UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Yemen

Cash Based Interventions Factsheet

Samira, a refugee from Somalia, collects multi-purpose cash assistance in Aden in Yemen. © Doane/UNHCR

Context in Yemen

Yemen is among the worst humanitarian crises globally. Almost ten years of conflict have created and exacerbated vulnerabilities and eroded resilience and capacities to cope. Yemen is home to an estimated 4.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and over 60,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

These displacement-affected individuals and families are particularly vulnerable, with reduced access to basic services and livelihoods, and face numerous protection risks, often daily. Many turn to harmful coping mechanisms to get by, including skipping meals, school dropout, child labour, taking out loans, moving to poorer quality shelter, and early marriage.

Why cash? Cash is one of the most rapid, efficient, and effective ways to support vulnerable people forced to flee their homes and in dire circumstances. Cash respects a person's independence and dignity by providing a sense of normality and ownership, allowing affected individuals and families to decide what they need the most in their circumstances. Over 90 per cent of recipients confirmed they prefer to support entirely or partially through cash. Cash also means families can purchase goods and services from local businesses, boosting the local economy.

Types of UNHCR cash-based interventions in Yemen: UNHCR uses various types of cash-based interventions in Yemen, each with a view to mitigate protection concerns and harmful coping mechanisms.

➔ **Multi-purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA):** Addresses socio-economic vulnerabilities to help affected families to meet basic needs and avoid using harmful coping mechanisms, such as skipping meals, dropping out of school, debt, and early marriage.

➔ **Case Management (protection) Cash** Supports highly vulnerable individuals who are undergoing a case management process to address protection concerns, working in combination with complementary protection activities.

➔ **Assisted Voluntary Return Cash** Supports safe, dignified, and voluntary return to country of origin in coordination with the country of origin and alongside legal assistance as needed.

➔ **Emergency Cash Assistance** Addresses unforeseen and life-threatening emergencies and is processed within 72 hours. Examples of uses include severe non-chronic medical expenses and cases of home eviction.

➔ **Winterization Cash** Addresses additional needs and expenditures arising due to harsh winter weather conditions, such as winter clothes, shelter insulation, and heating costs.

➔ **Cash for Shelter Rehabilitation, Shelter Maintenance, and Emergency Shelter kits (ESKs)** Improves the living conditions of those in sub-standard housing or shelter and supports durable solutions.

➔ **Cash for Documentation/ IDs** Facilitates access to National Identity Documents for vulnerable IDPs and IDP returnees, which promotes access to key services, such as healthcare and education, and rights.

Who is eligible for cash?

Detailed assessments are conducted and selection criteria are applied to identify who is eligible for assistance and who is most in need. While weighting and criteria differ according to the type of cash-based intervention, the focus is on vulnerability and capacity to cope, including income, reliance on harmful coping mechanisms, shelter conditions, household size, and specific protection vulnerabilities, including persons living with disabilities.

Assessments

Assessments are an integral part of UNHCR's cash assistance.

By September 2024, UNHCR had assessed households comprising over 21,000 refugees and asylum seekers and over 500,000 IDPs, allowing a robust understanding of the needs and evidence-based targeting of the most vulnerable.

UNHCR partner staff assesses displaced family in Sa'ada city @YDF

Assessments show that over one-third of refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs have no income and that over half earn less than USD 50 per month, leaving vulnerable families in abject poverty and forced to rely on harmful coping mechanisms to get by.

Assessments also show that displacement affected households are more likely to rely on harmful coping mechanisms than host community. For example, IDP assessments in 2024 show that while 11% of host community households adopt harmful coping mechanisms, this figure rises to over 80% for IDP households.

Achievements in 2023 and by end of September 2024:

Cash intervention	Refugees reached		IDPs reached		Budget (USD in millions)	
	2023	By Sep 2024	2023	By Sep 2024	2023	By Sep 2024
MPCA	17,873	13,452	502,172	271,318	21.5	10.7
Case management	1,694	1,513	-		1.2	0.9
Emergency	2,272	1,963	36,655	23,200	1.6	0.9
Winterization	11,927		58,852		1.5	
Shelter	-		46,393	17,175	6.0	1.9
Voluntary return	1,422		-		0.3	
Documentation	-		3,183	2,562	0.1	0.06

Effectiveness, quality, and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM)

To assess effectiveness, quality, and suitability of cash assistance, UNHCR conducts regular PDM exercises to gain insight on the experience of recipients as well as the uses of cash to improving programming.

Recent PDM findings showed:

- Almost all respondents reported using at least one harmful coping mechanism in the month before receiving cash.
- Harmful coping mechanisms included reducing expenditure on key items, skipping rent payment, debt, moving to poorer quality shelter, stopping a child from attending school, begging.
- Almost all (99 per cent) of respondents reported a significant (41 per cent), moderate (34 per cent), or slight (24 per cent) improvement in living conditions while receiving cash.

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