Field Report

2026

Nakivale Refugee Settlement

Phase 5 Distribution

19th – 21st August 2026



lifewater

water works program

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Introduction

From 19th to 21st August 2026, the Lifewater team conducted a distribution of 200 emergency water filtration systems in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Isingiro District, south-western Uganda. The intervention specifically targeted water-stressed areas in Rubondo Zone, focusing on Ruhoko A and Mugenyi A, where new refugee arrivals had recently been settled.

The intervention responded to the persistent challenge of access to safe and sufficient drinking water in Nakivale. With its rapidly growing population, limited water infrastructure, and increasing pressure on existing water sources, the settlement remains one of the most water-stressed refugee settlements in Uganda.

Current figures indicate that Nakivale has a population of more than 286,645 people, making it the largest refugee settlement in Uganda. Water availability is particularly concerning, with current estimates indicating that residents receive less than 7 litres per person per day, compared with the humanitarian standard of 20 litres per person per day.

The provision of household-level water filtration systems therefore offers an important complementary intervention, enabling vulnerable households to improve the safety of water available to them at the point of consumption.





- To improve access to safe drinking water among vulnerable refugee households.
- To reduce the risk of waterborne diseases.
- To improve household water safety at the point of consumption.

Project Overview

Nakivale Refugee Settlement is located in Isingiro District in south-western Uganda, relatively close to the Tanzanian border. Established in 1958, it is one of Uganda's oldest refugee settlements and is widely regarded as one of the oldest continuously operating refugee settlements in Africa.

Over the years, Nakivale has hosted refugees and asylum seekers from several countries, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

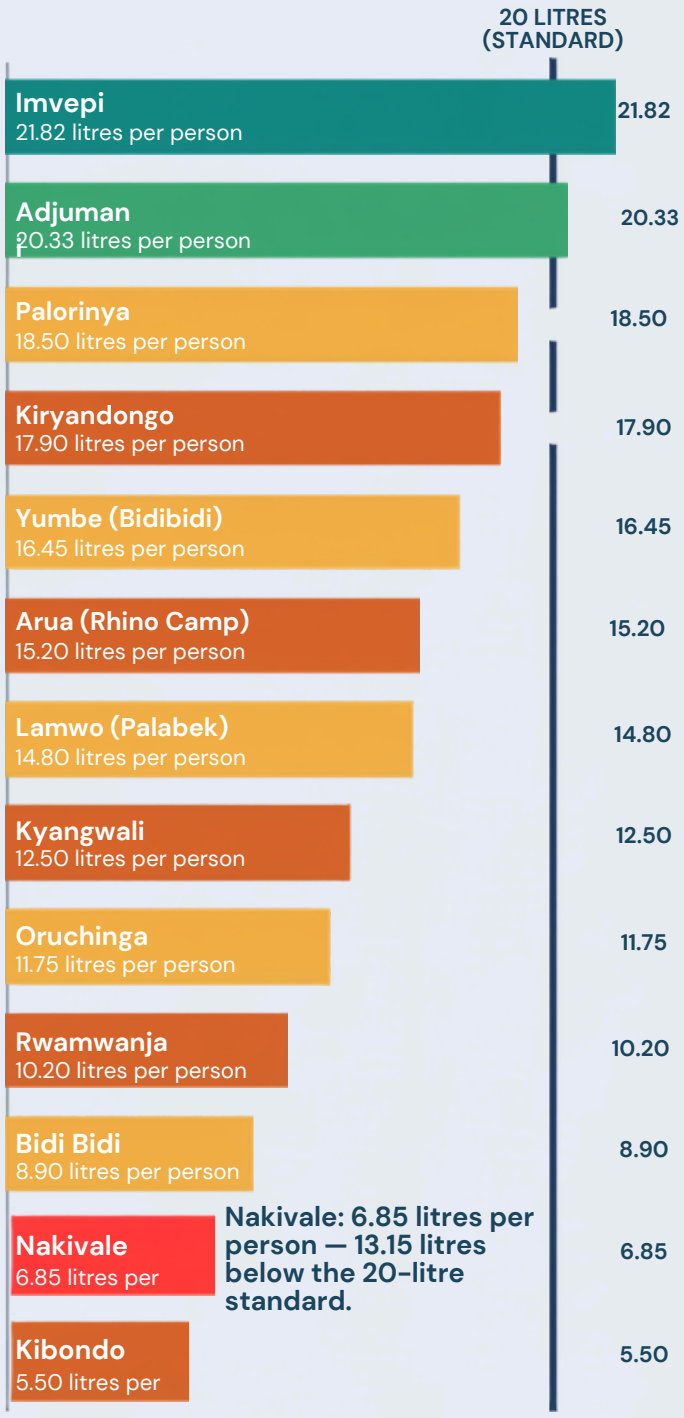
The settlement's principal water infrastructure includes systems drawing water from Lake Nakivale, including the Misiera surface-water treatment plant. The plant was established to respond to increasing demand for water from both refugee and host communities.
However, continued population growth has placed significant pressure on existing water infrastructure and water-service delivery.
The scale of the challenge is evident when Nakivale is compared with other refugee settlements in Uganda:

