. They live in Rweru sector of Bugesera district.
©UNICEF/UNI725206/Iyakaremye

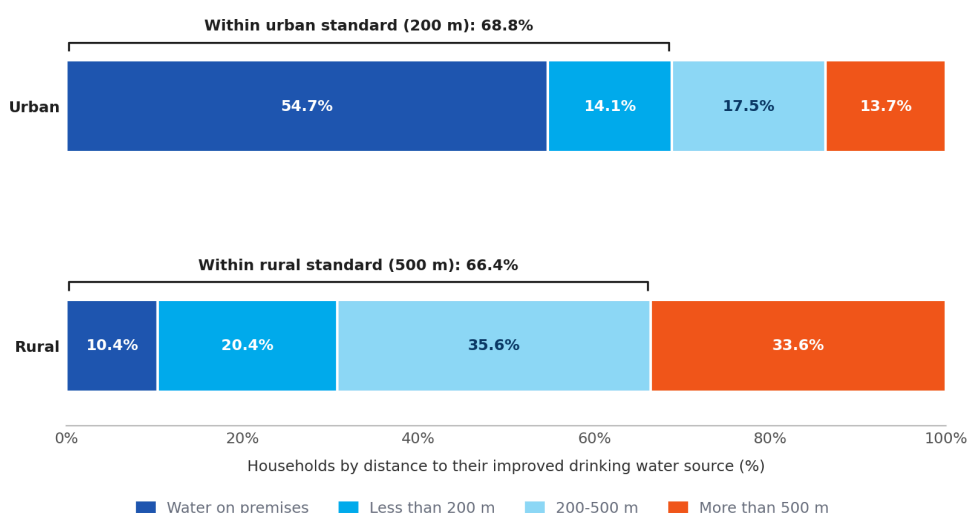




Water, sanitation and hygiene

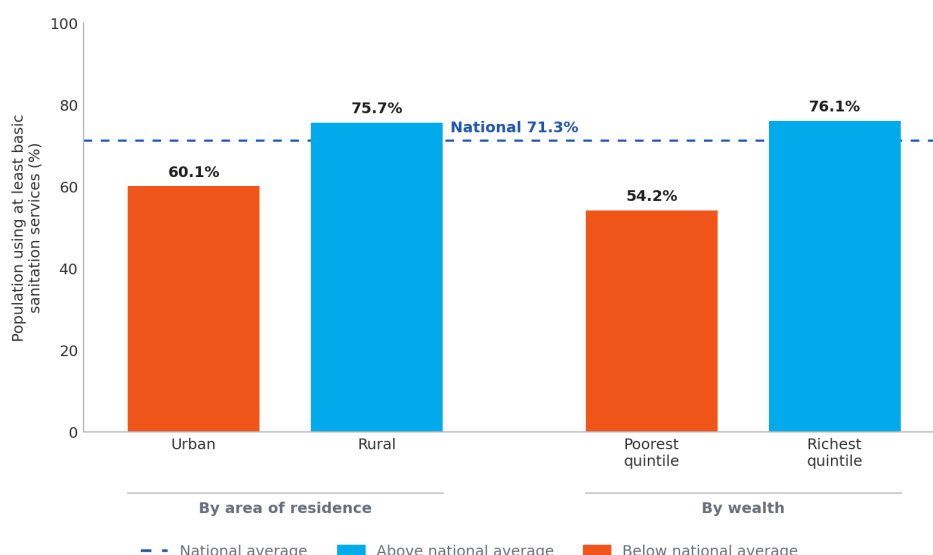
Rwanda has made strong progress in expanding WASH services, supported by sustained growth in sector investment. The next phase is to translate this investment into more equitable and higher-quality services by bringing safe water closer to households, expanding adequate sanitation, and prioritising communities where gaps remain. Sustaining progress will also require resilient and reliable financing to advance universal WASH services.

