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Post-Distribution Monitoring Report of UNHCR's Winter Cash Assistance to Refugees in Egypt (2024-2025)

July 2025

Acknowledgements

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Sagaci Research is an Africa-focused analytics firm. We provide data and insights you can trust and fuel your growth in Africa. We provide brand trackers, online panels, retail audits and other consumer research and data across the African continent.

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Summary

Amid challenging economic conditions and the onset of winter, and between December 2024 and April 2025, UNHCR provided once-off Winter cash assistance to 80,437 vulnerable refugee and asylum seeker households from all nationalities, The assistance aimed to support beneficiaries during the winter season and help them cover their basic needs during these months (e.g., winter clothes/ shoes, blankets, heaters, sources of energy, in addition to other basic needs such as food, rent, etc.).

To understand the impact of winter cash assistance and beneficiaries' view on cash collection process, UNHCR conducted this post distribution monitoring (PDM) survey through a third party, Sagaci Research. Data collection for this survey was conducted between 27th of May to 15th of June 2025 where telephone interviews were conducted with a representative sample of Winter cash recipients who successfully received the assistance between December 2024- April 2025. The significantly high amount of cash for this type of assistance, and its once-off nature may reduce the respondents' recall bias that might be caused by the time elapsed between the time of receiving cash and the timing of data collection for this survey.

The sample size was 439 beneficiaries as calculated using a 95 per cent confidence level and a confidence interval of 5, with an additional 15 per cent added to account for non-response and errors. A total of 399 beneficiaries assistance were successfully reached and interviewed about their use of cash, impact of cash assistance and potential non-compliance issues they faced during the process of cash collection.

Key Findings

- Just over two-thirds of respondents (69 per cent) could meet at least half of their basic needs, while seven per cent could meet all or most of their priority needs.
- Almost all respondents (99 per cent) reported that winter cash assistance improved their living conditions and reduced stress.
- Cash assistance was mainly spent on **food** (74 per cent), **clothes/shoes** (67 per cent), **blankets** (54 per cent), rent (29 per cent), and **healthcare-related** costs (17 per cent). All respondents (100 per cent) said the assistance helped them afford essentials they previously could not, especially food (72 per cent), winter preparations (56 per cent), and rent (25 per cent).
- Most respondents (96 per cent) found needed items in markets, with 95 per cent satisfied with quality. However, 80 per cent reported rising prices, especially for food (76 per cent), clothes/shoes (43 per cent), and blankets (25 per cent).
- The majority of the respondents (95 per cent) resorted to negative coping strategies due to limited resources, including cutting basic household expenses in order to provide food (89 per cent), missing rent or debt payments (23 per cent), and withdrawing children from school (16 per cent).
- The majority of respondents (86 per cent) were **very satisfied/satisfied with the cash distribution process**. Also, most beneficiaries (94 per cent) **did not need any help** to withdraw and spend the cash.
- Most respondents (97 per cent) felt physically safe during receiving, keeping and spending cash assistance. Also, almost all of them (99 per cent) did not face technical issues or other problems during receiving, keeping or spending the cash.
- Most respondents (91 per cent) felt well-informed about the cash assistance and 89 per cent identified at least one feedback channel, mainly the UNHCR InfoLine (57 per cent).
- A significant majority of respondents (89 per cent) could identify at least one local channel for lodging cash related complaints or feedback. UNHCR InfoLine emerged as the most recognized complaints channel as cited by 57 per cent of respondents.
- An overwhelming majority (98 per cent) preferred cash as a modality for assistance, while two per cent preferred in-kind support.
- Key suggestions included increasing cash amounts (41 per cent), improving access to other aid (33 per cent), and expanding coverage (11 per cent). Additionally, 15 per cent highlighted a need for return assistance, with 76 per cent of them preferring cash for return and 28 per cent requesting faster file closure procedures.

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List of Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Population
CBI	Cash-Based Interventions
CFM	Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms
EGP	Egyptian Pound
EPO	Egypt Post Office
FSP	Financial Service Provider
MPCA	MultiPurpose Cash Assistance
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
SMS	Short Message Service
WFP	World Food Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar

Introduction

As of May 2025, Egypt has become home to 981,735 registered refugees and asylum seekers, representing 393,152 households. Among those, 90 per cent are Sudanese, two per cent are Syrian, and the remaining eight per cent primarily come from sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq, Yemen, and other countries. These refugees reside in urban areas alongside host communities, with significant concentrations in Greater Cairo (including Cairo, Giza, and Qalyubia), as well as Alexandria, Sharkia, and Damietta.

Amid challenging economic conditions and the onset of winter, UNHCR provided one-time Winter cash assistance to (number) refugee households from all nationalities between December 2024 and April 2025 to meet essential needs such as electricity, clothing, blankets, heaters, and other essential needs during the winter months. The cash assistance was provided to highly vulnerable families, including those receiving regular multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) and those on the waiting list for MPCA. The amount of cash ranged from 2,210 EGP (43.5 USD) to 35,165 (693 USD)[1] depending on many factors such as family size, level of vulnerability, whether the family was receiving regular MPCA or on the waiting list, and whether the family had newly arrived from Sudan after conflict eruption in April 2023 or belonged to the protracted refugee caseload. Some beneficiaries received their assistance in two installments. Beneficiaries received their entitlement through Egypt Post Office (EPO) and its 4,000 branches across Egypt, and those residing near any of the 48 iris-enabled post offices received their cash assistance through iris biometric authentication, while those not residing near any of the iris-enabled post offices were assigned to receive their cash assistance using UNHCR cards from any post office.

As part of its commitment to the Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP) and to inform and improve its programs, UNHCR conducted, through Sagaci Research, a Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey for the Winter cash assistance. The PDM survey aimed to monitor the compliance to cash distribution processes and to assess the impact and effectiveness of the winter cash assistance on its recipients. The survey was conducted through telephone interviews between May 17th, 2025 – June 15th, 2025, on beneficiaries receiving the assistance between December 2024 and April 2025 and this report outlines the findings of the PDM survey.

[1] *UN exchange rate as of 1st May 2025: https://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.php*

Methodology

This PDM survey for winter cash assistance was conducted by Sagaci Research using the latest "CBI PDM Household Survey HQ Questionnaire" that was developed and shared by UNHCR HQ in May 2025, and which was then adapted to Egypt's context and to the operation's information needs while retaining the PDM core indicators for regional and global comparison.

Some of the beneficiaries also received another top up Winterization assistance. Because of this significantly high cash amount, and the nature of the assistance as once-off, we believe the recall of respondents will not be much affected by the relatively longer time between receiving the cash and the timing of PDM data collection.

Research Objectives

The research objective of this PDM survey was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the winter cash assistance distributed by UNHCR to eligible beneficiaries. To achieve this, the PDM survey aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the winter cash help the beneficiaries in covering up their winter needs.

2. To what extent were beneficiaries satisfied with the cash-out process and with the information they received on the winter cash assistance?

3. What were the difficulties and process-related issues that beneficiaries encountered during the cash-out cycle?

4. How did beneficiaries use the winter cash assistance they received?

5. Which negative coping strategies were adopted by beneficiaries to meet their most priority needs when resources were insufficient?

6. Were beneficiaries aware of the local channels for submitting complaints and feedback related to UNHCR Winter cash assistance?

Sampling

A representative random sample of 439 beneficiaries from all nationalities who successfully collected the winter cash assistance between December 2024 and April 2025 were contacted to participate in the PDM survey. The sample size was calculated with a 95 per cent confidence level and a 5 per cent margin of error. To account for potential non-responses and data collection errors, an additional 15 per cent was added to the calculated sample size.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted by Sagaci Research, where a team of 11 enumerators conducted phone-based interviews with the sampled households starting from the 27th of May 2025 and ending on the 15th of June 2025. The data collection was aided by four interpreters for non-Arabic speaking refugees. The "PDM Questionnaire" was uploaded on KoBo server after being modified according to Egypt's context and information and data were collected through smartphones and entered directly on the web-based KoBo form. On 22nd of May, prior to the start of data collection, UNHCR conducted an online training session for Sagaci enumerators on the revised questionnaire, during the session, all new questions and response options were thoroughly explained.

Interviews were conducted with the person registered by UNHCR to receive cash assistance. If the registered person was not available, the enumerator conducted the interview with any member of the household over the age of 18 who is able to give the necessary information. If neither the person registered to receive cash nor a household member above the age of 18 was available, the enumerator would end the interview. An informed consent was obtained from all participants before starting the interview, and after briefing the respondents on the survey and its voluntary nature and ensuring the confidentiality of participants' data.

Out of the provided sample of **439 beneficiaries**, successful interviews were conducted with **399 respondents,** resulting in a response rate of 91 per cent. The remaining 9 per cent of the sample (40 respondents) did not respond after three calling trials, separated by at least two hours. The reasons for non-response were turned off telephones (40 respondents).

The global CBI data analysis framework, which outlines the relevant indicators and the corresponding survey questions, as well as the methodology of core indicators calculation, was used after introducing some context-related modifications.

Data collected through the KoBo web-based form was uploaded to a UNHCR-owned KoBo server after initial review by the field supervisor. The collected raw data was shared by UNHCR on daily basis and the data quality checks were regularly applied both during and after data collection. The Sagaci Research data processing team then conducted statistical analysis on the cleaned dataset using relevant software such as Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Analysis followed any stated aggregation or disaggregation of findings and data, where applicable.

Findings are presented in charts, narrations and tables. Important to note that the summation of some percentages for single response questions could be slightly less or more than 100 per cent due to rounding off.

Challenges and limitations

- Respondents' recall bias might have influenced the responses to some questions. However, due to the once-off nature of this cash assistance, and as the cash amount was remarkably higher than the average amount of other types of cash assistance, the recall bias might not be high enough to significantly affect the results.
- Information gathered from the PDM survey is self-reported, and there might have been a response bias due to unfounded fear of exclusion from future cash assistance
- Some percentages may be slightly above or below 100 per cent due to rounding.

Results

Respondents Profile

A total of 399 winter cash assistance recipients were interviewed. The largest proportion of respondents were Sudanese (67 per cent), followed by Eritrean and South Sudanese (9 per cents each), Syrian (eight per cent), Ethiopian (five percent) then Somali (two per cent). Figure (1) shows respondents' nationalities in detail.

