

# Cameroon Situation

December 2020

**Over 63,000 Cameroonian refugees are registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States in Nigeria. 44 % live in settlements, **56 % among local communities.**

A door-to-door campaign sensitized **13,500 refugees** about **COVID-19** prevention. **No Cameroonian refugee** was reported **positive since the onset of the pandemic.**

UNHCR and partners maintained **border monitoring, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence** and other **protection** services despite the pandemic.



*Vulnerable refugees in settlements such as Adagom rely on UNHCR items such as buckets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, blankets and mats which were distributed this month. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.*

## Operational Highlights

- In support of the national education systems, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, completed the construction/renovation of **16 classrooms** in the public Secondary School Akor, St. Mary's Primary School, Akamkpa Local Government Area (LGA), and St. Peter's Primary School 2, Adagom (Ogoja LGA), Cross River State (CRS). This will increase the learning space for refugees and host community students. Additionally, **one block of three laboratories** and an **assembly hall** was erected in the Government Secondary School, Ikot Effanga, Calabar, CRS.

- UNHCR provided an assortment of **COVID-19** mitigation items to the LGAs Takum, Sarduna, Kurmi and Ussa in Taraba State. The items included plastic buckets with metal stands, liquid soap, face masks and latex gloves. The items were distributed to schools, Local Government Offices, Police stations and places of worship to prevent and curb the spread of COVID-19.



## PROTECTION

- **Registration:** UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria registered 30 refugees in Cross River and Benue States in December. Considering the pandemic, UNHCR and its partners are implementing all activities in line with the WHO prevention guidelines.
- **Documentation:** Printing of new refugee identity cards (ID) started to allow refugees access basic services such as health amid the pandemic. In Calabar, CRS, 29 new IDs were issued.
- **Child Protection: Birth certificates** were issued to **162 refugee children** by the National Population Commission in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States (BCT) bringing the total number of birth certificates across BCT States to over 2,000 in 2020.
- **Access to territory:** UNHCR undertook close to **150 border monitoring visits** to various localities in BCT States to assess the presence/needs of new arrivals, the Agency advocated for the protection of refugees and access to territory for asylum-seekers and monitored the living conditions of refugees and new arrivals through refugee leaders and village heads.
- Cameroonian refugees continued to **arrive in Nigeria in limited numbers**. During the reporting period, 89 new arrivals were recorded in CRS and Taraba. They fled following renewed violence in their towns and villages. Immigration officials were briefed on the rights of refugees, freedom of movement and unlawful detention in BCT States.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** In line with the theme for the year: **Orange the World: Fund! Prevent! Respond! Collect**, the 16 days of activism campaign against SGBV continued with sensitization of over **6,000 refugees** through dialogue forums on behaviour change and social mobilization with men, women, boys and girls; awareness on positive masculinity and community forums on ending SGBV against women and girls. Sensitization on multi-sectoral referral pathways for SGBV services was also conducted with host community members including students, healthcare workers, Police Officers, Correctional Officers and prison inmates in Ogoja, Boki, Akamkpa, Calabar, Adikpo, Takum and Gembu.
- Information, Education and Communication materials including leaflets and stickers with crucial **SGBV prevention and response messages** were disseminated and placed in strategic locations in schools, settlements and host communities.
- Multi-sectoral assistance including medical care, legal support, material **assistance** and psychosocial counselling were provided to two **SGBV survivors** in BCT States.
- **Capacity Building:** UNHCR, in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced persons (NCFRMI) facilitated a two-day protection training for about three dozen government officials, UNHCR and partner staff, including heads of Security Agencies, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Jalingo, Taraba State. Participants were equipped with knowledge on legal frameworks in safeguarding refugees, refugee registration process and documentation, on the importance of birth certificates for the prevention of statelessness; **Refugee Status Determination** (RSD), protection of refugees in emergencies, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).
- In Ogoja, CRS, sensitization training on the **#IBelong** campaign was conducted for almost 20 teachers and heads of Schools from five Primary and Secondary Schools, Refugee Education Committee and Refugee Community Based Organization. The training strengthened the understanding of participants about the causes and consequences of statelessness.

- A two-day **training on protection of Internally Displaced People (IDP)** was conducted for 42 key government line Ministry/Department officials, UN sister Agencies, NGOs, Civil Society and UN Human Security Trust Fund (UNHSTF) in Makurdi, Benue State, . It aimed at building capacity and strengthening partnership and coordination mechanisms in the IDP response.
- **People with Specific Needs:** In Benue and CRS, the International Day for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) was commemorated with of over 50 PWD's in Ikyogen, Adagom and Ukende Refugee Settlements. Seven people received walking aids **including wheelchairs, crutches and walking sticks** to improve their quality of life.
- **Security:** A police post and a two-room accommodation were renovated in Ikyogen community, Benue State, as part of the measures to improve the security of refugees and locals in the area.
- **Detention:** In BCT States, 67 detention monitoring visits were undertaken to the Nigerian Police stations, Immigration offices, Correctional centres, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, to advocate against the arbitrary arrest and detention of refugees.
- **Sports:** UNHCR donated **footballs, jerseys, socks and boots** to female and male **football and volleyball teams** in Adagom and Ukende communities, CRS, to promote **integration** of refugees and host community youth, and to develop the spirit of sportsmanship. In addition, four goal posts were mounted at the football fields.

