



UNHCR Cash Assistance in Asia and the Pacific: Impact and Main Outcomes from Post Distribution Monitoring in 2021 – 2022

HIGHLIGHTS

97%

reported improved living conditions

94%

felt less stressed

61%

still resorted to
negative coping mechanisms in the past four weeks

90%

spent cash assistance on food
expenses

55%

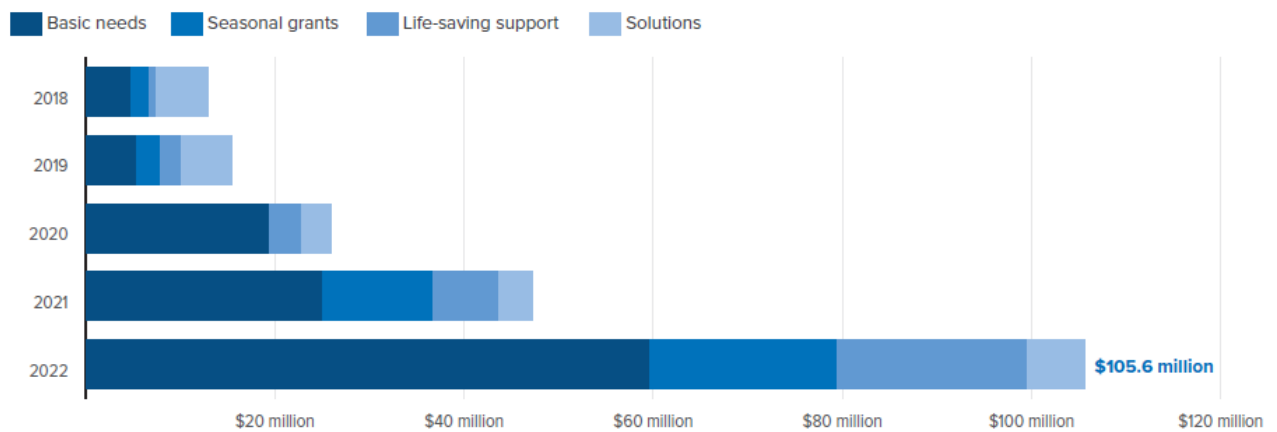
used cash assistance on health related
expenses

OVERVIEW

In recent years, cash transfers have surpassed in-kind distributions. It has become the primary mode of assistance delivery for UNHCR because of its effectiveness, efficiency, and ability to promote recipients' dignity and self-reliance. In the Asia and the Pacific region, UNHCR has been working to expand the use and quality of cash assistance to better support protection and solution outcomes for displaced communities. In 2022, UNHCR delivered \$105.6 million in cash assistance across 18 operations in the Asia-Pacific region – up from \$47 million in 2021.¹ Post distribution monitoring (PDM) shows it remains the preferred and most appropriate modality of assistance with only 3 per cent of households indicating a preference for in-kind assistance. Nevertheless, cash assistance continues to be part of a broad and integrated network of assistance and services provided by UNHCR and partners to support people forced to flee in protracted or emergency situations to meet their basic needs and mitigate the impacts of sudden shocks and crises.

This fact sheet presents the main findings and outcomes of PDM of some 8061 families in 14 countries from January 2021 to December 2022.²