In terms of geographical distribution, most respondents resided in Greater Cairo (91 per cent), Alexandria (5 per cent) and the remaining (three per cent) resided in other governorates. Figure (2) shows the details. Regarding gender distribution, most of the respondents were females (73 per cent), while males constituted 27 per cent. In terms of age distribution those aged 18-35 years were 38 per cent and those aged 36-59 years were slightly above half of the respondents (55 per cent) while those aged 60 and above years were seven per cent. See figure (4).

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by nationality

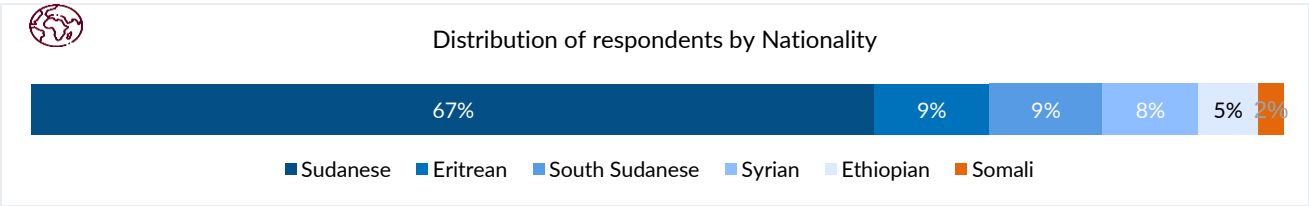


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by area of residence

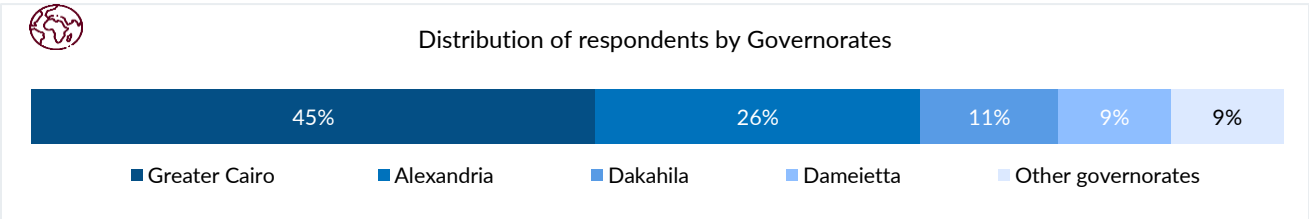
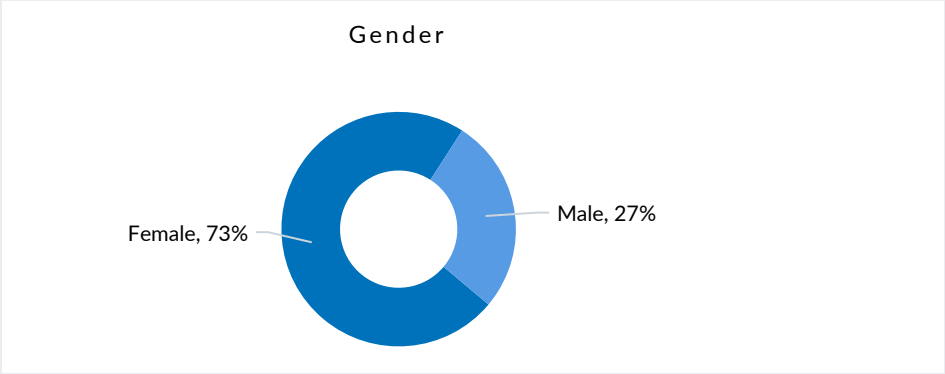


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by gender



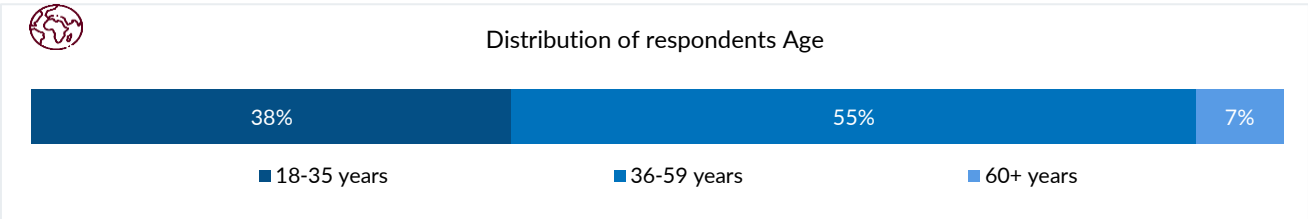


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by age

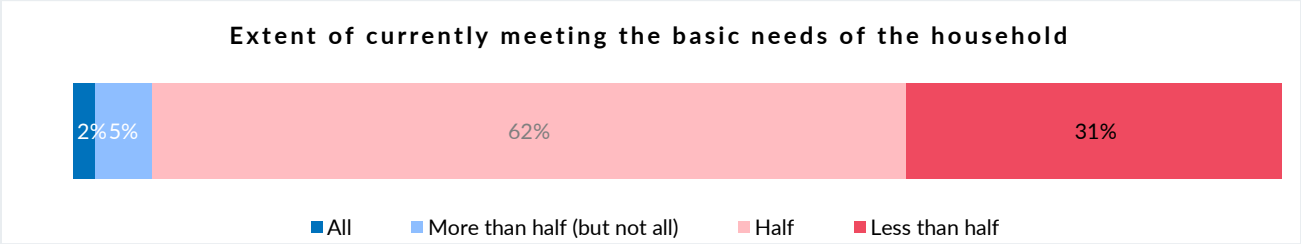
The average household size of interviewed beneficiaries was 4.1. When asked if they had a household member with a lot of difficulty with walking, seeing, hearing or remembering due to a health problem or disability, 31 per cent said yes while 69 per cent said no.

Impact of Winter Cash Assistance:

Perception about the usefulness of winter cash assistance and its impact on beneficiaries' well-being

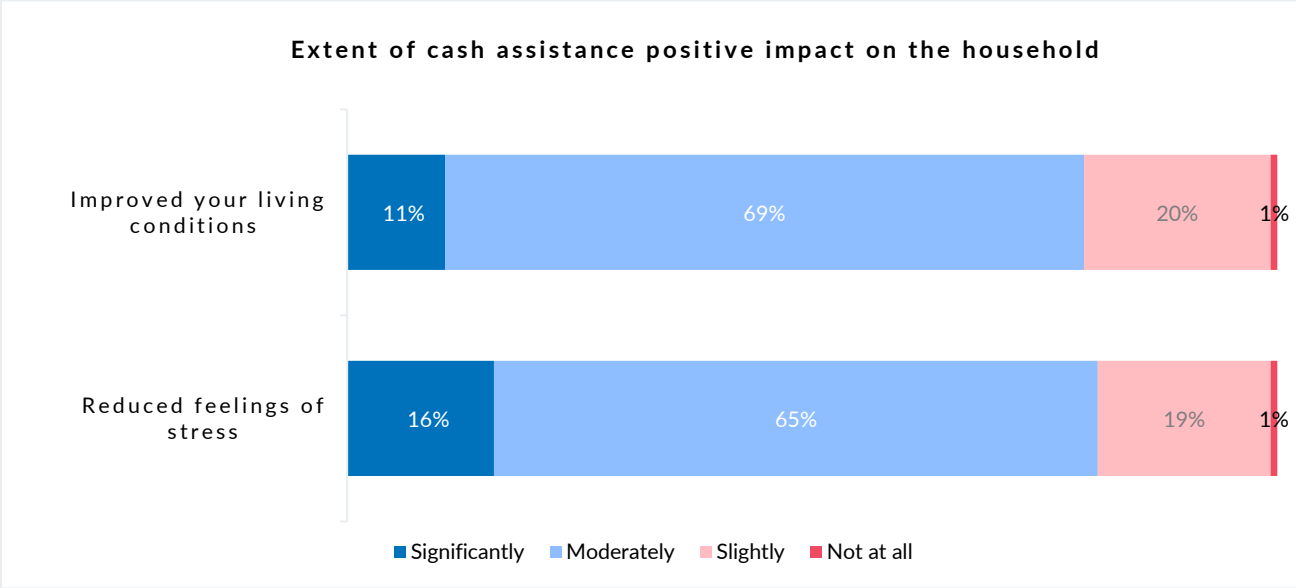
At the time the survey was carried out, more than half of the respondents (69 per cent) were able to cover half or more of their basic needs. Specifically, two per cent of beneficiaries were able to cover all their basic needs, five per cent were able to cover more than half of their needs, more than half (62 per cent) could cover half of their priority needs, while 31 per cent were able to cover less than half of their basic needs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Extent of currently meeting the basic needs of the household



When respondents were asked how winter cash assistance had impacted their lives, 99 percent stated that it had somewhat improved their living conditions, while 99 percent indicated it had alleviated their stress levels to an extent. The extent of the reported impact is shown in Figure (6).

