

Ethiopia

December 2018

In 2018, UNHCR successfully piloted the use of cash for refugee response in camps near [Jijiga](#), [Shire](#) and [Assosa](#) and streamlined its cash-based response for the [urban refugees](#) in Addis Ababa.

Feasibility studies and post distribution monitoring results show that [cash is an appropriate response](#) to refugee in the camps and other locations where the intervention has been piloted.

Cash was also provided as a [multi-purpose cash grant \(MPCG\)](#) to meet food and non-food needs of the [urban refugees in Addis Ababa](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cash feasibility studies conducted by UNHCR informed the decision to pilot cash based interventions (CBIs) in camps in the Benishangul-Gumuz (Assosa), Somali (Jijiga) and Tigray (Shire) regions as well as in Addis Ababa in 2018. A mix of cash and vouchers or either vouchers or cash alone was used to suit to the different contexts.
- 250 of UNHCR's and partners' personnel were trained on key CBIs themes to enable them to consider the most appropriate modality of transfer to persons of concern.
- A Financial Service Provider (FSP) was engaged to provide cash delivery services to UNHCR using different delivery mechanisms which include, mobile money, electronic vouchers and physical cash distribution.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were elaborated for the different field operations to guide the implementation of CBIs by UNHCR and by partners.
- In line with the strong emphasis on building strong partnership and commitment to pursuing open and collaborative engagement on cash, UNHCR conducted training for staff of the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) on CBIs and explored ways ARRA could be involved in CBIs. In collaboration with the Ethiopia cash working group, UNHCR was also involved in training of local authorities in the IDP response in West Guji and Geddo.
- All refugees in the three camps near Jijiga were reached with Core Relief Items (CRIs), all women of reproductive age with dignity kits and 600 improved shelters were constructed. In Addis Ababa Multi-purpose Cash Grant (MPCG) was implemented for Urban refugee households and for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) to promote foster care. In camps near Shire, cash was used for child protection for 6,509 UASC in foster families, while in Assosa, 1000 households were supported with cash to access domestic cooking energy. Cash was also used for vocational training for the youth in Addis Ababa and Shire.
- [Post distribution monitoring](#) was conducted for the Jijiga CBIs pilot and for the Addis urban cash assistance. Key lessons learned include that CBIs work in responding to refugee needs. Majority of the refugees prefer cash as a modality of receiving support as opposed to in kind support. There was a good market response, no negative impact on the local economy, no reports of insecurity due to the CBIs and no disruption of household and community social dynamics. The vouchers in Jijiga also did not lead to entry of contra-bands into the market as only registered and licensed traders were contracted. The process of implementing paper vouchers as a CBIs modality is however resource (time, money, personnel) intensive both for UNHCR and the traders hence the recommendation to expand CBIs modalities to include a combination of cash transfers (physical cash distribution, mobile money) and vouchers (paper and e-vouchers) as appropriate in Shire, Afar, Assosa and Jijiga.
- In the context of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework \(CRRF\)](#), the benefits of using cash to respond to refugee needs is evident in Jijiga where there was reported improved interactions between the local communities and the refugees. The demand of core relief items in the local markets also improved leading to a positive impact on the local economy.
- Enhanced collaboration and coordination by co-chairing the refugee cash task force with ARRA and by being part of the Ethiopia cash working group leadership under the steering committee.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- In 2019, UNHCR aims to expand its use of cash to respond to refugee, returnee (Ethiopians returning from countries of asylum under voluntary repatriation) and IDP needs across Ethiopia through direct implementation and through partnerships. Implementation of CBIs will be guided by a CBIs institutionalization strategic outline (see below) which will inform an elaboration of the CBIs strategy for UNHCR Ethiopia. Key focus will be on fostering partnerships with non-traditional actors to promote financial inclusion of refugees allowing use of innovative mechanisms to transfer cash to refugees and promoting integration of refugees in existing national systems. Expanded partnerships will also include in areas of CRRF and livelihoods.



CHALLENGES

In 2018, cash delivery options to refugees within the camps was restricted to physical cash distribution by partners and to use of vouchers. FSPs did not have access into the camps as there was no regulation to guide this process. This is expected to change in 2019 with the implementation of the refugee proclamation which will improve financial inclusion of the refugees among other things.

EXTERNAL / DONORS RELATIONS

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