Cash assistance by sector | 2018-2022

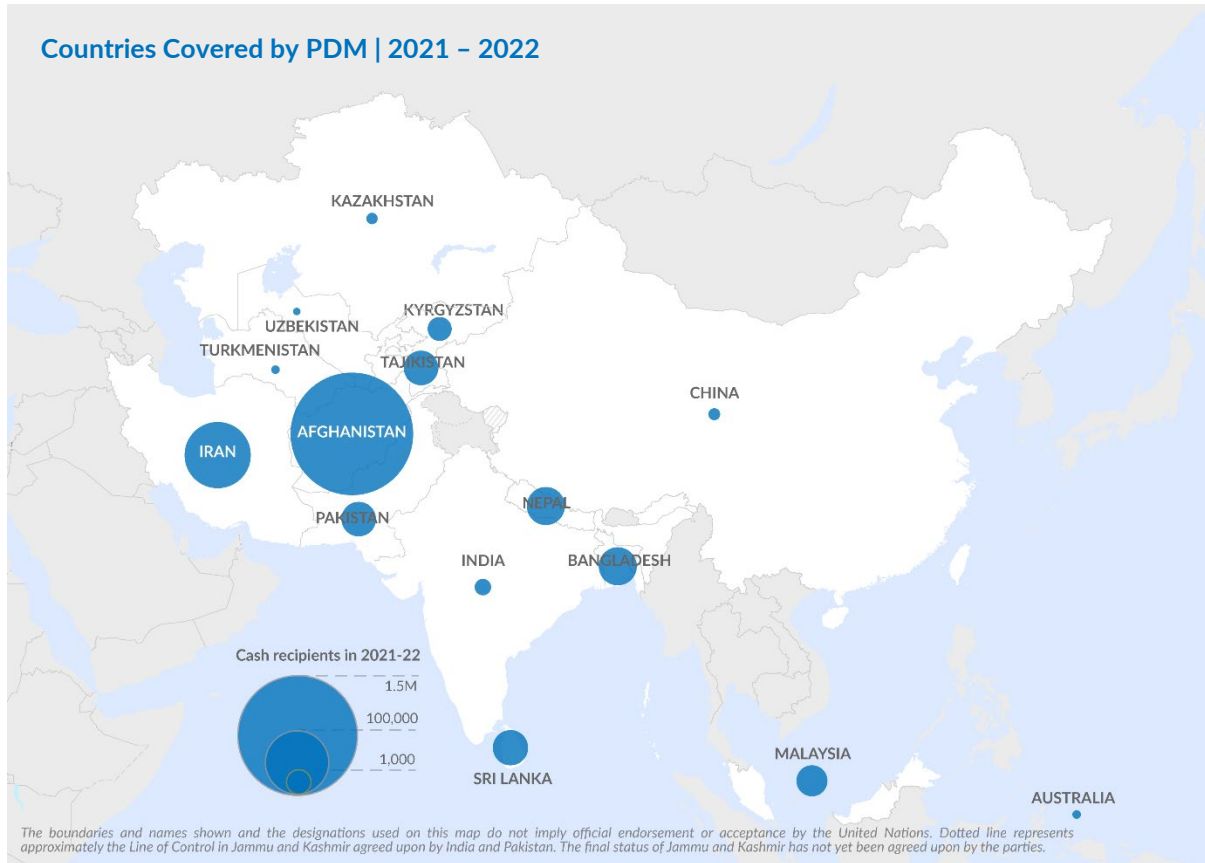


METHODOLOGY

The Post Distribution monitoring (PDM) was carried out with representative samples taken from the total number of individuals who received cash assistance. Simple random sampling was used with a confidence interval of 95 per cent and a 5 per cent margin of error. Respondents – refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) – were the same people who redeemed the cash assistance. In the event a third party outside the household is collecting assistance on the family's behalf, specific questions are asked to mitigate the risk of fraud.

¹ Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Thailand.

