

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

November 2021

Over 71,000 Cameroonian refugee men, women and children are **registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Enugu, and Taraba States. Nigeria.

More than 18,500 additional refugees received **cash** to purchase their preferred **choice of food** in Benue and Cross River States. **Nearly 36,000** refugees have benefitted since last month.

UNHCR and partners launched the **16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence** and commemorated the **International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women**, in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.



UNIFARM, a refugee-led group of local farmers, provide food items to a vulnerable host community woman, in commemoration of the World Day of Kindness (November 13), at Adagom community, Ogoja, Cross River State. ©UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Operational Highlights

- On 25 November, UNHCR, government officials, refugees, partners, religious and traditional leaders commemorated the **International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women**, which also marks the launch of the global **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**. The launch began with an awareness rally, followed by other activities including debates, drama and sensitization sessions in schools, refugee settlements and host communities in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba (ABCT) States.
- The Medical Women Association of Nigeria, in collaboration with UNHCR, undertook a **free surgical outreach** for Cameroonian refugees at the Catholic Maternity Hospital Ogoja, Cross River State (CRS). Some 40 refugees and locals from Benue, Cross River and Taraba States received free surgical interventions and about 350 children and adults received dental care, including evacuations, as well as cervical and breast cancer screening. UNHCR supported the team with medications, surgical materials, liquid soap, hand sanitizers, face masks and bedsheets.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- Cameroonian refugees continued to arrive from the South-West and North-West regions of Cameroon, through unofficial entry points in ABCT States. Over 300 **additional refugees**, mostly women and children, arrived in several border communities, as clashes by separatist groups and government forces continues unabated. Critical needs remain food, non-food items (NFIs) and shelter.
- UNHCR collaborated with twelve government agencies, national and international partners to systematically identify **protection incidents**, analyse the protection risks and refer cases to partners providing protection and multisectoral assistance.
- UNHCR and partners undertook over 40 joint **border and detention monitoring** visits in ABCT States, to assess the living conditions and needs of new arrivals, and advocate for the protection of refugees from abuse, arbitrary arrest and exploitation. No case of refoulement was reported.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced People (NCFRMI) registered and provided proof of **documentation** to more than 2,430 additional refugees in Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Enugu, and Taraba States. This brings the number of registered Cameroonian refugees to over 71,240 people.
- Over 1,000 refugees received **ID cards** issued by NCFRMI and UNHCR, to help them move freely and access basic social services in Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Enugu, and Taraba States.
- Some 2,400 returnees and Cameroonian refugee children received **birth certificates**, issued by the National Population Commission, in collaboration with UNHCR, in Benue and CRS.
- In ABCT States, at least 20 GBV survivors received **multisectoral assistance**, including medical, psychosocial, legal, and material assistance, through the established referral pathways, to enhance their coping skills.

- UNHCR, Caritas, Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) reached over 2,5000 refugees and locals, including students, with **awareness sessions** on birth registration, prevention of GBV, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse, child protection, death registration, child rights and GBV reporting channels. Five complaints boxes were installed in strategic locations by UNHCR, to improve communication and feedback with refugees in Akwa Ibom State.
- UNHCR and JRS **trained** close to 190 government officials, community stakeholders, implementing partners and security agencies on humanitarian law, refugee right, GBV and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, in Taraba State.

Challenges

- **Under-reporting** of GBV incidences remains a major concern, as most survivors fail to report GBV incidents for fear of reprisal attacks and stigma.
- In all refugee hosting locations, **harmful coping mechanisms**, including sale and exchange of sex, leading to increase in teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse, have been reported among youths and women-headed households, due to limited food and livelihood support.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- UNHCR installed a 16,000L hybrid borehole, to **improve water** supply for refugees in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.
- Over 3,000 soap tablets and 890 handwashing stands with buckets, got distributed to refugee families, to improve their **personal hygiene** in Adagom 1, Adagom 3 and Ukende settlements (CRS), by UNHCR through Save the Children (SCI). About 80 refugee communities received at least 465 cleaning materials, to improve environmental sanitation.
- About 95 per cent of communities in the four refugee settlements of Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen have been certified as **open defecation free** by the State task group on sanitation, in Benue and Cross River States, signifying improved behavioural change.
- UNHCR and SCI trained more than 55 health teachers, guardians, students, head teachers /principals and local government WASH coordinators on the establishment of environmental health club in eight schools, to help promote **personal and environment hygiene** in schools hosting Cameroonian refugee students, in Benue and CRS.
- More than 300 refugee women of reproductive age received **dignity kits**, provided by UNHCR, in Akwa Ibom and CRS.

