

2015-2016 Winterisation

The winterisation plan targeting the most vulnerable refugees both in and out of camps established in May and initiated on 12th October of 2015 continued into 2016 as expected. The winter plan was based on the success of and lessons learned from the winter support programme conducted in 2014/15.

Throughout the winter, UNHCR continued to lead the coordination mechanism with partners such as IOM, German Red Cross, IVY Japan and Peace Winds Japan as well as local authorities including ERC, BRHA and JCC Sulimaniyah to achieve an integrated winter response.

By the turn of the year much of the core relief item distribution program was completed and by the conclusion of the winter program in March 2016 more than 23,000 families in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) had benefitted from receiving in kind core relief items such as stoves, blankets, kerosene jerry cans and plastic sheeting. Based on an original planning figure of 13,000 families expected to receive in kind core relief items the KRI team by adopting a needs based approach was able to identify the specific requirements of households rather than distribute standard winterisation kits and provide needed assistance to almost double the planned number of families. Reporting of winter CRI distribution to refugees in the KRI is therefore measured in “families benefitting” rather than “kits distributed” to better capture the level of assistance provided.

Following the first round of Kerosene distribution (in kind and cash) which was completed in November/December 2015 A second round of distribution (for January February) of both in kind and cash for Kerosene continued until completion of the program on 8th March 2016 at which time 5,450,000 litres of kerosene had been distributed to 13,625 refugee families. In addition USD 2,153,000 had been distributed to 10,765 families by cheque as “cash for kerosene”.

This cash for fuel distribution encountered the same constraint as experienced during the cash

distribution which took place in November and December 2015. With no alternative available, payments continued to be made via cheque and faced the same capacity issues of the individual banks, branches being unable cash more than 50 cheques per day therefore slowing the progress of the distribution process.

Despite the challenges faced the 2015/16 winter support programme for refugees in KRI was largely a success. Post distribution monitoring already carried out highlights the importance of winter heating fuel to the refugee population and where possible a preference for cash based assistance rather than in kind. Additionally feedback was received with regard the speed of winter fuel distribution particularly cash for fuel. UNHCR is in the process of reviewing the modality of dispersing all cash payments to beneficiaries including those intended for winter fuel. The intention is to make the process of delivering cash faster and more efficient and to prevent delays to the beneficiaries in receiving cash assistance.

The successes and lessons learned during the 2015/16 winter support programme will form the basis of the 2016/17 winter support plan which is already in planning.



UNHCR partner agency, YAO, delivering CRIs to families who are unable to reach the distribution centre due to their vulnerability, such as those who are living with disability, elderly, women-headed households. March 2016. Photo credit: YAO