

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

September 2021

Some **68,000** **Cameroonian refugee men, women and children** have been **registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States so far.

UNHCR **constructed staff accomodation for health care workers** and **installed latrines** to improve medical care, personal hygiene and sanitation for refugees and locals in Benue State.

Almost **9,000 refugees** received **cash** to purchase the **food of their choice** for three months in Benue and Cross River States during the month of September, as **food prices** keep on increasing.



Local and refugee pupils study and play together in school buildings and playgrounds built by UNHCR in St. Peter's Primary School Adagom, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Operational Highlights

- On 14 September, government partners of UNHCR handed over various **infrastructure** projects that were completed in Ikyogen community to the Chairperson of Kwande local government area (LGA) and traditional leaders of Ikyogen community in Benue State. The projects included a three-bedroom self-contained **staff quarters for health care workers** in Ikyogen Primary Health Centre, four latrines and two bathrooms near Ikyogen market.
- In Akwa Ibom State, UNHCR is expanding its services for about **1,600 refugees** to complement the **shelter** response by the State. UNHCR has committed to providing health care, upgrade of water and **sanitation facilities** and protection services to refugees and locals through partners. The Deputy Governor commended UNHCR for supporting refugees and assured the agency of the State's support and readiness to partner and ensure **access to free education for refugees** in primary and secondary schools.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR collaborated with 12 government agencies and national as well as international partners to systematically identify **protection incidents**, analyse **protection risks** and refer cases to partners for the provision of protection and multisectoral assistance, including legal assistance, registration/documentation, healthcare, and services related to **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** and material assistance.
- In Benue, Cross River and Taraba (BCT) States, UNHCR and partners undertook at least **50 Joint border monitoring** visits to assess the presence and needs of **new arrivals**, advocate for the protection of refugees from abuse, exploitation, violation or neglect as well as ensure that they have access to territory. **No cases of refoulement** were recorded during the reporting period.
- More than **450 additional refugees arrived** in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State, and border communities in Cross River and Taraba States in a matter of a few days, due to fear of violence associated with the Independence Day of 1 October, declared by secessionist groups in Cameroon back in 2017. Most of the new arrivals are women and children from Akwaya subdivision and in urgent need of food, health care and CRIs. According to them, armed groups and individuals were **kidnapping** women, girls and young boys to unknown locations.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria registered and provided **proof of documentation** to more than **1,100 additional refugees**, including new births in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States.
- Some **170 refugee children** born in Nigeria received **birth certificates** issued by the National Population Commission at the refugee settlements and host communities in Benue and Cross River States.
- UNHCR and partners established **protection desks** in the refugee settlements and host communities to provide support to refugees on **GBV prevention/response**, legal matters, and registration in BCT States. About **1,000 refugees with specific needs** such as critically

sick individuals, individuals with disabilities, unaccompanied/separated children, pregnant women, and older persons were referred to specialized services.

- Over **1,000 refugees** received ID cards issued by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Person's (NCFRMI) and UNHCR, to help them move freely and access basic social services like healthcare and banking in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State (CRS).
- In CRS, UNHCR and NCFRMI trained **38 recently elected refugee leaders** of Adagom 1 settlement on refugee rights and obligations, leadership and conflict management, community-based protection, roles and responsibilities of community leaders, sexual exploitation and abuse and **UNHCR's Code of Conduct**.
- More than **45 GBV survivors** received multisectoral assistance in BCT States, including medical, psychosocial, legal, and material assistance through established referral pathways to enhance their coping skills.
- More than **15 awareness sessions** on child protection, death registration, child rights, birth registrations, prevention of GBV, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse response and reporting channels **reached over 2,000 refugees and locals**, including students in BCT States.

Challenges

- **Limited food and livelihood support** pushed youth and women-headed households to **negative coping mechanisms** in all refugee hosting locations, including survival sex leading to an increase in teenage pregnancies and alcohol abuse.
- Under-reporting of **GBV incidences** remains a major concern, as most survivors tend to endure with their abusers for fear of reprisal attacks and stigma.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- In Benue State, UNHCR **trained 15 individuals** from the Ikyogen community, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), NCFRMI and Kwande local government officials on **community WASH management** process and maintenance of WASH facilities, following the installation of latrines and bathing shelters at the Ikyogen market.
- UNHCR installed nine blocks of improved emergency latrines, rehabilitated 16 bathing shelters and commissioned **17 emergency latrines** in Ikyogen, Adagom and Ukende settlements, through Save the Children International, to improve sanitation and hygiene facilities for refugees in Benue and Cross River States.
- **Sensitization sessions on personal and environmental hygiene**, open defecation, and cholera prevention **reached over 1,500 refugees** through hygiene volunteers in BCT States.