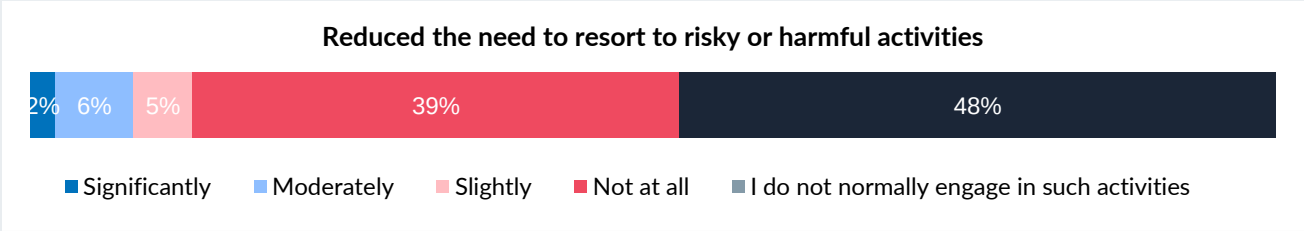
Figure 6: Extent of cash assistance positive impact on the household wellbeing and living conditions



> ***I am a single mother of two daughters, and I fled Sudan after the conflict. The Winter assistance was a ray of light in my life; it brought me great joy."***
>
> *Female survey respondent, Cairo*

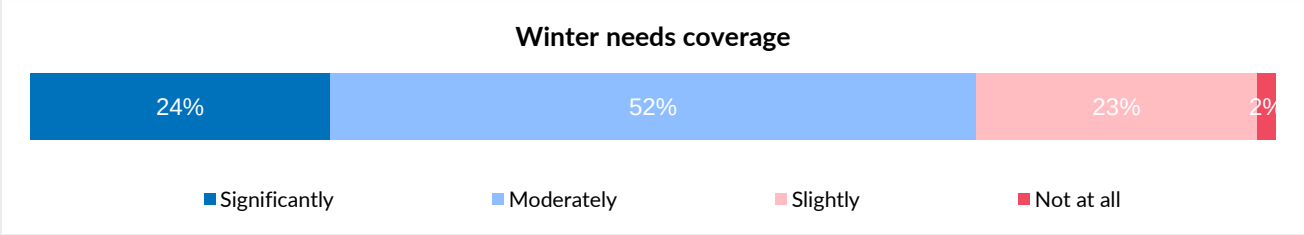
Concerning the impact of winter cash assistance on the need to resort to risky or harmful activities, 48 per cent of respondents stated that they do not normally engage in such activities, 13 per cent reported that the cash assistance at least slightly reduced their need to resort to these risky activities, 39 per cent of respondents stated that the cash assistance had not reduced their need to engage in these activities at all. The extent of impact on reducing risky or harmful activities is shown in figure (7).

Figure 7: Reduced the need to resort to risky or harmful activities



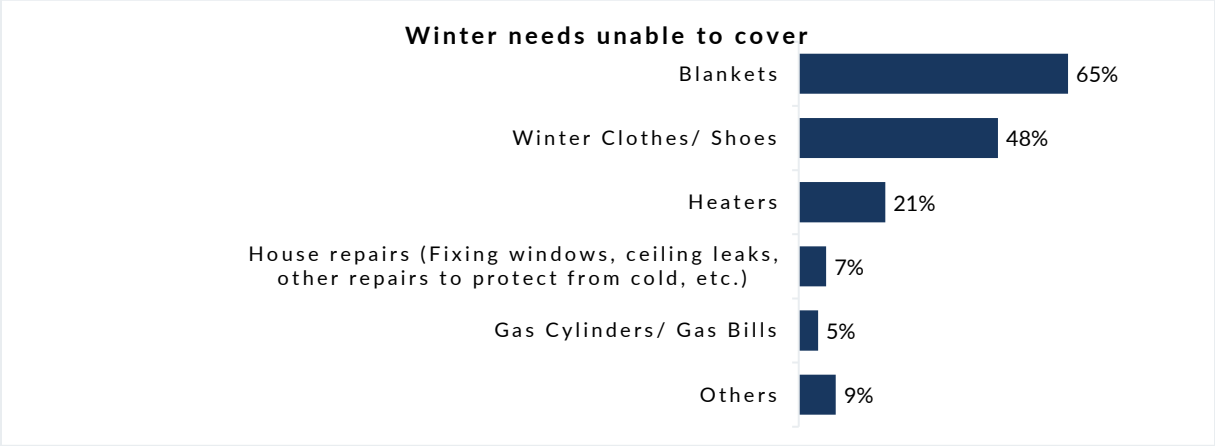
Regarding the impact of winter cash assistance on meeting winter needs such as clothes, blankets, heaters, etc., 98 per cent of respondent reported that the assistance had an impact on covering their winter needs. Detailed analysis shows that 24 per cent of respondents said the assistance helped significantly, 52 per cent said it helped moderately, 23 per cent said it helped slightly, and 2% said it did not help at all. Figure (8) shows the breakdown.

Figure 8: Winter Needs Coverage



Among those whose winter needs were not significantly covered, the main unmet winter needs were blankets (mentioned by 65 per cent), winter clothes/shoes (48 per cent), and heaters (21 per cent). These findings are detailed in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Winter needs unable to cover

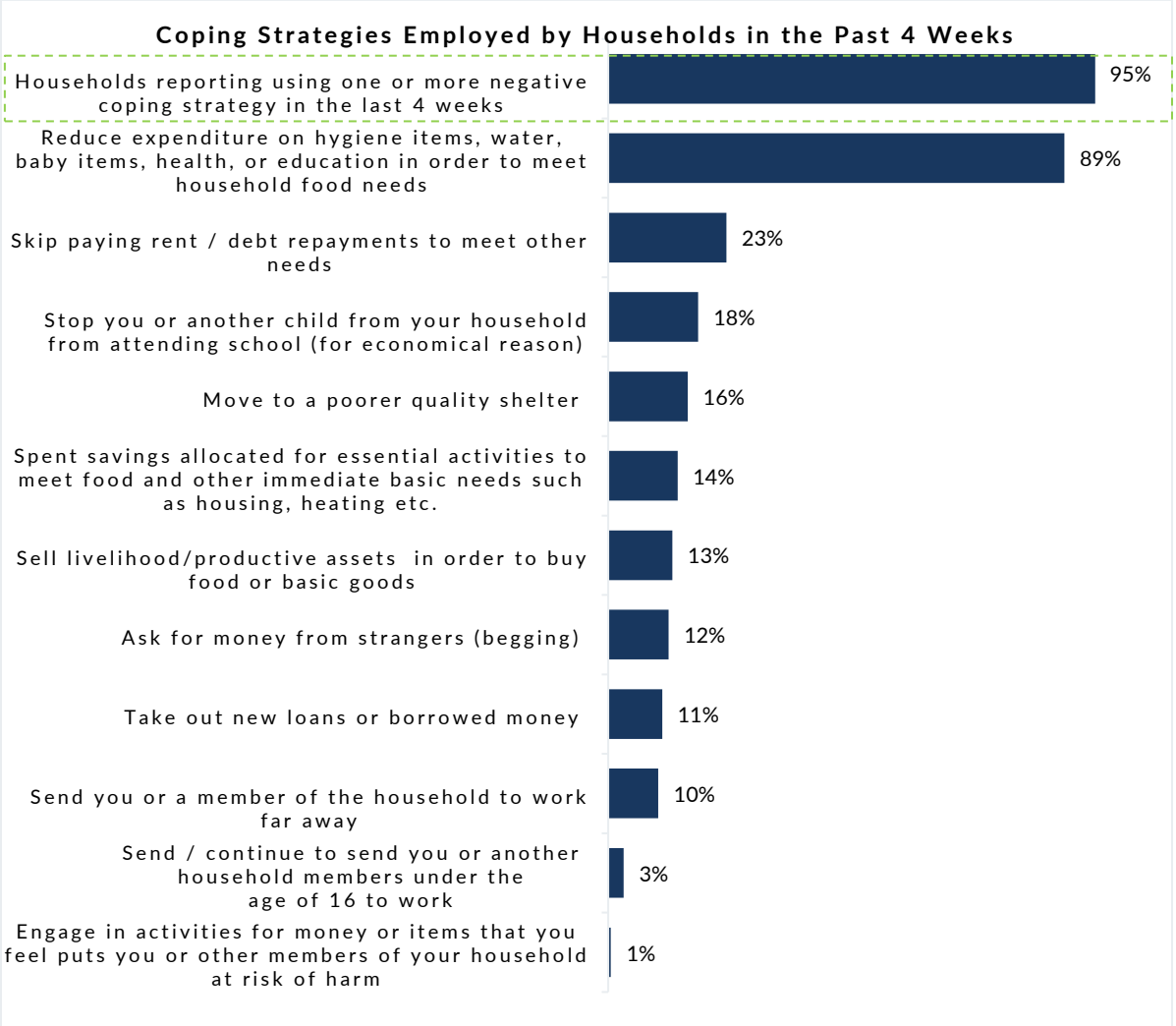


Use of Negative Coping Strategies

Coping mechanisms are behaviors adopted by households when resources are insufficient, revealing the trade-offs they are forced to make to meet their most pressing needs. Such strategies negatively impact both the livelihood and the dignity of the household's members.

The challenges faced by refugees in meeting their essential needs lead them to adopt a variety of negative coping strategies. On an aggregate level, **95 per cent of respondents reported resorting to one or more negative coping strategy** in the four weeks preceding the survey. The most common coping strategies were as follows: **(1) reducing expenditures on various basic household needs** (hygiene, health, baby items, etc.) to prioritize food needs, used by 89 per cent of respondents; **(2) skipping paying rent or debt**, used by 23 per cent; and (3)**, stopping a child form attending school**, used by 16 per cent of respondents. Figure (10) shows the detailed coping strategies adopted by beneficiaries.

