

UNHCR Yemen post cash distribution monitoring

How UNHCR cash assistance supports displaced Yemenis at risk of famine

Background

As part of UNHCR's interventions to ensure that extremely vulnerable displaced Yemeni families at risk of famine have the necessary means to buy food and other essential items, in May 2021 alone, UNHCR assisted 53,549 IDP families (some 337,464 individuals) with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) in 19 governorates, distributing more than USD 10,400,000. This assistance has been made possible through the generous support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates via the Famine Relief Fund, as well as the United States of America and the Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Bin Thani Al-Thani Humanitarian Fund. Most of the beneficiaries in May received a second instalment as part of UNHCR multi-month MPCA programme aiming at providing longer term support with the goal of averting famine and fostering self-reliance. A third instalment was delivered in July. The programme targeted displaced families (IDPs) residing across 49 districts classified as being on the verge of famine (IPC4+). Of note, UNHCR's extensive database based on needs assessments specifically aimed at addressing IDPs' needs made it possible to target families who because of their displacement are four times more at risk of hunger than the rest of the Yemeni population. In this respect, eligible families were selected according to their socio-economic vulnerability, demographic profile and protection risk profiles. The selected households in northern and southern Yemen received a disbursement of YER 122,000 and YER 141,000 (USD 204 and USD 161) respectively, based on the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) monthly transfer value set by the Yemen Cash and Market Working Group (CMWG). The latter considers the average household's basic survival needs and in-country inflation. Following the distributions to the selected families, UNHCR conducted a second post distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise to understand their expenditure patterns and evaluate the impact of the cash assistance provided to them in May. As these beneficiaries had received earlier assistance in April, the report also provides a comparative analysis between the findings during both months (April and May) in relation to the key monitoring parameters.



Abu Talin , 40 years old IDP father of six from al-Malabit living in Ad-Dhaheer district in Sa'ada collects UNHCR cash assistance in Sa'ada © UNHCR

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Objective of PDM

To evaluate the impact of the cash assistance on selected families and how the cash assistance contributed to reducing their food insecurity, UNHCR through its third-party monitoring partner Grand Thorton undertook a PDM from 7 June to 13 July. The exercise aimed at assessing the:

- Impact of cash assistance on the household's food security status and household's expenditure on food and on other household's needs.
- Impact of the cash assistance on the household's food consumption.
- Coping mechanisms adopted by the families before receiving cash assistance.
- Household's safety and security in terms of access to cash distribution sites and markets as well as goods and services.
- Service quality in the delivery of cash assistance by the financial service providers as well as household's preferred distribution modality.

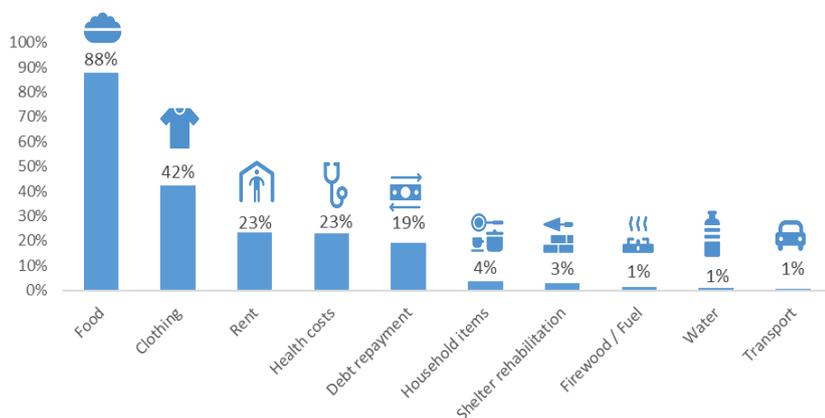
Methodology

- A sample of 2,343 households in IPC4+ locations benefitting from the assistance (1,682 in the North and 661 in the South) were selected and interviewed for the PDM. The sample represents about 6% of the total number of households that received assistance in May.

Key findings

A positive improvement across all major indicators in comparison with April confirms that regular and steady monthly cash assistance helps displaced households meet their food and other basic needs and reduces their exposure to harmful coping mechanisms. The main findings show a clear improvement on food consumption scores, with *only* 22% of the respondents remaining in critical need of assistance, showing a 61% improvement compared to April. A notable decrease in the use of harmful coping mechanisms was also observed, with families taking children out of school dropping from 31% to 16% and those engaging in child labour from 14% to 7% between April and May.