Access to improved drinking water is high, but proximity remains an important dimension of service. Nationally, 89.7 per cent of the population uses an improved drinking water source. Based on the specified distance benchmarks, 68.8 per cent of urban households have water on their premises or within 200 metres, while 66.4 per cent of rural households have water on their premises or within 500 metres. Around one-third remain beyond these respective distances.



Access standards follow the Water Supply and Sanitation Strategic Plan 2024-29: within 200 m in urban areas, within 500 m in rural areas. Source: NISR, Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2025 (DHS7).

Access to basic sanitation is relatively high, but important disparities remain. Nationally, 71.3 per cent of the population uses at least basic sanitation services, rising to 75.7 per cent in rural areas compared with 60.1 per cent in urban areas. The largest gap is by household wealth, with access ranging from 54.2 per cent among the poorest quintile to 76.1 per cent among the richest. Closing these gaps will be important to ensure equitable access to adequate sanitation for all.

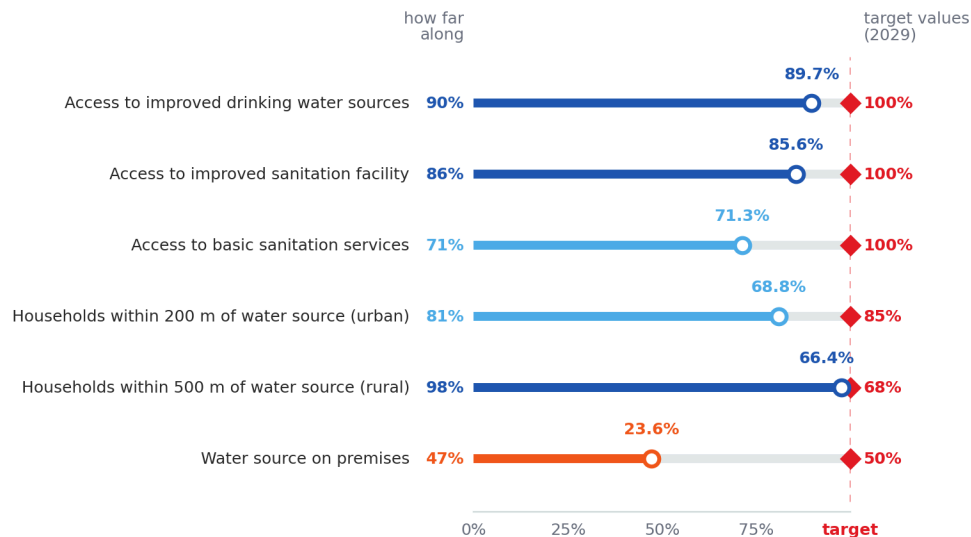


At least basic sanitation: use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households, including safely managed services (JMP sanitation ladder). Source: NISR, Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2025 (DHS7).