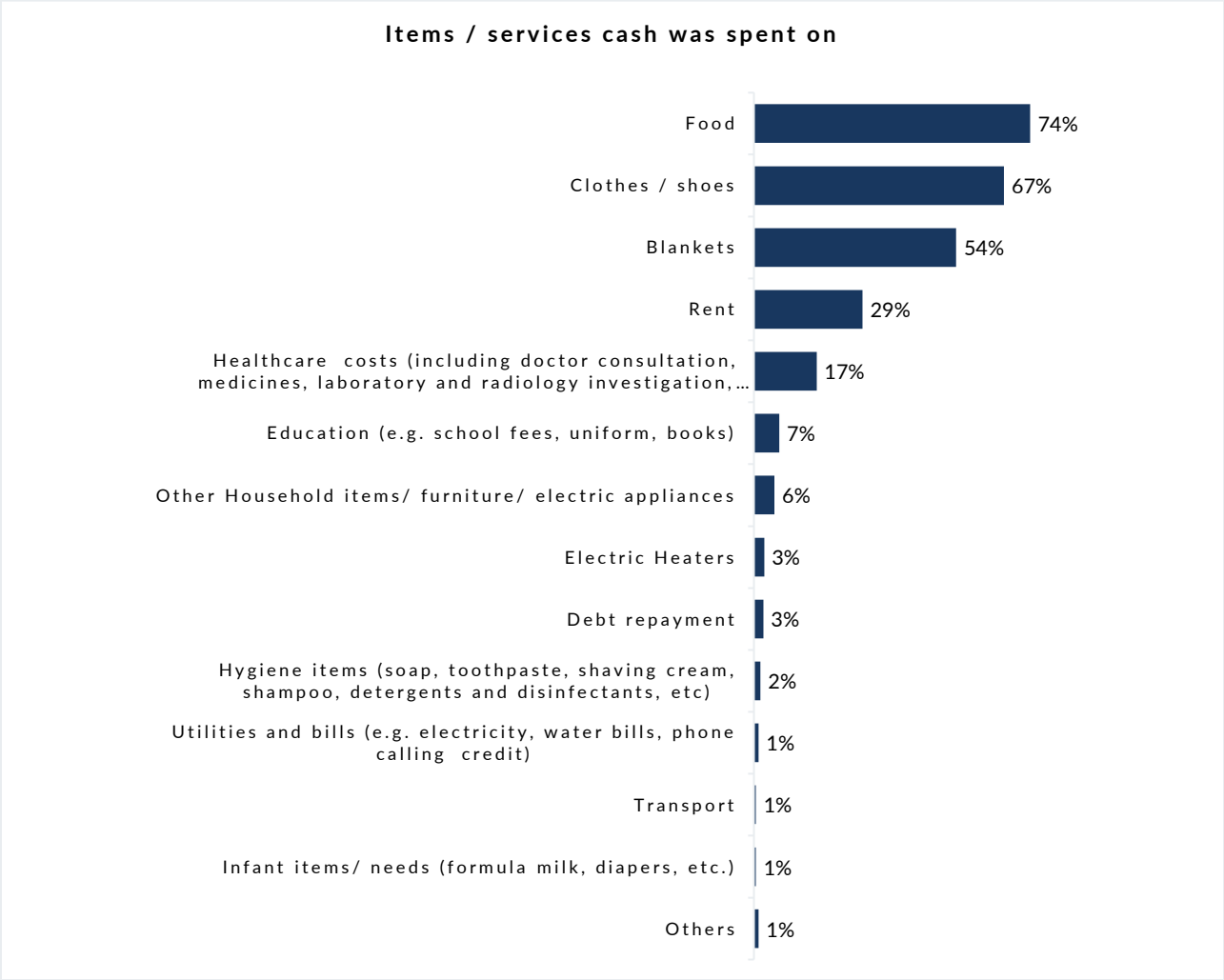
Figure 10: Prevalence of Negative coping strategies in the past four weeks



Use of Winter Cash Assistance:

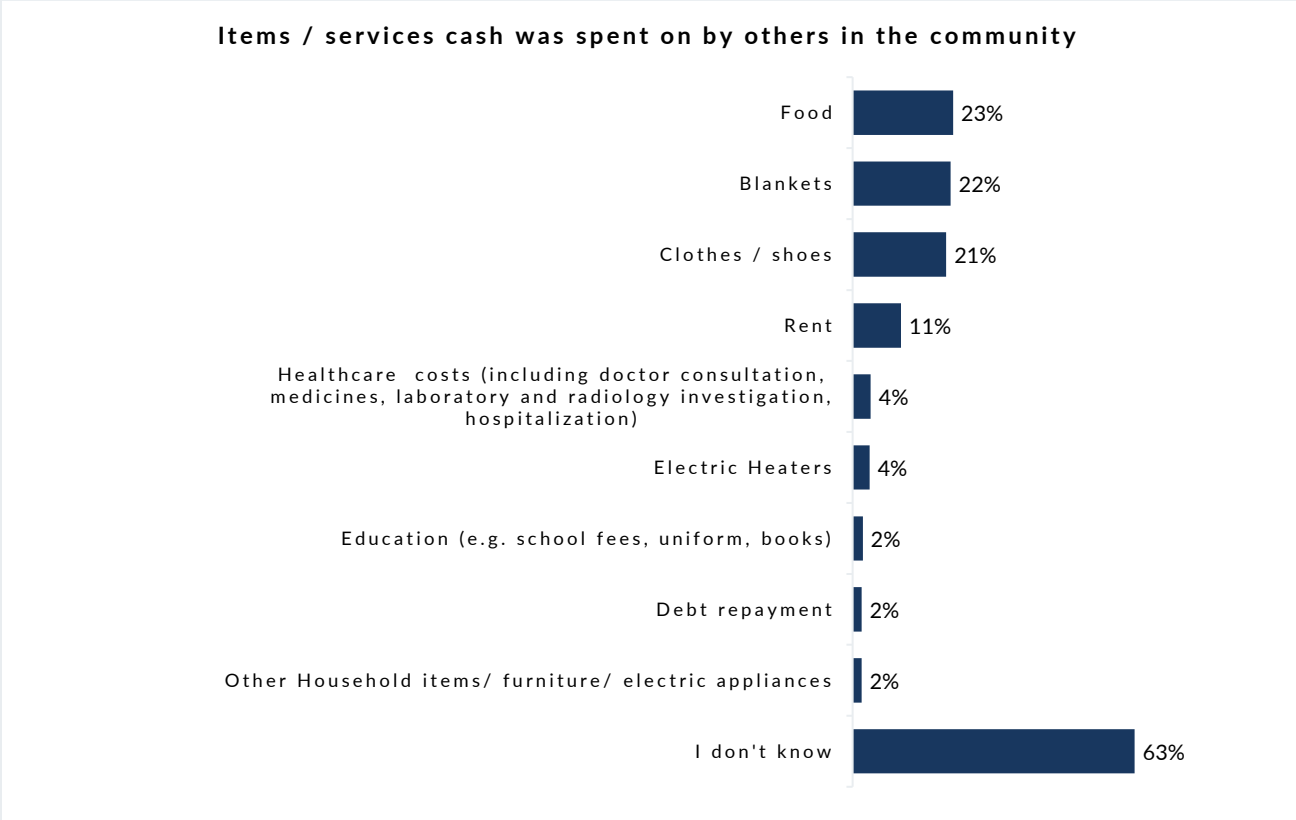
Regarding the items on which respondents spent the cash assistance, PDM results show that **74 per cent** of respondents used the cash to acquire **food,** making it the most common expenditure among respondents. This was followed by **67 per cent** who reported spending on **clothes/shoes**. **Acquiring blankets** was mentioned by 54 per cent of the respondents and **paying rent** was mentioned by 29 per cent. These findings are detailed in figure (11).

Figure 11: Spending categories of cash assistance



When asked if they knew what others in the community spent the assistance on, 63 per cent of respondents said they did not know, while 23 per cent mentioned food, 22 per cent mentioned blankets, and 21 per cent mentioned clothes/shoes. These findings are detailed in Figure 12.

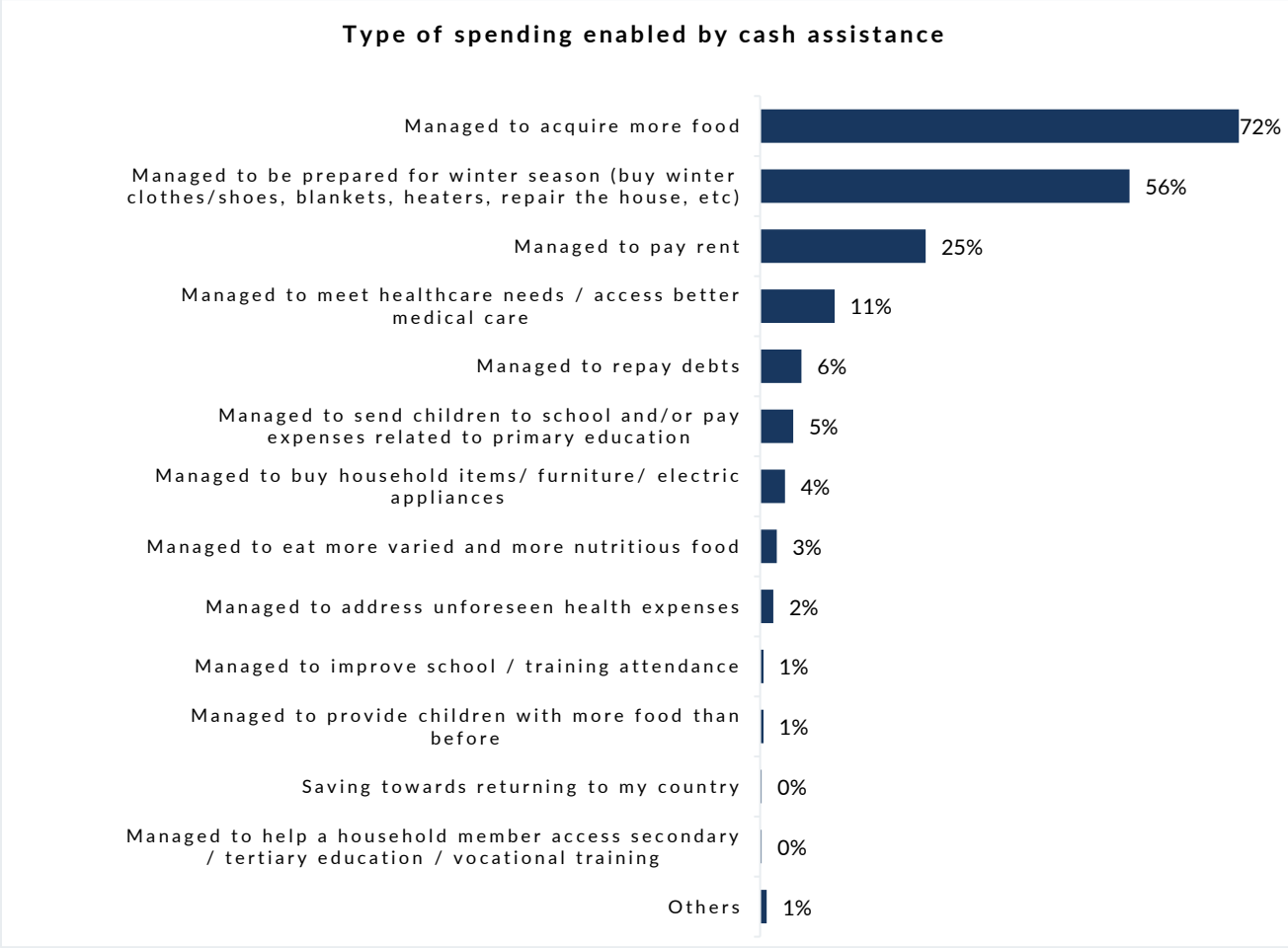
Figure 12: Spending categories of cash assistance by others in the community



Respondents were asked if they knew anyone who spent the money on returning to their country. The majority (60 per cent) said no, five per cent said yes, and 35 per cent said they did not know.

