

NAKIVALE PHASE 3 REPORT

YEAR 2026



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INTRODUCTION

Nakivale Refugee Settlement continues to experience sustained population growth, largely driven by new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This influx has placed considerable pressure on already limited Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure.

Water access in parts of the settlement remains below 7 litres per person per day, falling short of the Sphere standard of 15–20 litres per person per day required to meet basic needs. While centralized systems exist, including treatment facilities drawing from Lake Nakivale, their capacity is insufficient to meet current demand due to funding constraints, limited infrastructure expansion, and the growing population.

Consequently, many newly arrived households –particularly those in Base Camp (New Goma) –rely on untreated surface water sources. This exposes them to waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoeal infections.

To address this gap, Lifewater implemented a targeted household-level water treatment intervention focused on newly settled populations.

OBJECTIVES

The intervention aimed to improve access to safe drinking water among newly arrived refugee households through the provision of water filtration systems.

Specifically, the intervention sought to reduce exposure to waterborne diseases, promote safe water handling and treatment practices, and provide an immediate and practical solution in areas where access to treated water remains limited.



DISTRIBUTION

The distribution was conducted from 23rd to 24th February 2026 in Base Camp (New Goma), targeting newly arrived refugee households with limited access to safe drinking water. A total of 200 Water Works household water filtration kits were successfully delivered. The intervention directly reached 759 individuals. Disaggregated data shows that 135 of the primary recipients were female and 65 were male, reflecting the central role women play in household water management. The relatively smaller total population to be served by this distribution is due to the smaller household sizes which are consistent with the realities of displacement, where many individuals have been separated from family members or lost relatives and are yet to reconnect with extended family networks. Most beneficiaries are currently residing in semi-permanent structures, with limited access to basic services, including safe water. This increases their vulnerability and reinforces the need for immediate, household-level water treatment solutions.

The activity was led by the Lifewater core team— Caleb Kabaho, Joseph Ainebyoona, Stephen Kapipa and Rita—in close coordination with Nsamizi, which supported beneficiary identification, and UNHCR field teams, which facilitated verification of the beneficiaries in the settlement. The use of verified beneficiary lists strengthened accountability and ensured that the most vulnerable households were reached.

The distribution was further strengthened by the presence of a visiting team from Watchmen International USA, including Bill Carver, James Shelborne, and Ollie Shelborne. Their participation provided an opportunity to observe firsthand the realities of water access within the settlement and engage directly with beneficiary households. During their visit, they observed Lake Nakivale as a primary water source and visited the settlement's water treatment facility, which currently serves only a portion of the population due to capacity limitations. They also interacted with beneficiaries to understand how the filtration systems are being used at the household level, reinforcing the practical importance of the intervention.

TRAINING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

All beneficiaries received practical, hands-on training on the assembly, use, cleaning, and maintenance of the filtration systems. Training was delivered in local languages to ensure understanding.

The Africa Youth Award youth group supported demonstrations and assisted beneficiaries during setup. Their involvement strengthened community ownership and improved correct usage of the systems.

POST-DISTRIBUTION FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up visits and spot-checks were conducted to assess system usage and provide additional support where needed.

Most households had successfully installed and were using their filtration systems correctly. Beneficiaries demonstrated a clear understanding of maintenance practices, and additional support was provided where necessary.

Community involvement in follow-up activities further reinforced accountability and sustained use of the systems.



BENEFICIARY STORY – “WE REFUSED TO GO BACK TO THAT WATER”

She arrived quietly, carrying her torn emergency water filter bag kit. Inside were the remains of a water filtration kit. It had been destroyed by rats.

For weeks, her family had gone back to collecting and using water from the lake—water she knew was unsafe. Water that had once made her children sick. Water she had hoped she would never have to rely on again.

But even then, she didn't throw the filter away. She kept it. Because to her, it was not just a tool—it was the difference between sickness and health, between fear and some sense of control.

When she heard there was another distribution happening, she walked to the site—not to ask for a new kit, but simply to show what had happened, hoping there might still be a way.

When the team asked if she had anything at home that could be used, she didn't hesitate. She ran back and returned with an old bucket.

Together, they worked on it.



A hole was carefully made. The remaining parts of the system were fitted. Slowly, what had once been considered unusable became something valuable again. **A working filter.**

She watched closely, asking questions, making sure she understood every step. Because this time, she said, she would protect it. Before leaving, she filled it with water. For the first time in weeks, she would take clean water home to her children.

What stayed with the team was not just the moment—but what it represented. In a place where families have lost homes, stability, and certainty, this mother held onto something many might have discarded. She chose to try again.

Her determination tells a powerful story: That access to safe water is not taken for granted. That even the simplest solutions carry immense value. That when given the opportunity, communities will go to great lengths to sustain what improves their lives.



200

HOUSEHOLDS

759

PEOPLE

CONCLUSION

The distribution successfully provided 200 households with access to safe drinking water, reaching 759 individuals in a high-risk environment. This intervention contributes to reducing health risks and strengthening household resilience among newly arrived refugees living in resource-constrained conditions. We appreciate the Watchmen International USA and UK observers for their hands-on support during the distribution.

We extend our sincere appreciation to WaterWorks for enabling this distribution.

Your support has provided vulnerable families with immediate access to safe drinking water, reducing exposure to waterborne diseases and strengthening resilience among newly arrived refugee communities at a time when funding constraints continue to limit WASH service delivery across refugee settlements, your contribution is not only timely—it is life-saving.

HAPPY BENEFICIARIES



