

CASH AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION UPDATE

Nigeria, January 2022



UNHCR SUPPORTS CAMEROONIAN REFUGEES WITH OVER 2 M US\$

In December 2021 and January 2022, UNHCR distributed urgently needed cash assistance to Cameroonians in Nigeria



HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR's cash assistance expands to Akwa Ibom State.
- FAO and UNHCR undertake in-depth assessment of food insecurity and livelihoods

It was a first when UNHCR distributed cash for food to Cameroonian refugees in Akwa Ibom State. And it came as a big relief in times of rising food prices. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende

Cash in hand and on the bank

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, pumped over 1.9 million US\$ through its cash-for-food programme into areas in Nigeria that host Cameroonian refugees. While UNHCR's cash support had to be cut several times in recent years exacerbating the food situation amid rising food prices and shrinking opportunities for income generation following the economic hit of COVID-19, a generous donation from the UAE-based private donor Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI) made this possible.

During the last days of 2021, UNHCR distributed cash in hand for food to some 20,000 Cameroonian refugees in settlements in Ogoja and Ikyogen (Cross River and Benue States) through its partners Rhema Care and Foundation for Justice Development and Peace. They received a total of 166 Million Naira (about US\$ 400,000). Additional outreach will ensure that individuals entitled to cash assistance who did not show up, receive this support.

UNHCR also transferred over 140 Million Naira (nearly US\$ 340,000) to the bank accounts of some 4,000 refugee families in the first days of 2022. MBRGI's support will allow UNHCR to continue its cash support to Cameroonian refugees in the coming weeks.

Refugees in Akwa Ibom and Taraba receive money for the first time

Earlier in December 2021, UNHCR and Rhema Care distributed cash for food and rent to all Cameroonian refugees registered in Akwa Ibom State as of September 2021. It was the first cash support of its kind to refugees in this State. The assistance reached more than 1,400 refugees of some 800 families at a rate of Naira (NGN) 4,600 (about US\$ 11) per individual per month for three months and NGN 20,000 (nearly US\$ 50) for rent per family for six months for almost 180 vulnerable families.

The same amount of cash for food and rent also reached Cameroonian refugees in Taraba State for the first time. In Takum, Ussa, Kurumi, Bali and Sardauna Local Government Areas, over 3,000 refugees and nearly 800 vulnerable locals benefitted.

In addition, UNHCR helped some 10,000 women, men and children with ad-hoc cash assistance worth nearly 75 M Naira (some US\$ 180,000). Over 2,200 families with extremely vulnerable members such as elderly individuals or those with specific needs received the support through UNHCR's bank platform.

Tomatoes blossom in North-East Nigeria

UNHCR also supported refugee and IDP returnees in North-East Nigeria. In Banki and Bama, Borno State, where Nigerian refugees had returned from Cameroon in a government-led repatriation in April 2021, some 1,200 families received agricultural tools, inputs and training for peri-urban/homestead gardening in a UNHCR collaboration with FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. The refugee returnees and vulnerable IDP returnee families whose livelihoods and self-reliance were supported, now produce vegetables such as tomatoes and spinach and meet some of their basic food needs. Their food security and nutrition have improved thanks to a dignified source of income.

WHAT WE WANT WITH CASH

UNHCR's Strategy on cash-based interventions and economic inclusion is based on the conviction that harmonious relationships between refugees and Nigerians are possible if everybody's contribution to economic development is visible.

Therefore, the Agency launched its cash for food programme in Nigeria which injected over 150 million Naira (some 375,000 USD) into the local economy, boosting the development of markets and exchange of goods in refugee-hosting areas.

Now, UNHCR is gradually replacing the cash for food programme by multi-purpose cash grants for basic needs (with an equal amount as the national social safety net standards foresee for most vulnerable Nigerians).

This strategic transformation aims at laying the foundation for the self-reliance of refugee men and women

A WIDOW WITH A BUSINESS VISION

This money has restored hope and happiness to my family and we can smile again.

- 63-year old Saratu Adamu

The mother of four and her family lost everything when they fled their community in Adamawa State in North-East Nigeria when a non-State armed group struck in 2014. Two years later, her husband died, she could not afford food nor school fees. Their lifestyle was shattered, and they survived on begging until she benefited from UNHCR's cash grant and business training.

The IDP who now lives in Madali, Adamawa, invested the grant - 30,000 Naira (about US\$70) - in petty trade and sells groundnut oil. She now can afford sending her children to school.

Not all is rosy, however, in Saratu's life. She plans to have a shop, and needs more funds.



Saratu could not afford the school fees for her children. After starting her groundnut oil business, these IDPs can attend school and the future looks brighter for them. © UNHCR/Francis Garriba

Deep dive into potential for economic recovery

In Benue, Cross River and Taraba States, FAO and UNHCR jointly conducted a community-based assessment with the aim to better understand food insecurity, agricultural livelihoods and needs for cooking energy among Cameroonian refugees and host communities in eleven Local Government Areas in Benue, Cross River and Taraba states back in September 2021. The team of six conducted 147 key informant interviews and 36 focus group discussions with Cameroonian refugees, host communities, government officials and other stakeholders.

Rising food prices and other challenges in putting enough food on the table emerged as top concerns of this weeks-long research as communities still recover from the economic hit of Covid-19. The assessment also showed that rising costs of inputs for farming or livestock rearing hamper the ability of both, refugees and local communities, to earn enough. The majority of households continue to depend on the time-consuming endeavour of collecting firewood to prepare food which exposes especially women and children to gender-based violence. Refugees who want to earn their living in agriculture, face a particular hurdle: limited access to land; for many, the main source of income is engaging in daily wage labour.

The assessment, made possible thanks to support from the Directorate-General for the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), will guide FAO, UNHCR, partners and stakeholders throughout 2022 to better design projects that address food insecurity and other basic needs, support agricultural livelihoods for economic recovery and tackle energy needs with fuel-efficient stoves.

The majority of households continue to depend on the time-consuming endeavour of collecting firewood to prepare food which exposes especially women and children to gender-based violence.

Key figure

3.8 Million meals



Tens of thousands of Cameroonian refugees could put food on the table thanks to cash assistance made possible by donor MBRGI.

Contact Us

UNHCR in Nigeria

Roland Schönbauer

Senior External Relations Officer, Abuja

Email: schoenb@unhcr.org

www.unhcr.org/ng



Twitter | Instagram | Facebook