When asked about things they were able to do or afford after receiving the cash assistance, which they were not able to do before, all respondents (100 per cent) stated that the cash assistance enabled them to afford things they previously could not. The main items/ services they could afford after receiving the assistance was the **ability to acquire more food**, reported by 72 per cent of respondents. This was followed by the **ability to prepare for winter season** mentioned by 56 percent, **ability to pay rent** was mentioned by 25 per cent of respondents. The cash assistance also enabled 11 per cent of beneficiaries to **meet healthcare needs**, which they could not do before receiving the cash. Six per cent of the respondents reported having managed to **repay debts.** This is detailed in figure (13).

Figure 13: Type of spending enabled by the cash assistance



We are a family of seven. Without the assistance we wouldn't have been able to pay the rent or buy food. However, the winter in Egypt is cold and lasts for long. We need the amount of assistance to be increased and provided monthly instead of just once.

Sudanese Female survey respondent, Giza

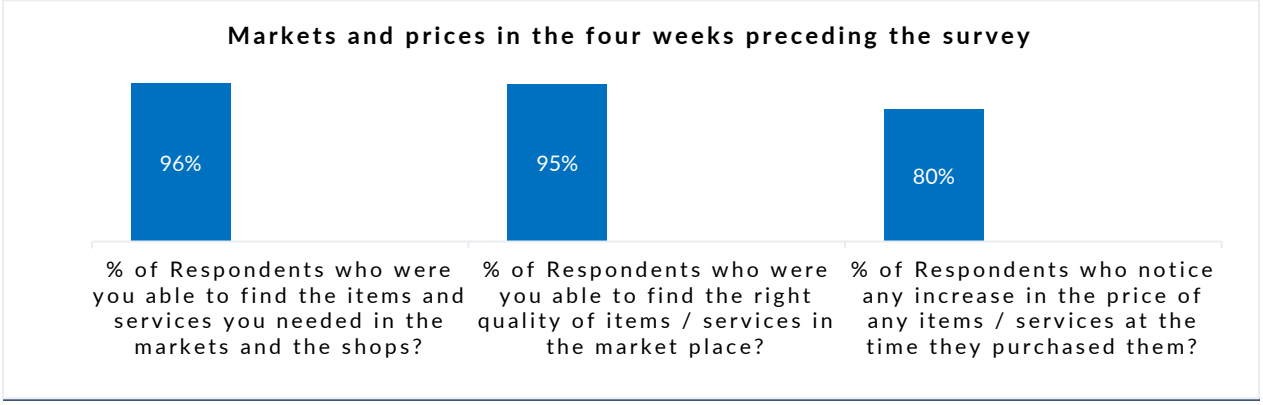
Availability of items in the nearby markets

The PDM survey results show that **96 percent** of respondents were able to find the items or services they needed in the market, indicating that markets in Egypt are accessible, viable and functioning effectively**.** Two per cent (comprising eight respondents) reported difficulties in finding some items such as healthcare related items (three respondents), blankets (three respondents), food items, clothes/shoes, electric heater and other (were mentioned by one respondent each). The remaining two per cent (comprising eight respondents) indicated that this question was not applicable to them.

In terms of quality**, 95 per cent of respondents were able to find the items they needed with acceptable quality,** again indicating effectively functioning markets. Among the three per cent reporting issues with quality (10 respondents), the concern was related to clothes/ shoes (five respondents), blankets (three respondents), food items (two respondents) and transportation (one respondent). The remaining two per cent (comprising eight respondents) indicated that this question was not applicable to them.

Despite the availability and quality of items**, 80 per cent of respondents noticed an increase in the prices of services /items at the time they purchased them**. The largest reported price increases were for food items (76 per cent of survey respondents), clothes/shoes (43 per cent), and blankets (25 per cent each). Price increases were also reported for healthcare related items (five per cent), transportation (four per cent), household items and household appliances, education related services /items, hygiene items, electric heaters (two per cent each), utilities and bills and fuel for cooking or heating (one percent each)

Figure 14: Ability of beneficiaries to find key items/services with acceptable quality and at stable prices



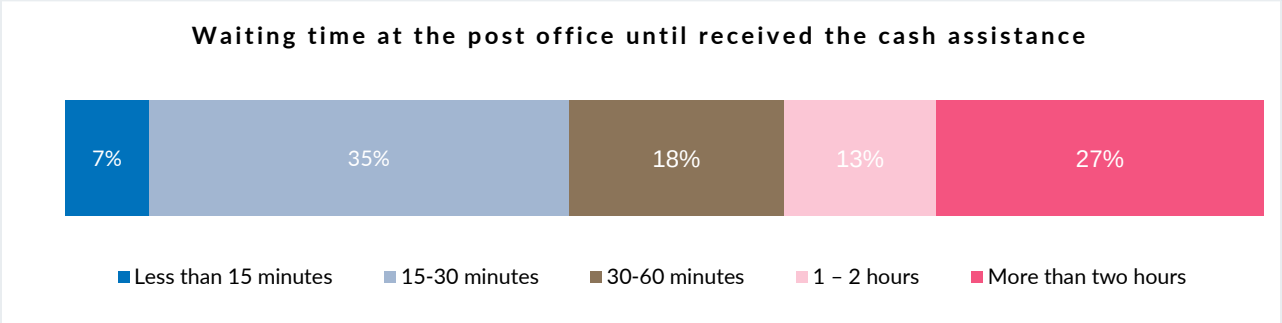
Cash Distribution Process-Related Issues

Receiving cash and waiting time at financial service provider.

When respondents were asked if they received Winterization cash assistance from UNHCR, through Egypt Post Office. All respondents said yes.

When beneficiaries were asked about the waiting time at the post office, 42 per cent mentioned that they had to wait 30 minutes or less from the time of their arrival to the post office until they received the money, 18 per cent had to wait between 30- 60 minutes, while 40 per cent waited an hour or more before they could receive their assistance. The disaggregation of the waiting time is shown in figure (15).

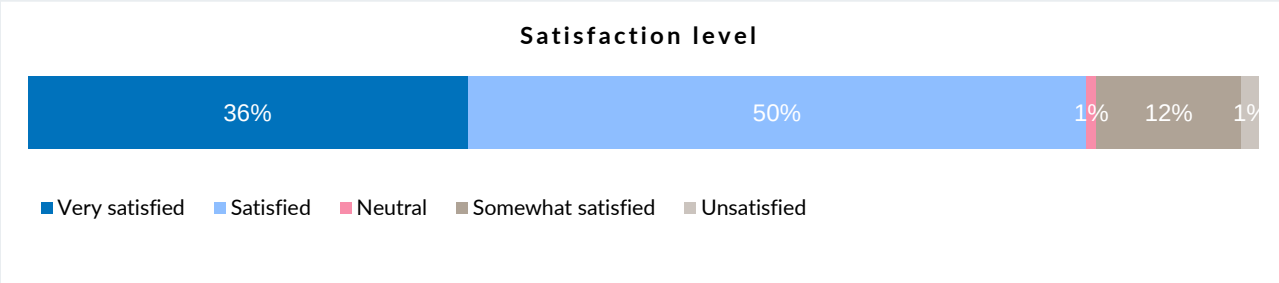
Figure 15: Waiting time at the post office to withdraw your cash assistance until the cash was received



General satisfaction with the cash collection process

Based on the collected data, 86 per cent of respondents reported being either **very satisfied** or **satisfied** with the cash distribution process. However, one per cent were **neutra**l and 13 per cent of were **somewhat satisfied** or **unsatisfied** and felt there was room for improvement. Figure (16) shows the breakdown.

Figure 16: Satisfaction with cash distribution process



Among the respondents who were somewhat satisfied and not satisfied (14 per cent of survey respondents), the reasons for dissatisfaction cited included over-crowdedness/ long waiting time (78 per cent), Iris scan issues (35 per cent), needing to visit multiple post offices until they were able to collect cash (13 per cent), mistreatment/ discrimination by the post office staff (six per cent). Cash shortage at the post office, delay in the timing of cash disbursement by UNHCR and long distance between their homes and the post office branch (mentioned by two per cent each). Other miscellaneous issues were mentioned by four per cent of the somewhat satisfied/ dissatisfied respondents.

Difficulties in collecting cash assistances:

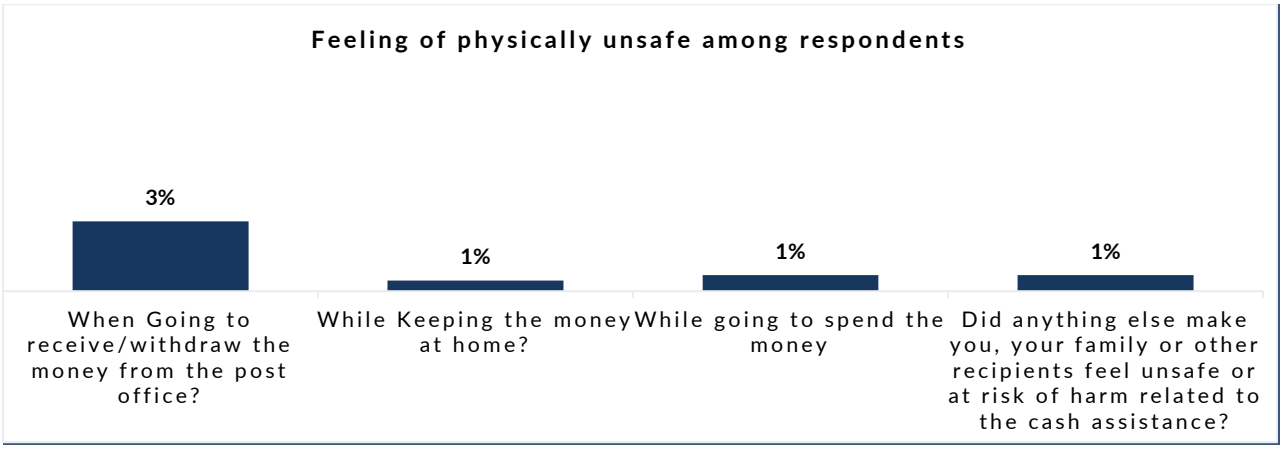
Almost all respondents (94 per cent) did not need any help while they withdrew their cash indicating relative ease and smoothness of the distribution processes. The main reasons for needing help among the remaining six per cent (comprising 16 respondents) were limited mobility due to medical conditions, disability, etc. (11 respondents), unsafe roads to the post office and other reasons (mentioned by two respondents each). The post office was difficult to reach/ very far away / I did not know how to reach the post office was mentioned by one respondent. Most respondents who needed help received it from family member (13 respondents) and Acquaintance (friend, neighbour etc.) (three respondents). Only one respondent paid money for this help.