### Challenges

- In the absence of sufficient donor support to the Cameroonian refugee response, UNHCR continued to **transform its cash programmes** into cash plus livelihoods programmes, while reducing the amount for food further (from 4,600 to N3,700 Naira). Explaining the transformation remained a challenge as livelihoods support only reached 10 % of the refugees.
- There was an **urgent need for more non-food-items**, including blankets, mats, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, dignity kits and jerrycans for vulnerable individuals.
- Poor access to registration for new refugee arrivals in hard to reach communities was limiting their access to protection and other services.
- The lack of solar street lights in Ikyogen settlement made the area unsafe at night.



## HEALTH

- UNHCR is providing technical support to health facilities/workers through provision of COVID-19 prevention materials/equipment, on-site mentoring, capacity-building and supply of **life-saving medication to 14 primary health centres** in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.
- In Lagos State, 200 N95 and **5,000 surgical masks**, 2,000 surgical gloves and 20 bed sheets were donated to Mount Sinai Hospital Lagos and State Hospital Ijebu-ode, in appreciation of their continued assistance to refugees amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Challenges

- In BCT States, there is an urgent need for essential equipment, particularly beds, to support the isolation centres, and a safe ambulance to move critically ill patients including refugees.



## FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

- **Cash for food** reached **more than 34,000 refugees** in Benue and Cross River States.
- As of December 2020, **Cameroonian refugees opened** or pre-opened more than **9,000 bank accounts** in a partnership with Standard Chartered and First Bank of Nigeria, with close to 4,000 heads of households being biometrically registered for this purpose. The accounts will promote the financial inclusion of refugees and facilitate transfer of cash assistance.

- In BCT States, UNHCR distributed food and non-food items to more than **5,500** refugees. The items included buckets, blankets, jerry cans, mats and kitchen sets, mosquito nets, rice, beans, cassava flour, wheat, salt and palm oil, sleeping mats and buckets.

### Challenges

- Only 58% of registered refugees living in the settlements or their vicinities received cash for food, while 42% those in host communities and urban cities could not benefit from this support, given funding constraints. The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on has exacerbated vulnerabilities of the communities.
- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, **prices of basic food commodities in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly**, by 30% on average, compared to early 2020.
- UNHCR plans to launch a digital cash distribution platform for refugees was slowed down due to the outbreak of the pandemic and reduced services at banks.



## EDUCATION

- **UNHCR supported schools to remain open** where health conditions allowed, and helped mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread through increased access to WASH, health services and through information campaigns.
- In CRS, **tuition fees** were paid for more than **400** refugee students at the Government Technical College Ogoja, and four West African Examination Council Examination candidates were supported by covering their registration.
- UNHCR paid the **tuition fees**, examination fees and other school charges of more than **1,200** refugee students, for the first term 2020/2021 academic year in four primary and secondary schools in Ikyogen, Benue. Two sensitization sessions were organized to promote school enrolment among refugees in Ikyogen settlement.
- In Taraba, a one-day awareness **campaign on child rights** reached 600 refugee and host community primary and secondary school students.
- In CRS, **school bags** were distributed to **more than 3,000 refugee and host community students** in 10 primary and secondary schools, while in Benue State, more than 100 refugee students received school shoes, uniforms, socks, writing pens and school bags.



## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- In Benue and Cross River States, **latrines and bathing shelters were fumigated** to ensure vector control around the shelter areas at Ikyogen, Ukende and Adagom settlements.
- **5,000 families** in settlements across BCT States received more than 7,000 sachets of aqua tab (**water disinfectant**) to improve the quality of household drinking water and allow safe water storage.
- **190 dignity kits** were distributed to women and girls of reproductive age (12-45yrs) in Oban, Akamkpa (CRS) to promote personal hygiene. 20 women drawn from the refugees and host community in Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen were trained on production of re-usable menstrual pads, and four received **sewing machines** and start-up materials to boost the production.
- Door-to-door sensitizations on **COVID-19 preventive measures**, handwashing, risks of open defecation, environmental sanitation, safe water chain and personal hygiene reached more than **13,500 refugees** in Ikyogen, Adagom and Ukende settlements. **No refugee was reported with COVID-19** in the area since the onset of the pandemic.