Challenges

- Inadequate user-friendly bathing shelters and latrines for **individuals with disabilities** and long distances from the water points for refugees with specific needs constitute a major challenge in the refugee settlements of Benue and Cross River States.
- The main gap in the WASH sector remains **inadequate water supply**, and lack of adequate latrines, and bathing facilities in the refugee settlements and in most communities where refugees are hosted.

**HEALTH:**

- UNHCR is providing support to about 30 **health facilities**, through the provision of medical equipment, incinerators, laboratory consumables, COVID-19 prevention items and capacity-building for staff, in ABCT States.
- More than 3,000 refugee families, including the elderly, pregnant women and children under 5 years have received **mosquito nets**, in the refugee settlements and host communities, in ABCT States.
- Door-to-door awareness sessions on the dangers of self-medication and herbal medicines reached some 400 refugees, by UNHCR, the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) and FJDP, in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.
- UNHCR and the NRCS conducted a three-day training on **standardized, expanded nutrition survey**, for 37 volunteers, to determine the general health and nutritional status of Cameroonian refugees, including children, in Benue and Cross River States. The survey commenced on 22 November in the four refugee settlements.
- UNHCR health partner NRCS undertook **nutritional assessment** for about 300 refugee children in Benue and CRS. About 30 children diagnosed with severe acute and moderate acute malnutrition received nutritional supplements.
- Some 50 refugee and host community new mothers received delivery kits, provided by UNHCR through NRCS, in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.

Challenges

- Most refugees who are uninsured engage in self-medication and administration of **herbal medicine**, due to unavailability of medications at the health facilities, in ABCT States.

**EDUCATION:**

- In Taraba State, almost 1,185 refugee students attending 20 public schools have received **educational materials** such as books, uniforms, shoes/sandals, pens/pencils, erasers/sharpeners, school bags and face masks, provided by UNHCR, through the protection partner JRS. Also, six schools hosting refugee children have received scholastic and recreational items including textbooks, enrolment registers, skipping ropes, football, chalk, rulers, and dusters.

Challenges

- Levels of school and **university enrolment** remain critically low for refugee children and youths, because of limited funding and support.

**LIVELIHOODS**

- Five refugees trained on small business enterprise and goat farming, by UNHCR through Mediatrix, received start-up kits, to improve their **livelihoods and self-reliance**, in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.

Challenges

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



FOOD SECURITY

- UNHCR provided cash for food for three months to over 18,630 refugees, to enable them purchase food of their preferred choice, in Benue and Cross River States. Thus far, about more than 35,630 refugees have benefited, since last month.
- The UNIFARM, a refugee-led group, provided **food items** including pork meat, cassava, rice, and salt to more than 25 vulnerable refugees and locals, in commemoration of the World Day of Kindness, in Adagom community and refugee settlement, Ogoja, CRS. The group is comprised of refugees and locals who established an integrated animal and crop farm on land provided by the government, in Adagom refugee settlement.

Challenges

- 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. Moreover, prices of basic food commodities in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly.



SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) monitored and managed the four refugee settlements of Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen, in CRS and Benue, ensuring integration in host communities, providing security for refugees and resolving over 30 potential crises, through **community engagement and negotiations**.

Working in partnership

Together with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR 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, government, and humanitarian actors. 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 Nigeria Red Cross. Operational partners include UNFPA, FAO, ICRC and WHO.

External/Donors Relations

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