

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

January 2021

63,235 Cameroonian refugee men women and children are **registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States in Nigeria.

COVID-19 UNHCR helped prevent the spread of the virus by distributing **hand sanitizers for schools** and supporting the **rehabilitation of laboratories** for increased testing. **No refugee tested positive so far.**

Over **2,000 refugees** received Non-Food-Items such as blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, kitchen sets and jerry cans in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.



UNHCR launched a connectivity centre for refugees and local youth in Adagom, Ogoja, Cross River State. It aims to promote integration of refugees and hosts and to boost livelihood opportunities. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Operational Highlights

- In Cross River (CRS) and Benue States, the **rehabilitation of two GeneXpert laboratories** started with support from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. The facilities at St Monica Hospital in Adikpo and at the Tuberculosis and Leprosy Hospital Monaiya, Ogoja, once upgraded, will support **COVID-19 testing** serving both refugees and host community.
- On 21 January, UNHCR launched a **Connectivity Centre** offering information communication and technology (ICT) assets for refugees and host community members in Adagom community, CRS. The centre will promote integration among refugees and hosts, create job opportunities, provide ICT training and an **e-learning** platform.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR worked with **ten national and international partners** to systematically identify protection incidents, analyse the protection trend and refer cases to partners providing protection and multisectoral assistance, including **legal assistance**, advocacy, capacity-building, sensitization, **sexual and gender-based violence** related services and material assistance as appropriate.
- UNHCR is ensuring that refugees have access to territory amid the COVID-19 pandemic through regular border monitoring visits to assess the presence and needs of new arrivals, advocate for their protection and access to territory. In Benue and CRS, UNHCR and its partners undertook over 13 **border monitoring visits** to Immigration check points in border localities. No case of refoulement was reported.
- In BCT (Benue, Cross River, Taraba) States, over 19 **detention monitoring** visits were conducted to Police stations, Immigration Offices, Correctional Centres, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, to advocate against the arbitrary arrest and detention of refugees. No refugee was found in detention during the reporting period.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria **registered** 58 newly arrived refugees in Cross River and Benue States in January 2021 following WHO's COVID-19 prevention protocols.
- In Benue and CRS, over **1,000 identity cards** were renewed and re-issued to refugees. The ID card is key to freedom of movement and access to basic social services including health care and banking.
- **Immigration Service Officials at border areas were sensitized on refugees' rights**, recognition of fact sheets and freedom of movement during border monitoring visits in Benue and CRS. Refugees continue to report concerns of extortion, **restriction of movement** and non-recognition of fact sheets by Immigration Officials.
- Sensitization sessions on birth/death registration and **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** prevention/response reached over 800 refugees in BCT States.
- **Advocacy** visits were undertaken to the National Population Commission and National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Zonal office, Benue State, to strengthen collaboration and facilitate **birth and death registrations** for refugees and effective management of **child protection** related cases.
- 29 **GBV survivors** received multi-sectoral assistance, including medical, legal, material, and **psychosocial support**.
- Over 200 refugees including women, men, boys, girls, elderly and individuals with disability took part in the **prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)** risk assessment conducted through Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions in Benue and CRS. The assessment aimed

to improve Sexual Exploitation and Abuse prevention measures and reduction of SEA risks among refugees. 17 partner staff of Rhema Care was trained in SEA risk assessment in Ogoja, CRS.

- In CRS, 28 child protection cases were identified and managed through Best Interest Assessments. **Birth certificates** were issued to **14 refugee children** by the National Population Commission in Benue and CRS.

CHALLENGES

- Concerns are rising about **survival sex**, Gender Based Violence and child protection in the refugee settlements and host communities.
- Refugee women of reproductive age need dignity kits.
- There is a demand to expand the connectivity/ICT centre in Adagom.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- In Cross River State and Benue, the submersible pump systems in the refugee settlements (Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen) were serviced to ensure **continuous supply of potable water** in accordance with quality standards. Refugees also received material support to clean the surroundings including water collection points and latrines.
- Over **1,000 refugee families** in Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements, (CRS and Benue) received **water treatment tablets** (Aqua tabs) to support household water treatment and safe storage.
- UNHCR started distributing COVID-19 WASH preventive items (handwashing facilities, liquid soap, and **hand sanitizers**) to 79 primary and secondary **schools** for safe return to schools in BCT states.

CHALLENGES

- **Water supply remains inadequate** in the settlements. In Ikyogen, all three boreholes have failed. The yield remains insufficient and will merely meet about 20 percent of the water needs. The settlement currently depends on water treated from the Amire river, about 1.3 km away. Boreholes in Ukende and Adagom refugee settlements, CRS, are generally saline and unsuitable for household use. Efforts to provide shallow boreholes to supply fresh water continue in Ukende settlement, CRS.



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 lifesaving **medication to 14 primary health centers** in BCT States. **Over 5,000 refugees and host community** members including pregnant women, children less than 5 years and elderly individuals **received free health care services** at the supported facilities.
- The Nigerian Red Cross Society took over health projects for Cameroonian refugees in **Benue, Cross River and Taraba States** in January from the former UNHCR partner FHI 360.

CHALLENGES

- There is **no COVID-19 compliant ambulance for emergency evacuations** in Adikpo, Ogoja and Takum. The only available tricycle ambulance in Ikyogen, Benue, is not functional.

**EDUCATION:**

- UNHCR is supporting **schools to remain open** where health conditions permit and mitigates the risk of spread of COVID-19 through increased access to WASH, health services and information campaigns. Distribution of **COVID-19 prevention** items is ongoing in 79 primary and secondary schools to curb the spread of COVID-19 in BCT states.
- Enrolment of refugee students/pupils in primary and secondary schools continued with **over 2,000 refugee students enrolled** thus far in Benue and CRS, including registration for external examinations at various levels (Common Entrance and West African Examination Council Examinations). Meanwhile, sensitization on school resumption and enrollment reached at least 500 refugee families in Ikyogen Settlement.

**SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS**

- UNHCR and its partner, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) continue to provide settlement coordination and Management to four refugee settlements (Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen), CRS and Benue.
- Some **24 newly elected leaders** from 12 refugee communities were issued certificates of leadership by SEMA in Ikyogen settlement, Benue. The leaders were sensitized on integration with host community members.
- **Over 2,000 refugees** received **non-food items** including sleeping mats, blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, jerrycans and buckets in BCT states.
- A joint **shelter assessment** was conducted by UNHCR and its partners to identify vulnerable individuals in need of transitional shelters in Adagom 1& 3 settlements, Ogoja, CRS. A total of **120 households** including elderly people, individuals with disability, GBV survivors, large single headed families and chronically ill individuals were assessed to be in dire need of transitional shelters.

CHALLENGES

- Because of COVID-19, **prices of basic food commodities** in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly, on average **by 30%** on core food commodities, compared to early 2020. The cash assistance provided caters for 60% of minimum expenditure for the monthly food basket. **Food** remains one of the **critical needs** of refugees in settlements and host communities.

Working in partnership

In collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to Cameroonian refugees. The Agency holds regular coordination meetings in Ogoja, to foster collaboration with UN agencies and humanitarian actors. The following partners implement specific sector activities in the response to the Cameroon refugee situation: National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, 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 Nigeria Red Cross Society. Operational partners include the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNFPA, FAO and WHO.

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