

Ethiopia

September 2018

In the first half of 2018, **37,188** UNHCR continues to support refugees had been supported urban refugees in Addis Ababa with cash for the purchase of laundry soap and kitchen sets and **12,000** women for dignity kits through Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs) in Jijiga. **400** improved shelters were also constructed using cash.

UNHCR continues to support urban refugees in Addis Ababa with monthly cash assistance through a **multi-purpose cash grant (MPCG)**. Through its partner NRC, UNHCR also continues to provide cash assistance to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Shire.

The use of cash for core relief items will be expanded to camps in **Assosa** and **Shire** in the fourth quarter of 2018 and will continue in **Jijiga**. Cash will also be used to respond to refugees' cooking energy needs in **Assosa**.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Following feasibility studies conducted in Assosa, Jijiga, Shire, Afar and Addis Ababa, cash based interventions (CBIs) will be implemented in these locations in 2018. CBIs feasibility assessments will be conducted in Gambella and Dollo Ado/Melkedida together with ARRA.
- To date UNHCR has trained a total of 230 of its own staff and those of partners on key CBIs themes to familiarize them with the modalities of cash transfers across the country. Training sessions tailored to the needs of each of the Sub-Offices and for partners will continue in the fourth quarter of 2018.
- Key achievements of the cash based intervention so far in 2018 include:
 - i. 37,188 individuals in the three camps in Jijiga were supported with cash for the purchase of laundry soap and kitchen sets; 12,000 women were given cash for the purchase of dignity kits while 400 improved shelters were constructed in two camps (Aw-barre and Sheder) of Jijiga;
 - ii. UNHCR responded to the immediate needs of approximately 1,600 urban refugee households in Addis Ababa with monthly cash assistance through a multi-purpose cash grant;
 - iii. UNHCR supported 6,509 unaccompanied and separated children with cash assistance in Shire;
 - iv. The post distribution monitoring (PDM) for the Jijiga pilot was conducted;
 - v. Systems and structures were put in place to launch CBIs in Assosa, Shire and Afar in the fourth quarter of 2018, and,
 - vi. In line with the strong emphasis placed on building strong partnership and commitment to pursuing open and collaborative engagement on cash, a 2-day training was given for the concerned staff of Ethiopian government's Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) on CBIs and on ways ARRA could be involved in CBIs within the refugee context.
- Key lessons learned from the Jijiga pilot was that CBI works in responding to refugee needs. The majority of refugees prefer cash as a modality of receiving support as opposed to in-kind assistance. There was a good market response, no negative impact on the local economy, no reports of insecurity due to the CBIs and no disruption of household and community social dynamics. The vouchers also did not lead to entry of contra-bands into the market as only registered and licensed traders were contracted.
- The process of implementing vouchers as a CBIs modality is however resource intensive (time, money, personnel) both for UNHCR and the traders, hence it has been recommended to expand CBIs modalities to include a combination of cash transfers (physical cash distribution, mobile money) and vouchers (paper and e-vouchers) as appropriate in Shire, Afar, Assosa and Jijiga.

- In the context of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the benefits of using cash to respond to refugee needs are evident in Jijiga where there is reported improved interactions between the local communities and refugees. Due to improved purchasing power brought about by the CBIs, the demand for core relief items in the local markets has improved leading to a positive impact on the local economy.
- A CBIs learning event targeting UNHCR and partners will be held in the fourth quarter of 2018.
- UNHCR and ARRA continue the coordination of partners implementing CBIs in the refugee camps to ensure appropriate and efficient programming.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2017, UNHCR Ethiopia established a CBIs institutionalization strategic outline, which presents key milestones towards the implementation of CBIs programming based on UNHCR's Corporate Strategy and adjusted to the operational context. This outline is reviewed quarterly.



CHALLENGES

The main challenge identified in the implementation of CBIs within the refugee context of Ethiopia is the limited options available for delivery of cash to the refugees in the camps. This is currently restricted to physical cash distribution by partners and to using vouchers. Financial service providers do not have access into the camps as there is no regulation as yet that guides provision and access of financial services through banking institutions to refugees which include refugee bank accounts, mobile money and electronic vouchers. (restricted wallets using mobile money)

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