At 6.85 litres per person per day, Nakivale has the lowest reported water availability among the settlements listed, receiving only about 34% of the 20-litre standard and facing a deficit of approximately 13.15 litres per person per day.

This situation reinforces the need for complementary household water-treatment solutions alongside longer-term investment in water infrastructure.

Water Access Falls Below the 20-Litre Standard

Most refugee settlements fall below the essential 20-litre per person benchmark, highlighting critical water access



Key Activities

01

Mobilisation of beneficiaries

The Lifewater team worked closely with Nsamizi, the UNHCR WASH partner, to mobilise beneficiaries in the targeted areas.
Once again, Nsamizi played an important role in coordinating beneficiary mobilisation, working together with Village Health Teams (VHTs) and Refugee Council (RC) leaders to identify and mobilise households for the distribution.
The mobilisation focused particularly on Ruhoko A and Mugenyi A villages, where new arrivals have recently settled and where access to adequate water remains a significant concern.

02

Distribution

A total of 200 emergency water filtration systems were distributed to selected households between 19 and 21 August 2026.
The systems are intended to provide households with a means of improving the quality and safety of water before consumption, particularly where households have limited access to reliably treated water.
The intervention is especially important in a context where insufficient water availability can encourage households to rely on alternative sources whose quality may not be guaranteed.

03

Beneficiary Training

Distribution was accompanied by practical training for beneficiaries on the proper use, care and maintenance of the water filtration systems.
The training was conducted by Africa Youth Award (AYA) youth, providing an opportunity for young people to actively participate in community WASH interventions.
The training emphasised the importance of:

- Correct operation of the filtration system.
- Proper handling of treated water.
- Regular cleaning and maintenance.
- Safe storage of drinking water.
- Continued use of the system to protect household members from unsafe drinking water.

04

Monitoring and Follow-up

AYA youth will also participate in periodic monitoring and evaluation of the distributed systems.
This follow-up is important to establish whether the systems remain functional and are being correctly used by beneficiaries.
It will also help identify challenges requiring additional support, including maintenance, user knowledge, and household adoption.

The monitoring approach strengthens accountability while providing an opportunity to assess the longer-term effectiveness of the intervention.

Acknowlegement

We sincerely appreciate the support and collaboration of all partners and community structures that made this intervention possible.
Special appreciation goes to the OPM, UNHCR and Nsamizi, the UNHCR WASH partner, for once again supporting the mobilisation of beneficiaries and working closely with Village Health Teams and Refugee Council leaders to facilitate the distribution.
We also appreciate the contribution of the AYA youth, who conducted beneficiary training and will continue to support periodic monitoring and evaluation of the distributed systems.



We acknowledge the cooperation of the local leadership, VHTs, RCs and community members in Ruhoko A and Mugenyi A for their participation and support throughout the exercise.

Thank You

For Your Support!

We appreciate the Lifewater team and Waterworks whose commitment and resources made it possible to provide 200 emergency water filtration systems to vulnerable households in one of Uganda's most water-stressed refugee settlements.



Happy recipients