Most respondents (97 per cent) reported feeling physically safe receiving, keeping or spending the Winter cash assistance.

Further analysis of responses indicates that 97 per cent of respondents felt physically safe while going to withdraw the money. Those who felt unsafe (13 respondents) were asked when they felt unsafe, seven respondents mentioned when going to the post office, four respondents mentioned when returning from the post office and three respondents mentioned at the post office. Assault or robbery was the main reason mentioned (11 respondents), physical violence, harassment, or threats, sexual violence and fear of detention were mentioned by one respondent each. Other reasons were mentioned by two respondents.

Furthermore, the majority felt physically safe while keeping the money at home and while spending the cash assistance (99 per cent each). The reason for feeling unsafe while keeping the money at home is assault or robbery (mentioned by two respondents), while the reasons for feeling unsafe when spending the money are assault or robbery (three respondents) and verbal harassment/ inappropriate treatment (one respondent).

Figure 17: Percentage of respondents reporting feeling physically unsafe while withdrawing, keeping or spending their cash assistance



Results of the survey also show that approximately 99 per cent of respondents did not face any technical (or other) problems while withdrawing, keeping, or spending the cash they received from UNHCR.

Among the one per cent who reported facing problems (two respondents) they cited issues with biometric authentication.

In general, none of the survey respondents had to share the amount of cash assistance with any person outside their households.

No respondent was asked do or give anything they did not want to (other than money), in order to receive, withdraw or spend cash and also no respondent experienced any other problems receiving, withdrawing or spending the cash from UNHCR.

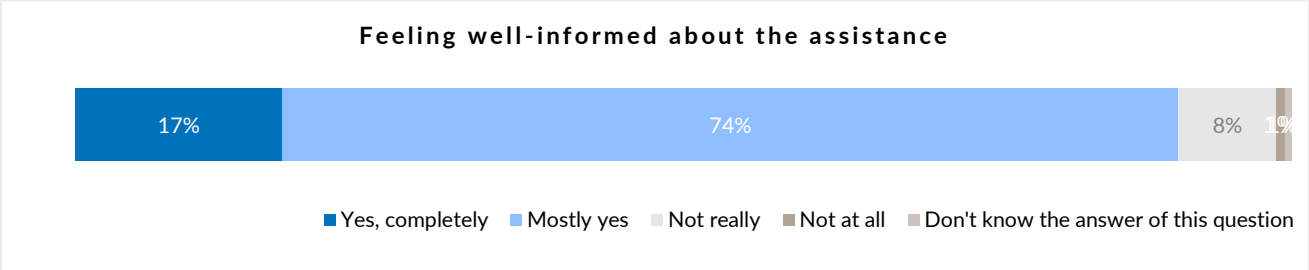
Accountability to Affected People

Information about Winter cash assistance, complaints, and feedback channels

As part of its protection mandate and commitment to accountability to affected People, UNHCR ensures that timely information on cash assistance is available to refugees through various channels, including SMS, the UNHCR Infoline, UNHCR Livelihood partners, reception desks, and other platforms such as the UNHCR help website, social media, and community meetings. UNHCR Livelihood partners also conduct counseling calls to recipients of cash assistance to provide essential details about collection and problem-solving.

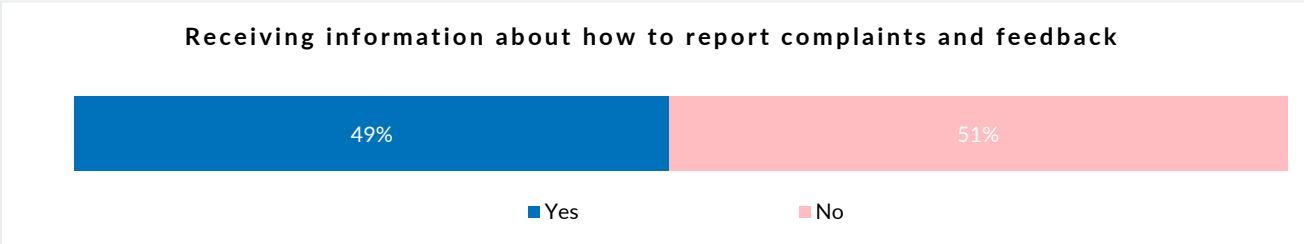
When respondents were asked whether they felt they received adequate information about the cash assistance, **91 per cent reported feeling well-informed** while nine per cent did not feel so as shown in figure (18). For those who did not feel well-informed, suggestion for improvement included providing more information about the timing of assistance distribution (five per cent of all respondents), clearer notification SMS (three per cent of all respondents), more information on eligibility criteria for winter cash assistance (one per cent of all respondents), giving more information on the documents required for registration to the assistance, more information on the duration of the assistance, clearer instructions on how to collect the cash assistance and other suggestions (0.2 per cent of all respondents each).

Figure 18: Respondents feeling well-informed about winter cash assistance



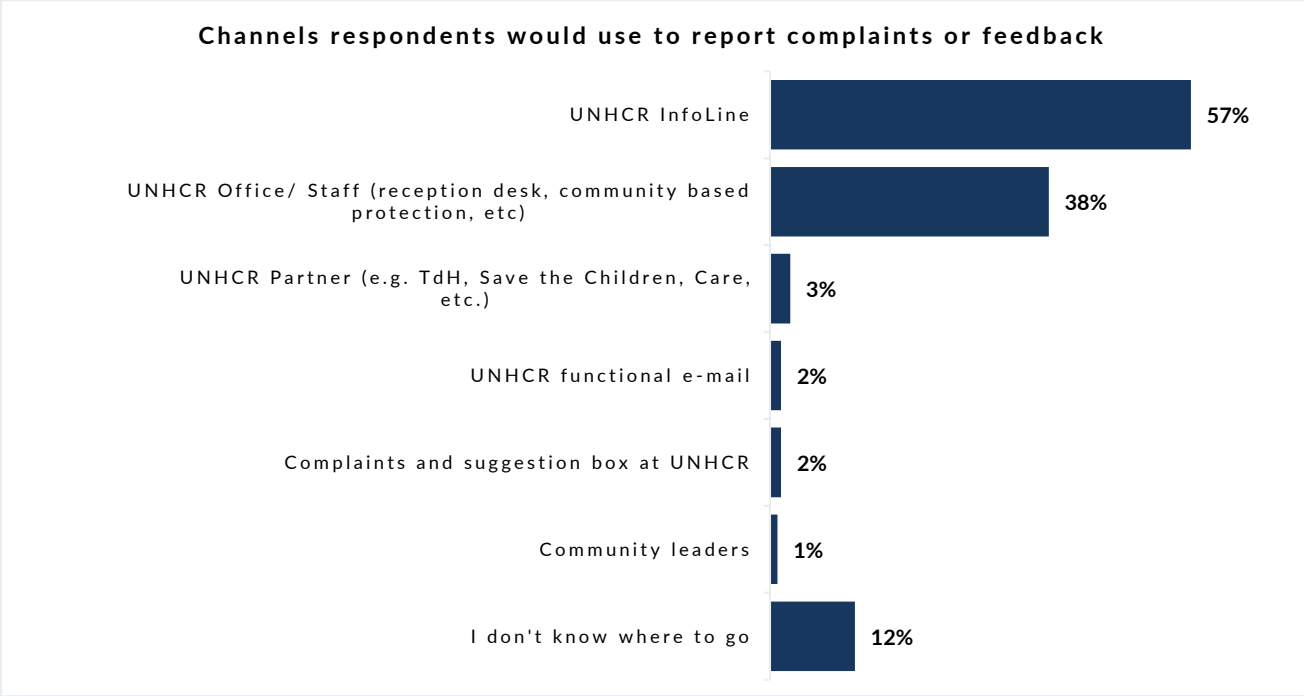
When respondents were asked if they received information about how to report complaints and feedback on the on the Winter cash assistance received, almost half of respondents (49 per cent) reported receiving such information. See figure (19) for details.