Use of cash assistance



When asked how they spent the cash they received through UNHCR (families can choose all that applies), **88% of the respondent families continued to mention food**, 42% buying clothing and 23% paying rent. Health and medicine were the answer for 23% of the families interviewed and debt payment was the answer for 19%.

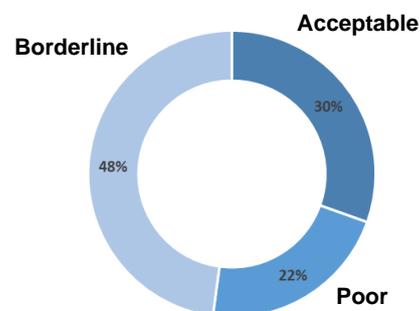
- Compared to April findings, beneficiaries have continued to spend most of the cash assistance to cover their food needs whereas expenditure on clothes has reduced significantly, confirming that indeed the Eid celebrations may have contributed to the high expenditure on clothes reported in April (53%). A decrease was also observed on the spending on rent, which dropped from 31% in April to 23% in May.

Food consumption score

Food consumption patterns and habits of IDP families receiving cash

- 30%** of HHs with **acceptable** food consumption
- 48%** of HHs with **borderline** (mid-point) food consumption
- 22%** of HHs with **poor** (unacceptable) food consumption.

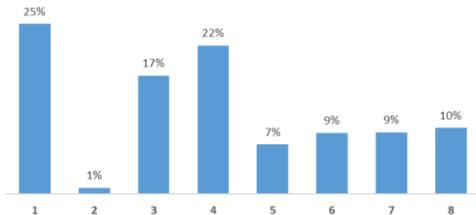
Comparatively between April and May, there has been a significant change in the food consumption score of the beneficiaries: **the percentage of households reporting poor food consumption decreased by 61%**, accompanied by an increase of 50% of the households reporting acceptable food consumption and an increase of 100% of the households reporting borderline food consumption.



This result largely confirms that regular cash assistance contributes significantly to improved dietary diversity and food consumption as it enables beneficiaries to not only consume their preferred food but more nutritious food. This will in the immediate and long-terms alleviate families from famine risks as well as help them improve their resilience.

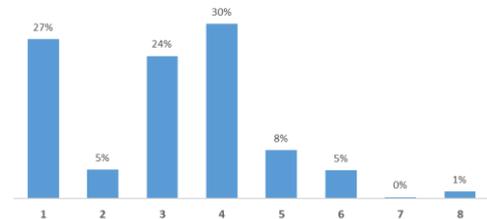
Information on food security and lack of resources to buy food

How often did your household have to rely on less preferred and less expensive food options?



A 38% reduction took place in respect to households who had to rely on less preferred food more than five times during the week (56% in April to 35% in May) and a 92% improvement in terms of households who are able to purchase and rely on their preferred food (13% in May and 25% in April).

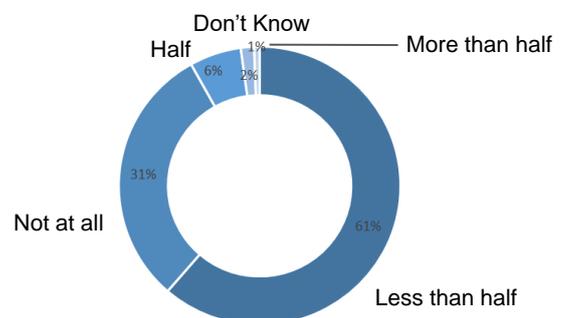
How often did your household have to reduce the number of meals per day?



27% of the respondents indicated they did not have to reduce meals within the day whereas 73% had to reduce meals at least once a day. This is a 30% reduction in the number of respondent households which did not have to reduce meals in a day as compared to April and a 17% increase in those who had to reduce at least once a day.