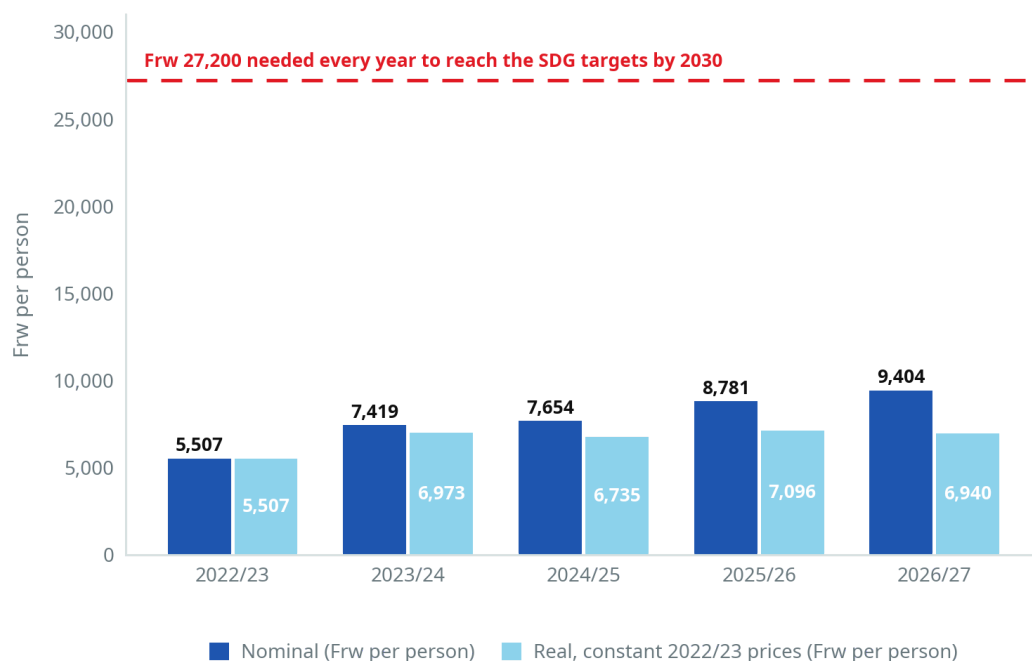
Water, sanitation and hygiene

Close to achieving headline access targets, but still far from the outcomes that matter most. Rwanda's national strategy commits to universal access to water and sanitation services by 2029. Based on the two headline indicators, the country is close to achieving this goal. However, significant gaps remain in the measures that most directly affect children's health, including proximity to water sources, the use of shared sanitation facilities, and access to safely managed wastewater services.



"How far along" shows each current value as a share of its 2029 target. Basic sanitation: improved facilities not shared with other households. Distance standards follow the WSS SSP 2024-29: within 200 m in urban areas, within 500 m in rural areas. Sources: NISR, DHS7 (2025) (current values); NST2 2024-2029 and MININFRA, WSS SSP 2024-2029 (targets).

Spending per person is increasing in nominal terms but remains stagnant in real terms. WASH spending reached FRW 9,404 per capita in 2026/27. After adjusting for inflation, however, spending has remained at around FRW 7,000 per capita since 2023/24, which is only about one-third of the estimated FRW 27,200 per person per year required to achieve the SDG targets by 2030.