Figure 19: Receiving information about how to report cash-related complaints and feedback mechanism



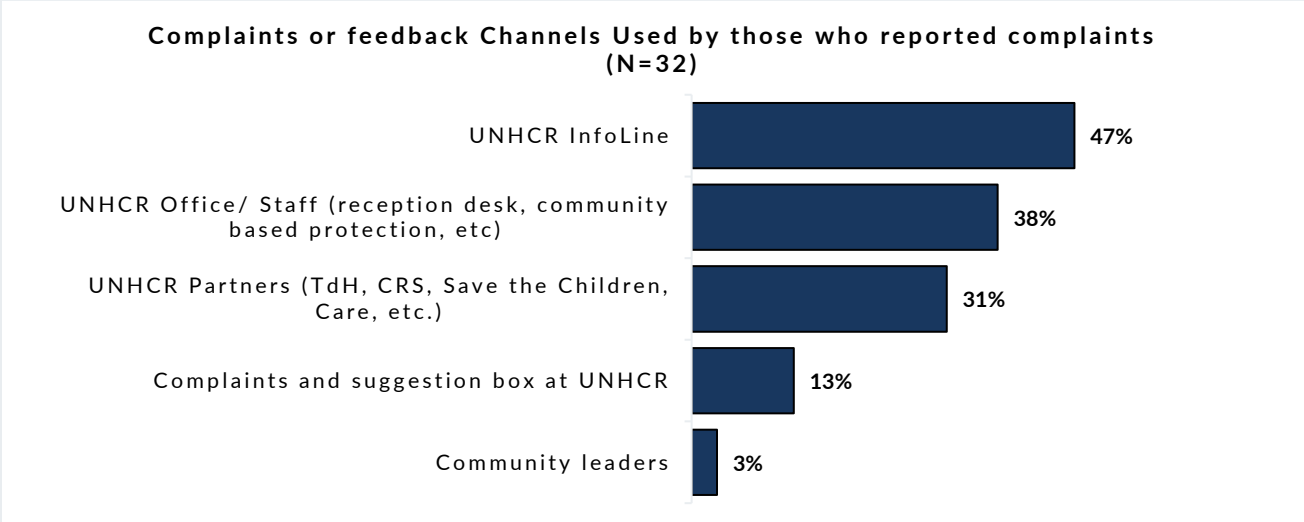
When probed further about their knowledge of complaint and feedback channels, 89 per cent of respondents could identify at least one local channel for lodging cash related complaints or feedback. Figure (21) shows that UNHCR InfoLine was the most recognized complaints and feedback channel and was mentioned by 57 per cent of respondents. This was followed by UNHCR office/Staff which was mentioned by 38 per cent of respondents. UNHCR partner was mentioned by three per cent of the respondents and UNHCR functional e-mail and complaints and suggestions box at UNHCR were mentioned by two per cent of the respondents each. Other channel recognized by respondents was community leaders (mentioned by one percent of the respondents). For further details, see figure (20).

Figure 20: Complaints and Feedback Channels Identified by Respondents



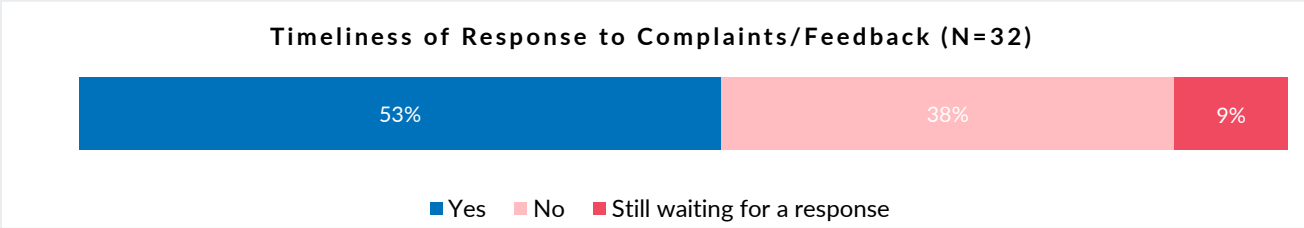
Survey results showed that eight per cent of respondents (33 respondents) had complaints or feedback concerning UNHCR Winter cash assistance at some point. Of those, 97 per cent (32 respondents) reported their complaints. Among those who reported complaints, 47 per cent reported them through UNHCR InfoLine, 38 per cent reported them to UNHCR Office/ Staff, 31 per cent reported to UNHCR Partners, 13 percent reported to complaints and suggestion box at UNHCR and three per cent through community leaders. Figure (21) shows the complaint channels utilized by respondents who had complaints or feedback.

Figure 21: Channels used to report complaints or feedback



When asked about the timeliness of receiving response to their complaints, 53 per cent of those who reported complaints or feedback felt they received a timely response, 38 per cent did not feel the response to be timely, while eight per cent were still waiting for response. See figure (22) below shows the break down.

Figure 22: Timeliness of Response to Complaints/Feedback Submitted to UNHCR

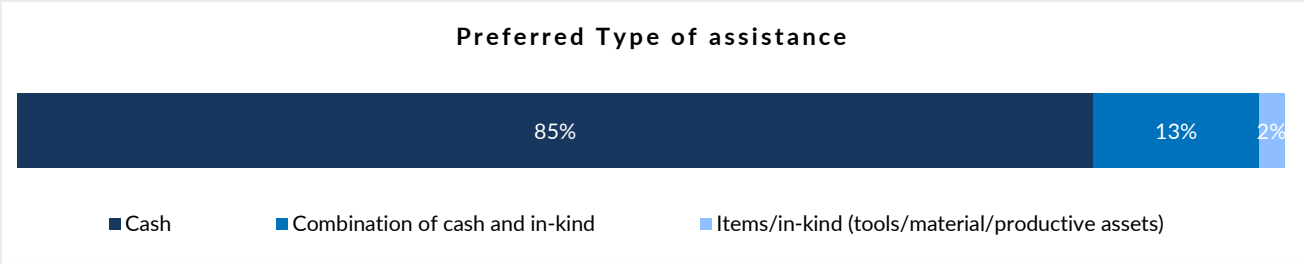


For the remaining one respondent who had complaints but did not report on them he/she did not mention the reason for not reporting.

Preferred type of assistance

Same as in previous PDMs, and consistent with global results, most respondents (98 per cent) mentioned cash as a preferred kind of assistance, where 85 per cent preferred to receive the assistance as cash only and 13 per cent preferred a combination of both cash and in-kind assistance. Only two per cent preferred to receive the winter cash assistance as Items/in-kind (tools/material/productive assets). Figure (24) shows the breakdown.

Figure 23: Preferred type of assistance

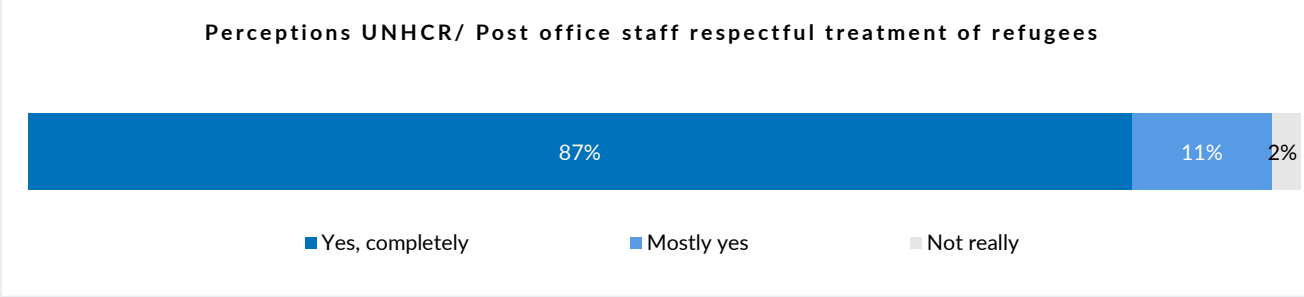


Those who preferred in-kind or a combination of both cash and in-kind (15 per cent of survey respondents, corresponding to 60 respondents) did so mostly because the assistance amount is not enough to buy the needed items (92 per cent of those respondents comprising 55 respondents), accessing the cash is difficult and shopkeepers will increase the price of items if cash is provided (five per cent of those respondents comprising 3 respondents each). Cash feels as a risk for safety was mentioned by three per cent (comprising 2 respondents).

Other general views on cash assistance

When asked about their treatment by **UNHCR/ Post Office** throughout the process of receiving cash assistance, about **98 per cent of respondents felt they were absolutely or mostly treated with respect.** A small minority of two per cent (nine respondents) reported negative experiences, where they did not feel they were treated with respect. For further details, see figure (24).

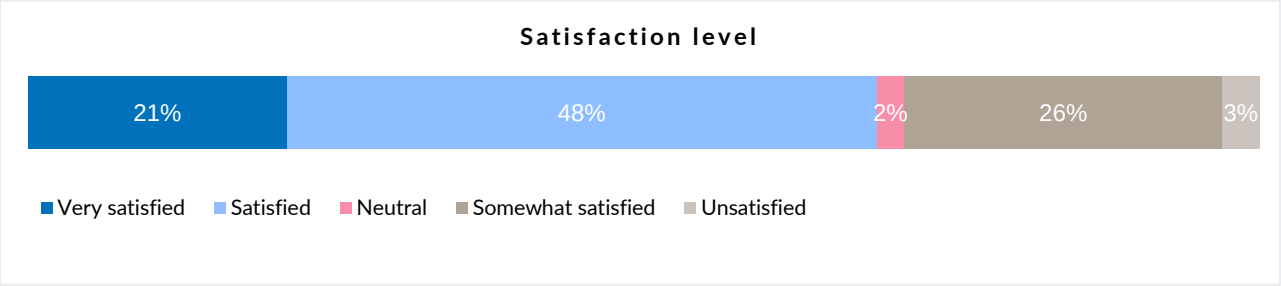
Figure 24: UNHCR/ Post Office treatment of refugees



Majority of those who felt they were not treated with respect felt so at post office by staff (eight respondents), while two respondents did not feel respected by UNHCR Staff.

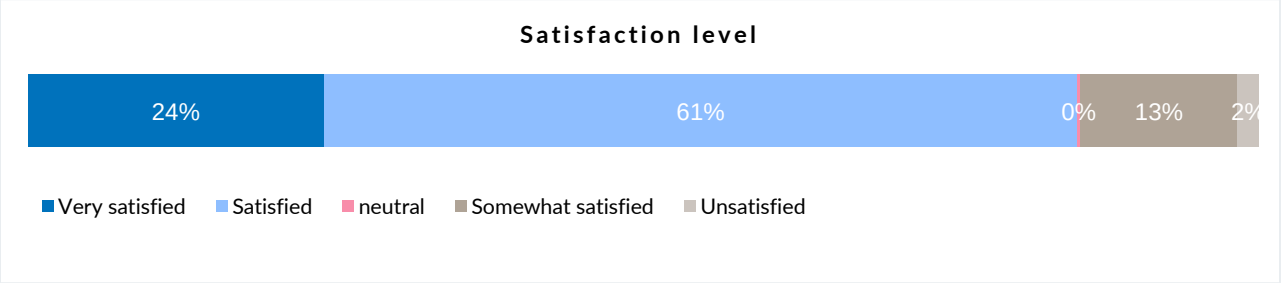
Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the cash assistance. 69 per cent reported being either very satisfied or satisfied, two percent were neutral, and 29 per cent were either somewhat satisfied or unsatisfied. See figure (25).