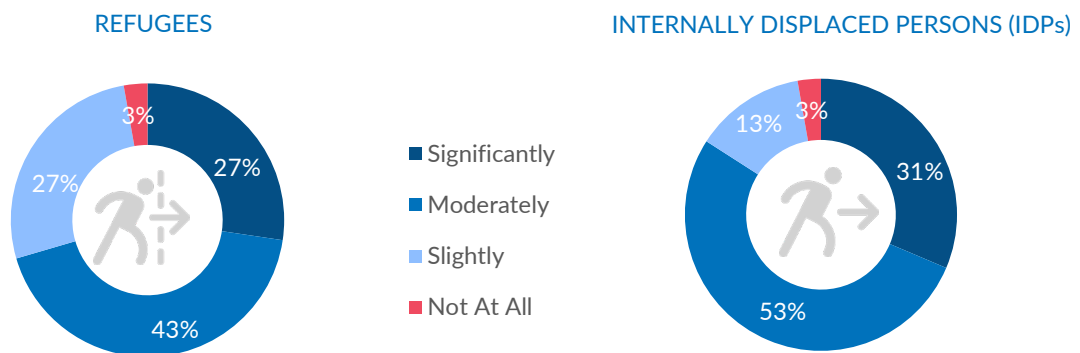
² The analysis provided remains strictly indicative and can only be used to depict rough tendencies, given the diverse operational contexts and sampling methodologies. For global figures, please refer to the Cash Assistance in 2022: Main Outcomes from Post Distribution Monitoring document [here](#).



FINDINGS

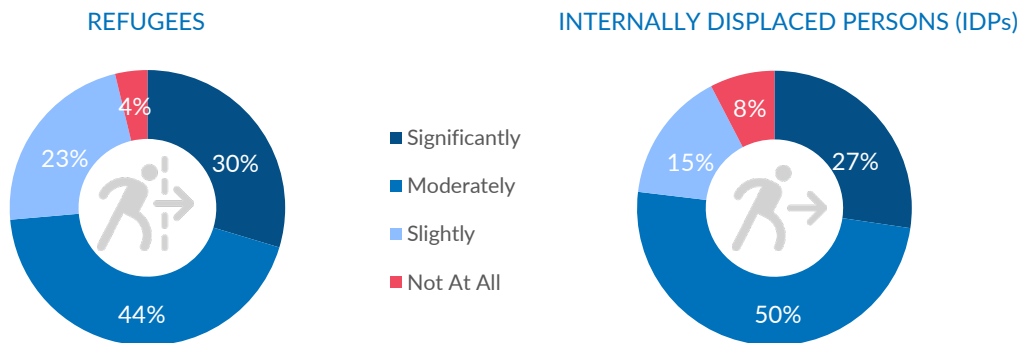
CASH IMPROVES LIVING CONDITIONS AND WELL-BEING:³ 97 per cent of respondents said cash assistance improved their living conditions although the lack of funds limited the extent to which cash grants covered all their needs. Cash assistance also contributed to a reduced feeling of stress and anxiety and helped mitigate the various protection risks some households face.

Percentage of households reporting improved living conditions



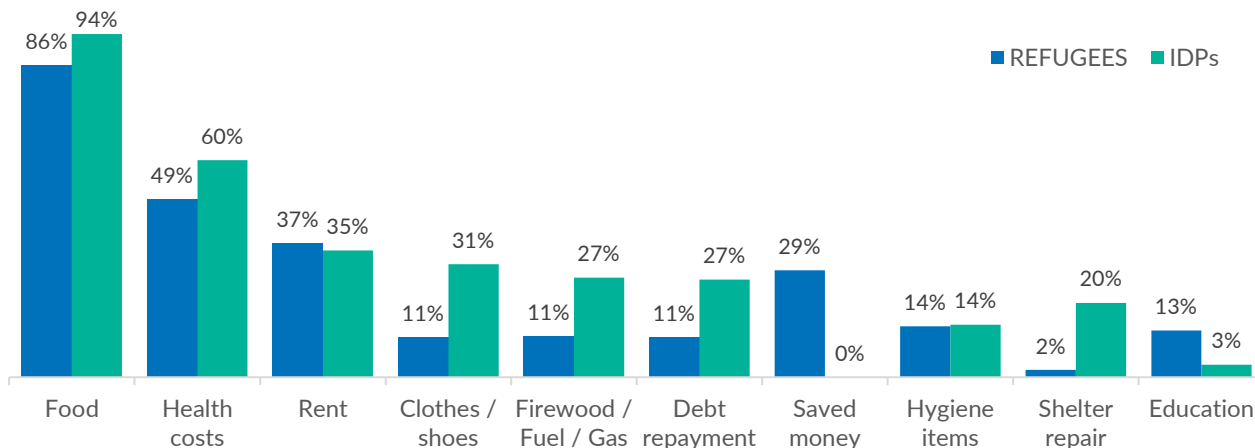
³ Data available for 12 countries, including 11 refugee-hosting operations (2,273 respondents) and one IDP-hosting operation (4,246 respondents).