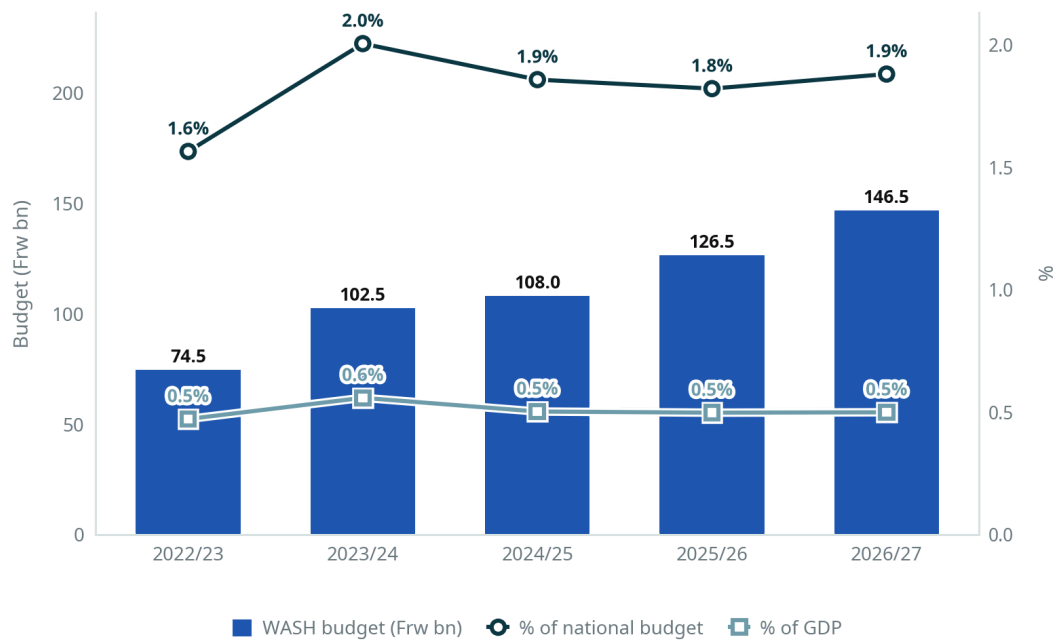


The Frw 27,200 benchmark is the ~Frw 400bn annual investment need for the WASH SDG targets by 2030, divided by the projected 2027 population (MININFRA/UNICEF WASH Sector Financing Strategy, 2022).



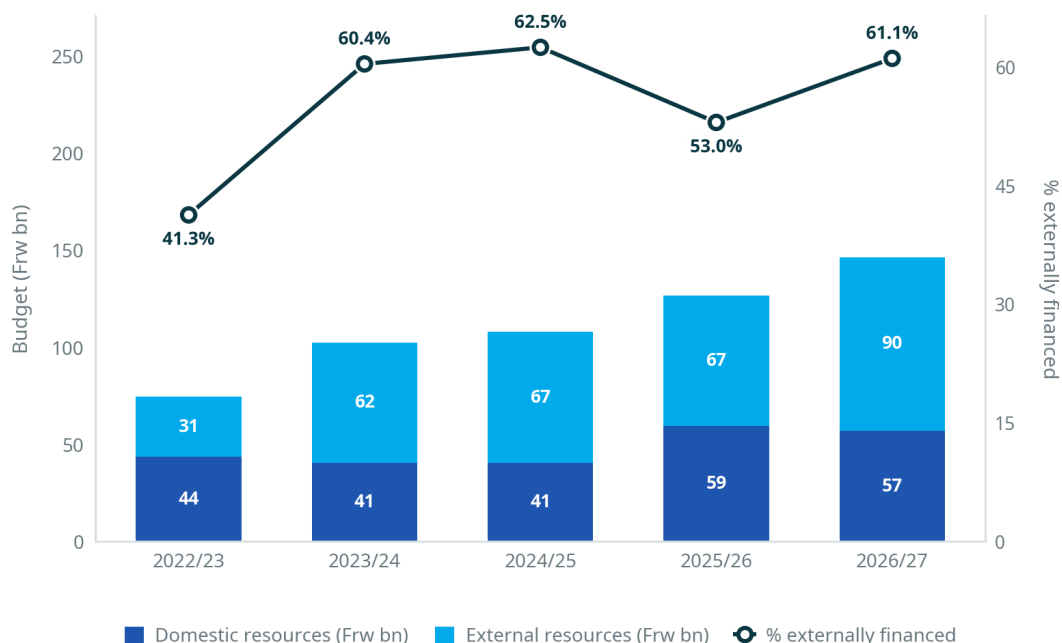
Water, sanitation and hygiene

WASH is the only social sector that has experienced sustained nominal growth. Funding for WASH has increased almost continuously, nearly doubling from FRW 74.5 billion in 2022/23 to FRW 146.5 billion in 2026/27. This represents a 15.8 per cent increase in the current year, the strongest growth among all child-focused sectors. As a share of the national budget, WASH spending has remained relatively stable at around 1.9 per cent, while its share of GDP has stayed constant at approximately 0.5 per cent.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).

The sector's growth is increasingly financed by external resources. Donor funding increased from FRW 30.7 billion in 2022/23 to FRW 89.5 billion in 2026/27 and now accounts for approximately 61 per cent of the budget, making WASH the most aid-dependent of the four child-focused sectors. Domestic funding has grown only modestly, and its share of total financing has fallen from 59 per cent to 39 per cent.