Figure 25: Satisfaction with cash assistance



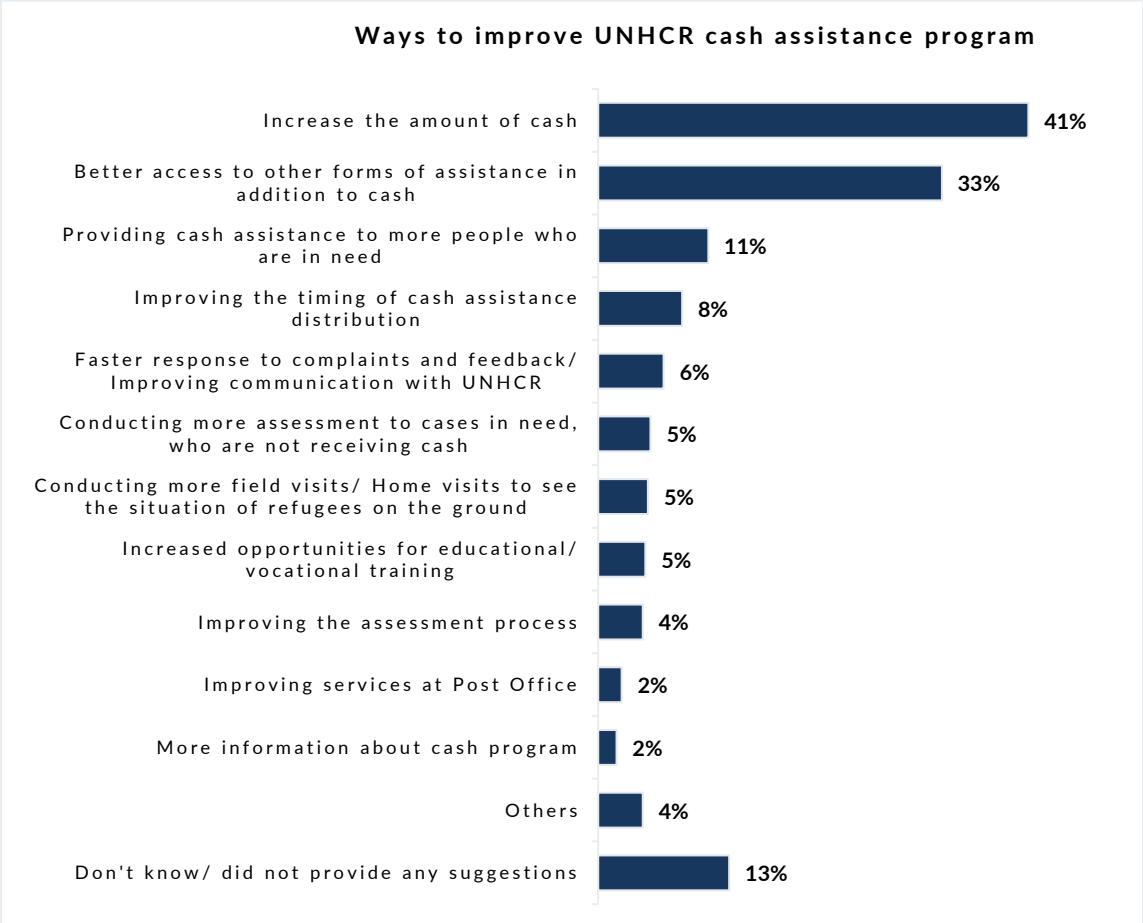
When asked how satisfied they were with the timing of receiving winter cash assistance, the majority of respondents (85 per cent) were either very satisfied or satisfied. A small proportion (0.25 percent) were neutral, while 15 percent were either somewhat satisfied or unsatisfied. See figure (26)

Figure 26: Satisfaction with the timing of receiving cash assistance



When asked how UNHCR could improve its cash assistance program, 41 per cent of respondents highlighted the need to increase the amount of winter cash assistance, while 33 per cent suggested better access to other forms of assistance in addition to cash, and 11 per cent suggested providing cash assistance to more people who are in need. Improving the timing of cash assistance distribution was noted by eight per cent of respondents. Additionally, faster response to complaints and feedback/ Improving communication with UNHCR was mentioned by 6 per cent. Detailed suggestions are enumerated in figure (27).

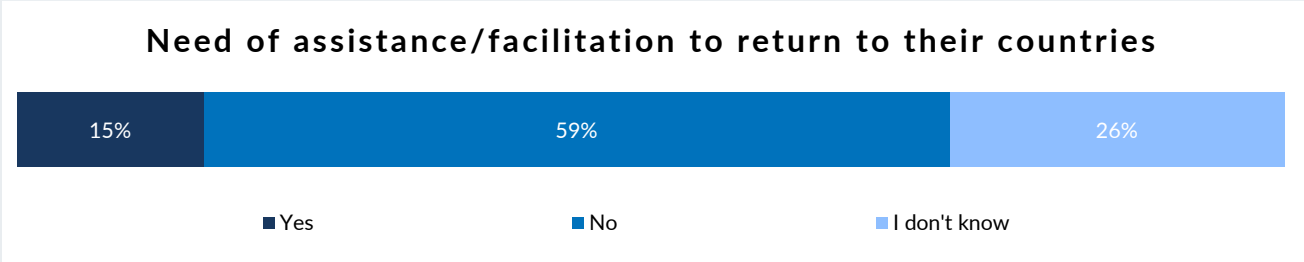
Figure 27: Suggestions to improve the UNHCR cash assistance program



When asked if they had any additional comments on winter cash assistance, nine respondents said yes. Of these, seven requested that the assistance be provided more than once. One respondent stated that the number of families receiving winter assistance should be considered, and another mentioned that they had already used up the cash by the time of the interview.

Survey respondents were also asked if there is a need in the community for assistance/facilitation to return to their countries and 15 per cent of respondents said yes, 59 per cent said no and 26 per cent said they don't know. Figure (28) shows the breakdown.

Figure 28: Need of assistance/facilitation to return to their countries



Of those who saw a need in the community for assistance or facilitation to return to their countries (58 respondents), 76 per cent mentioned that cash assistance was needed, 28 per cent suggested that the process of file closure should be made faster or easier, and 16 per cent mentioned other miscellaneous forms of assistance such as arranging buses for return, payment of residency-related fines, providing healthcare services that are not available in the country of origin (e.g. surgeries and medication.

Conclusion

This PDM survey was conducted to provide an overview of how beneficiaries used the Winter cash assistance, the challenges they faced during the cash distribution process, and the overall impact of this seasonal assistance on recipient households.

Overall, the Winter cash assistance had a positive impact on the lives of beneficiaries, where it helped most beneficiaries (98 per cent) to cover their priority needs during winter months, at least to some extent. Almost all recipients (99 per cent) reported improvements in their living conditions and reduced stress levels, while 48 per cent indicated a reduction in resorting to risky coping behaviours.

The cash was primarily spent as intended on priority needs during the winter season, with recipients using it mainly for food (74 per cent), clothes/shoes (67 per cent), blankets (54 per cent), rent (29 per cent), and healthcare related items/ services. The assistance enabled all beneficiaries to afford items or services they could not previously access—particularly purchasing more food (72 per cent), winter preparedness (56 per cent), and rent payments (25 per cent).

The viability of local markets was confirmed in this PDM, with 96 per cent of beneficiaries able to find what they needed and 95 per cent reporting acceptable quality. However, 80 per cent observed price increases, especially for food (76 per cent) and winter clothing (43 per cent).

Despite receiving once-off, seasonal cash support, a substantial portion of beneficiaries still faced challenges in meeting basic needs. Almost one third of beneficiaries (31 per cent) were able to meet less than half of their basic needs at the time of survey, highlighting continued vulnerability. To cope, 95 per cent of households resorted to negative strategies, including cutting essential expenses (89 per cent), skipping rent or debt payments (23 per cent), and withdrawing children from school (16 per cent).

Regarding the cash distribution process, the majority of beneficiaries (86 per cent) where very satisfied/ satisfied with the process, and 94 per cent did not need any help while withdrawing the cash. Most respondents (97 per cent) felt physically safe while withdrawing, keeping, and spending the cash, and almost all of them (99 per cent) did not face any technical problem during withdrawing, keeping, or spending the cash. However, long waiting time at the post office was faced by some beneficiaries where 27 per cent had to wait for more than two hours before receiving their assistance. Long waiting times, and over crowdedness may be attributed to the significantly high number of beneficiaries receiving winter cash assistance, especially between December 2024 and February 2025. Also, around 14 per cent of beneficiaries were somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied with the distribution process due to several issues such as overcrowding, iris scan problems, and the need to visit multiple post offices in order to collect the cash.

In terms of Accountability to Affected People (AAP), 91 per cent of beneficiaries felt well-informed about the assistance. and 89 per cent could identify at least one feedback channel, with the UNHCR InfoLine (57 per cent) being the most frequently mentioned. Among the eight per cent of respondents who had complaints, the majority (97 per cent) actually reported them, with slightly more than half (53 per cent) receiving timely responses, and eight per cent were still awaiting a response at the time of the survey.

Also, the vast majority of beneficiaries (85 per cent) were very satisfied/ satisfied with the timing of winter cash assistance, and the majority (69 per cent) were very satisfied/ satisfied with its amount of assistance. As with other surveys, cash remained the preferred modality of assistance, where the majority (85 per cent) of recipients preferred cash-only assistance, while 13 per cent preferred a combination of cash and in-kind. Key suggestions for improving cash Programme included increasing the cash amount (41 per cent), better access to additional aid (33 per cent), and expanding coverage (11 per cent). Furthermore, 15 per cent noted the need for assistance to return to their country of origin, with 76 per cent of them preferring cash-based support and 28 per cent requesting faster file closure processes.

UNHCR Egypt remains committed to improving the efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness of its cash assistance programming. This PDM survey helps ensure the Winter Cash Assistance continues to address real and evolving needs, guided by data and direct feedback from affected communities.