Challenges

- The main gap in the **WASH sector** remains **inadequate water supply** in the refugee settlements, despite the construction and rehabilitation of over **15 boreholes** by UNHCR. The yield remains insufficient and merely meets about **40 percent of refugees' water need**. UNHCR is currently operating a water treatment plant at a very high cost to cover the needs of refugees. Moreover, latrines and bathing facilities in the refugee settlements are inadequate.

**HEALTH:**

- UNHCR continued providing support to more than **20 health facilities** through the provision of **medical equipment**, incinerators, laboratory consumables, **COVID-19 prevention items**, and capacity-building for staff in BCT States.
- In Taraba State, UNHCR completed the remodeling of Model Primary Health Centre Abong in Kurmi LGA, to improve **health care services** for refugees and locals.
- Over **200 refugees** received **COVID-19 vaccination** and **2,000 refugees and locals** received face masks provided by UNHCR, to help prevent **COVID-19** in Benue and CRS.
- Through the Nigerian Red Cross Society, UNHCR trained some **70 pregnant and lactating women - refugees and locals** - on the preparation of iron rich food, using locally available resources, to help improve nutrition for children at Adagom and Ukende refugee settlements in Cross River State.
- Over **500 refugees and members of the host community**, particularly pregnant women and children younger than five years, received **mosquito nets** to help prevent malaria, which remains the major cause of illness among refugees and locals.

Challenges

- **Lack of medication** in the health facilities hinders access to health care for most refugees who cannot pay for health services.

**EDUCATION:**

- In Benue and Cross River States, UNHCR enrolled about **2,000 refugee students** into public primary and secondary schools for the first term school session, following school resumption this month. UNHCR is supporting the government to host refugee students by providing **additional classrooms**, furniture and WASH facilities, to improve the learning environment for refugees and locals.
- UNHCR registered more than **135 refugee students** for the 2021 primary-six placement examination into junior secondary or high schools, in CRS.

Challenges

- **Refugee students** aspiring for higher education **cannot register** for the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board examination – a prerequisite for university admission, due to **lack of a National Identity Number**.
- Levels of school and university enrolment remain critically low for refugee children and youth because of the **limited funding and support**.
- **Refugee children with specific needs** have limited access to education, given the long distance from the settlements of Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen to the schools.

**LIVELIHOODS**

- In BCT States, UNHCR and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) undertook a **joint livelihood and energy needs assessment** for refugees and host community members, using **key informant interviews** and **focus group discussions**.

Challenges

- Refugees continue crossing the border to Cameroon in search of **food** and **livelihood** opportunities to sustain their families. In addition, inadequate access to land for refugees limits the **livelihoods** options, especially for crop farming.



FOOD SECURITY

- Some **9,000 refugees** from **2,200 families** received **cash** to purchase the **food** of their choice for three months in Benue and Cross River States. Over **35,000 refugees** received the **cash for food** in August and September.
- More than **19,735 individuals** of over 4,880 families representing 65 per cent of the targeted households have undergone a **Multi-Sectoral Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment** across Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements.

Challenges

- Because of **COVID-19**, prices of basic **food commodities** in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly. The cash assistance for food provided to refugees has been inconsistent due to funding constraint. Food remains one of the critical needs of refugees in settlements and host communities.



SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS

- UNHCR and SEMA monitored and managed the four refugee settlements (Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen), in Cross River and Benue States to ensure refugee integration with host communities and providing security for refugees. At least **35 potential crises** between refugees and locals were resolved through **community engagement** and **negotiations**.
- Over **800 refugees**, mainly **new arrivals** and individuals with **specific needs** received CRIs including blankets, solar lamps, towels, and buckets, while some **100 refugee women** in reproductive age received **dignity kits**, provided by UNHCR, in Benue and Cross River States.
- More than **35 refugee families of people with disabilities** received energy saving stoves in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.
- In CRS, UNHCR constructed **12 additional transitional shelters** for **vulnerable refugees** in Adagom and Ukende settlements, while **ten additional shelters** are at different stages of completion.

Working in partnership

Together with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to Cameroonian refugees. The Agency holds regular coordination meetings at the State and local government levels with UN agencies, authorities, and humanitarian organizations. The following partners implement specific sector activities: NCFRMI, SEMA, Save the Children International, CUSO International, Catholic Caritas Foundation Nigeria, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi Foundation for Justice Development and Peace, MEDATRIX Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Nigerian Red Cross. Operational partners include UNFPA, FAO, ICRC and WHO.

External/Donors Relations

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Softly earmarked contributions: Germany 37 million | United States of America 33 million | Private donors Australia 8.7 million | Canada 5.6 million | Private donors Germany 2.6 million.

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