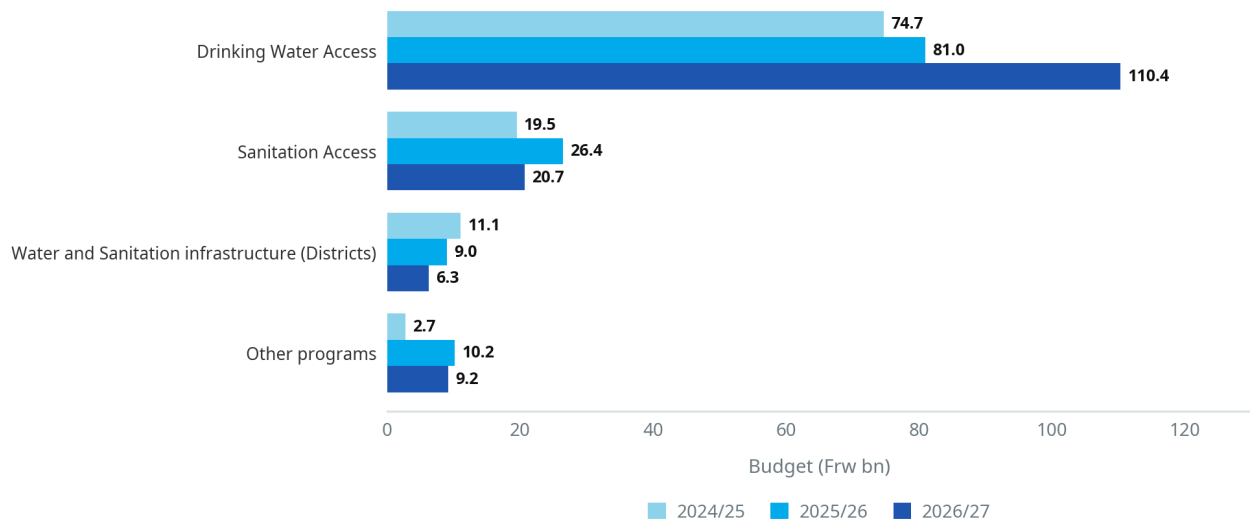


External resources are grants and loans combined.
Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2022/23–2026/27).



Water, sanitation and hygiene

Almost all growth in the sector has been concentrated in drinking water, while all other programmes have declined. Funding for drinking water access increased by 48 per cent to FRW 110.4 billion, accounting for about 75 per cent of the sector budget and virtually all of its net growth. In contrast, funding for every other programme declined: sanitation fell to FRW 20.7 billion, district water and sanitation infrastructure dropped by 43 per cent to FRW 6.3 billion, and other programmes decreased to FRW 9.2 billion.



Source: MINECOFIN, State Finance Laws (2024/25–2026/27).

On 13th December, 2024 at ECD ADEPE located in Rubavu district.
Children wash their hands as means to observe hygiene.
©UNICEF/UNI725092/Iyakaremye

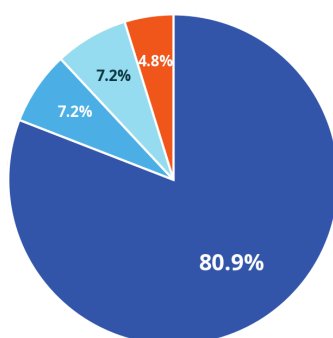




Climate change and children

Children account for nearly half of Rwanda's population and are among the groups most exposed to floods, droughts, and climate-sensitive diseases. Climate-related spending is substantial, but it is concentrated outside the main child-focused sectors.

Most climate financing is focused on adaptation, helping build resilience to climate risks that affect children and communities. In 2026/27, the Government has tagged FRW 761.8 billion as climate-related spending, equivalent to about 10 per cent of the total national budget. Approximately four-fifths of this allocation is dedicated to adaptation, helping communities cope with the impacts of a changing climate rather than reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A small share, 4.8 per cent, is classified as harmful to adaptation.