- In Benue and CRS, four hand pump boreholes, 16 gender segregated latrines and 18 gender segregated showers were installed in refugee settlements and host communities. In addition, **five boreholes** were upgraded with **solar power**.

### Challenges

- **Latrines were over-stretched** at the refugee settlements. There were about 50-80 individuals per drop hole of latrine while the Sphere standard is 25/drop hole post emergency.
- In Ikyogen settlement, all three boreholes constructed have failed, resulting in **water scarcity**. Presently, the settlement depends on treated water from the Amire river, about 1.3 km away from the settlement.
- Boreholes in Ukende and Adagom refugee settlements, CRS, are generally saline and unsuitable for families to use.
- In Taraba, the only water source for refugees and rural host communities are contaminated streams, which could potentially cause life threatening diseases.



## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT/SELF-RELIANCE

- In 2020, UNHCR through its partner CUSO International empowered more than **2,700 refugee and host community families** with technical/vocational trainings and entrepreneurial/financial management skills to improve their **livelihoods** and self-reliance in Benue and CRS. 1,500 individuals received production kits/inputs and technical support in agriculture, livestock and fisheries activities, while close to 1,300 men and women received **start-up kits** for small business enterprises. Six cassava processing centers were also established in Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements.

### Challenges

- A recent UNHCR socio-economic assessment showed that **68% of refugees** live on less than N 20,000 per month, i.e. **less than 2 USD per day**.
- Livelihood opportunities for refugee families remain limited.



## SHELTER

- In Benue, more than **130 refugee families** received **shelter kits** to build transitional shelters in Ikyogen. Also, 40 families were supported with cash for the construction of transitional shelters (payment for labour).



## SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

- The CR and Benue State Emergency Management Agency coordinated the activities in the four refugee settlements and monitored the coexistence of refugees with host communities particularly in non-settlement LGAs. The agency resolved over 55 potential crisis situations between refugees and host communities.
- In CRS, refugees in Adagom settlement protested on 9 and 10 December 2020 over the **delay in the payment** of cash for food. A group of agitated individuals threatened and attacked a SEMA staff and a chief of the Adagom host community. To ease the **tensions** and promote respect of law and order by refugees, UNHCR and SEMA held several meetings/negotiations with refugees and locals.

## Working in partnership

In collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to Cameroonian refugees. UNHCR holds regular coordination meetings in Ogoja, CRS, to foster collaboration with UN agencies and humanitarian actors. The following partners

implement specific sector activities in the Cameroon refugee response: NCFRMI, SEMA, Family Health International, Save the Children International, CUSO International, Catholic Caritas Foundation Nigeria, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP); MEDATRIX Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service and the Nigeria Red Cross Society. Operational partners include ICRC, UNFPA, FAO and WHO.

## External/Donor Relations

As of 30 December 2020, **funding** of the requirements for the Cameroon refugee situation stood at **53%** of the USD 90.6 million needed.

**UNHCR is grateful for the following support:**

### Direct contributions to UNHCR in Nigeria

Canada | CERF | Country-Based Pooled Funds | France | Holy See | Japan | Nigeria | Other private donors | Spain | The Fountain of Life Church | Unilever (UK) | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security | United States of America

### Unearmarked contributions

Denmark 34.6 million | France 14 million | Germany 25.9 million | Italy 10.6 million | Japan 23.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Norway 41.4 million | Private donors Italy 17.6 million | Private donors Japan 27.8 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 37.5 million | Private donors Spain 73.5 million | Private donors Sweden 12.8 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million | Sweden 88.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | United Kingdom 45.7 million

Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | South Africa | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Other private donors

### Softly earmarked contributions

Canada 10.2 million | Denmark 14.6 million | France 4 million | Germany 70.9 million | Ireland 3.3 million | Private donors Australia 11.4 million | Private donors Germany 5.1 million | Private donors Japan 4.5 million | Private donors Lebanon 2.1 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.5 million | Private donors United Kingdom 2.6 million | Private donors USA 8.7 million | Spain 3.4 million | Sweden 3 million | United Kingdom 24.8 million | United States of America 46.8 million

Czechia | Holy See | Iceland | Japan | Jersey | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Morocco | Norway | Private donor

## CONTACTS

**Tesfaye Bekele**, Head of Sub-Office, Ogoja, Nigeria  
[bekelet@unhcr.org](mailto:bekelet@unhcr.org), Cell + 234 901 066 0624

**Roland Schoenbauer**, Senior External Relations Officer, Abuja, Nigeria  
[schoenb@unhcr.org](mailto:schoenb@unhcr.org), Cell + 234 901 066 4695

**LINKS:** [UNHCR Data page Nigeria](#) - [Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#)