Percentage of households reporting reduced feeling of stress



CASH IS USED TO MEET BASIC NEEDS:⁴ Most refugees and IDPs who received cash assistance used it to address immediate needs such as food (90 per cent), health (55 per cent) or rent (36 per cent). They also invested in education and livelihoods (capital).

Percentage of households reporting cash expenditure per sector

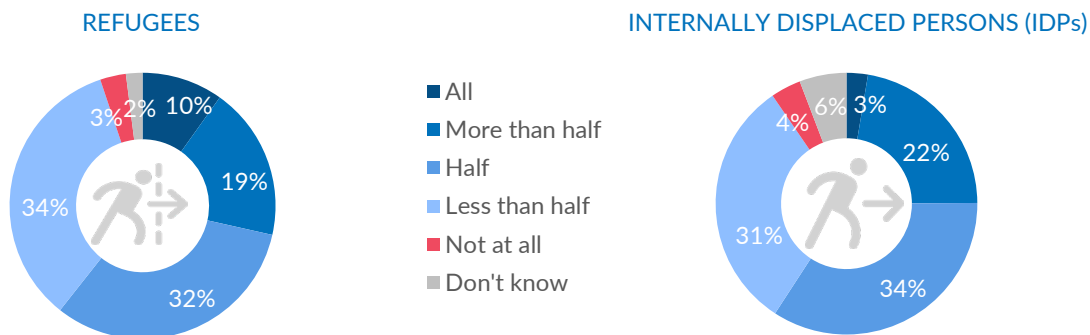


In **Afghanistan**, UNHCR has mainstreamed cash assistance across various sectors, including shelter, health, energy, education and food to address basic needs. This approach has been critical in supporting refugee and IDP returns through cash-based interventions that are embedded in integrated programmes at both the individual and community level.

⁴ Data available for 13 countries: 12 refugee-hosting operations (3,652 respondents) and one IDP-hosting operation (4,246 respondents).

NEEDS AND PROTECTION RISKS REMAIN SIGNIFICANT:⁵ Although cash assistance helped address households’ immediate needs, this assistance was not enough to cover all basic needs. Only 29 per cent of the targeted refugee households indicated that over half of their basic needs were covered while 25 per cent of IDP households said the same.

Percentage of households who reported being able to meet half of their basic needs



Percentage of households who reported using negative coping strategy in the past four weeks



68 per cent of refugees and 55 per cent of IDPs said they resorted to one or more negative coping mechanisms to address gaps during periods where cash assistance was delivered. These mechanisms include borrowing money, defaulting on debt repayments and rent, and cutting down on food expenditure. The situation for refugees was particularly concerning given their lower level of integration in the communities they reside in and the limited opportunities available to them such as the right to work or access to official financial services. These protection risks demonstrate the importance of continued investment in humanitarian assistance coupled with robust protection interventions and case management as well as the need for greater support from development actors in displacement settings.

In **Indonesia**, UNHCR and one its partners set-up a committee to identify the most vulnerable families based on various criteria, including household composition, living conditions, available resources as well as the specific protection risks faced. Following this, multi-purpose cash grants were provided to address their basic needs and reduce protection risks. In addition, UNHCR also provides educational grants to children attending public schools as well as nutritional grants to pregnant and lactating women to promote both malnutrition and school attendance.

⁵ Data available for 13 countries: 12 refugee-hosting operations (3,652 respondents) and one IDP-hosting (4,246 respondents).

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