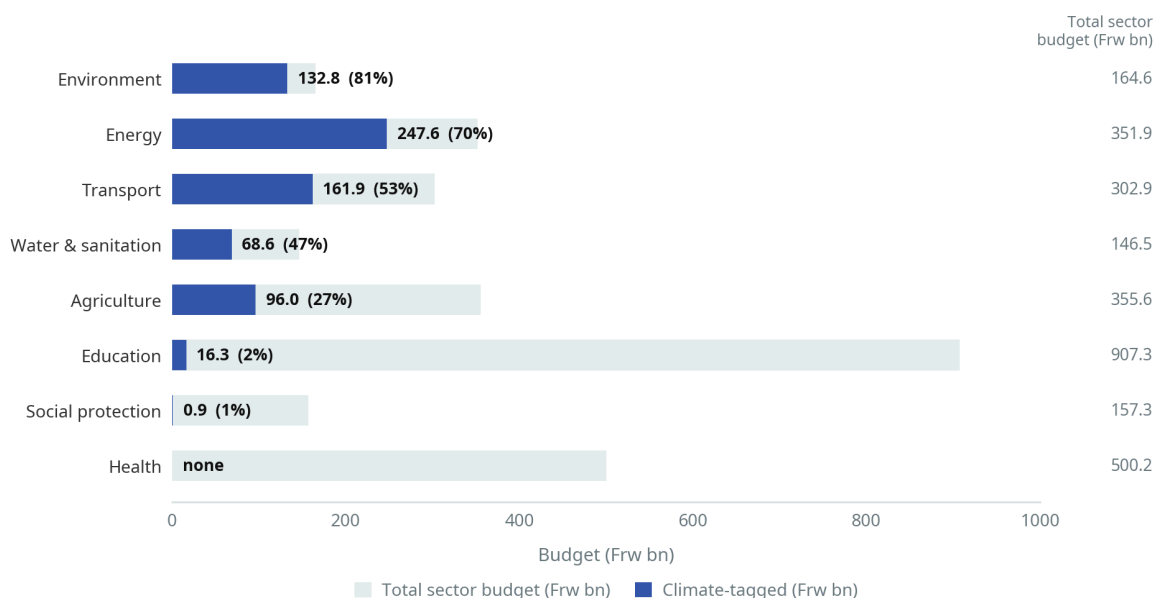
Frw 761.8 bn tagged as climate spending in 2026/27



'Brown' is the MINECOFIN tag for spending that works against climate objectives.
Source: MINECOFIN, Budget Framework Paper 2026/27.

Climate financing presents an opportunity to better connect resilience investments with outcomes for children.

Most climate-tagged spending is concentrated in the energy, transport, and environment sectors. Relative to each sector's own budget, climate-tagged spending accounts for just 2 per cent of education funding, less than 1 per cent of social protection funding, and none of health-sector funding. Water and sanitation is the notable exception, with approximately 47 per cent of its budget tagged as climate-related spending, reflecting its position as a priority adaptation sector.



Source: MINECOFIN, Budget Framework Paper 2026/27.

On October 12, 2024, in Gisagara District, Southern Province of Rwanda, UNICEF Rwanda, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Arts (MoYA), the National Youth Council (NYC), Generation Unlimited, youth-led organizations, and other key stakeholders, joined young people in the Special Umuganda of Youth. This activity focused on tree planting to enhance the community's resilience to climate-related hazards and empower young people to take the lead in addressing environmental challenges and contributing to sustainable development in their communities. More than 2,000 young people, including girls and boys, came together to plant trees in Kibirizi Sector of Gisagara District, in the Southern Province. The Special Umuganda also marked the national launch of the Green Rising Project, a global Generation Unlimited-led initiative aimed at supporting youth-led climate action, helping 10 million young people be the climate advocates their communities need for a just green transition by 2025. After a day of planting, participants gathered for the Green Rising Concert, where artists performed, and speakers emphasized the urgent need for concrete green actions.

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for every child

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That's why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.



kuri buri mwana

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