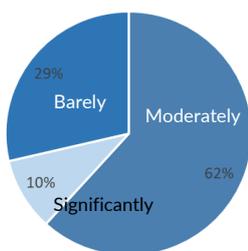
Impact of the assistance on meeting basic needs

Between April and May, only 6% of the households claimed the assistance helped them meet more than half of their basic needs (from 11% to 6% in May), with **61%** (2% decrease as compared to April) of the respondents indicated being able to meet less than half of their basic needs, and an increase in those stating they were unable to meet their needs at all (from 24% in April to 31% in May). These results are likely influenced by the impact of inflationary pricing and fluctuating exchange rates (94% of respondents indicated prices increased over the last four weeks as shown further down this document). The results further reaffirm the severe impact of conflict-induced displacement on the ability of families to make ends meet.

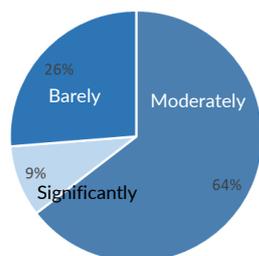


Did UNHCR cash assistance ...

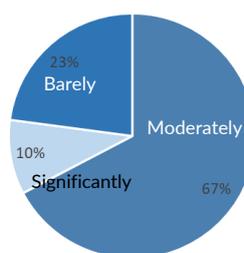
Improve your living conditions?



Reduce feelings of stress?



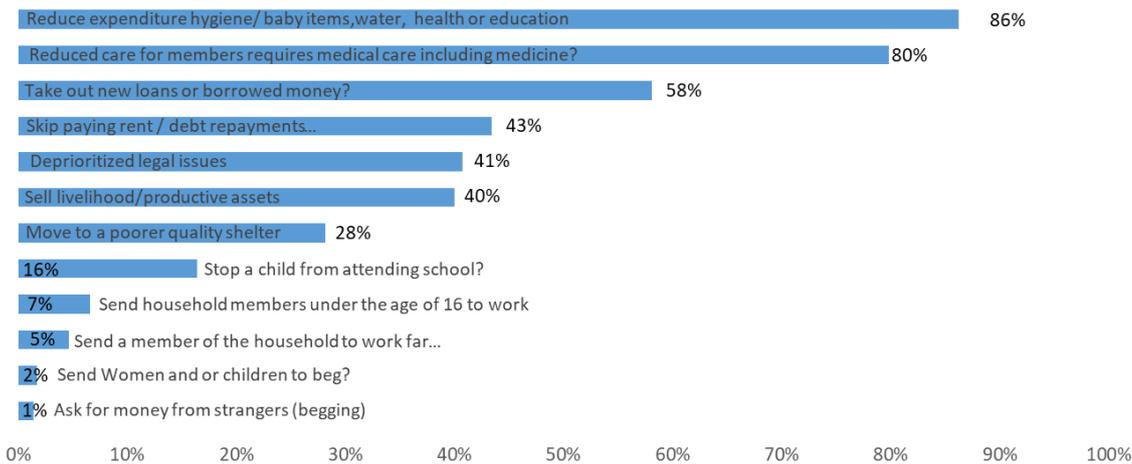
Reduce the financial burden of your household?



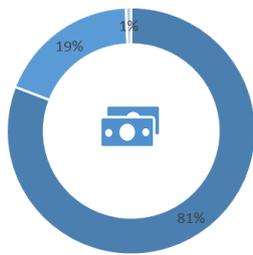
Although most respondents still struggle to make ends meet, **more than two-thirds of respondents noted that cash assistance was making a difference in their life** and in their capacity to cope with the stress of being displaced. A general average increase of 25% in the reduction of feelings of stress was recorded between April and May confirming that, even though the cash may not entirely meet their basic household needs, it still alleviates households' stress, financial burden and improves their living conditions as they are able to meet the households' food, clothing, rent and health needs, among others.

Coping mechanisms

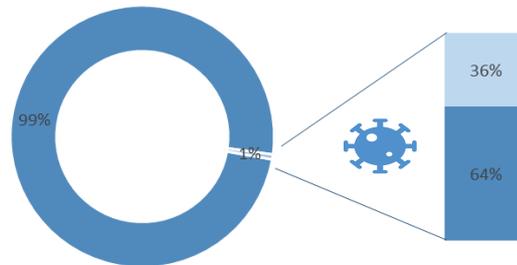
There is a clear and significant decrease in all indicators related to the use of harmful coping mechanisms, with reductions reaching up to -50%. This highlights the positive impact cash assistance has in the ability of households to cope without having to resort to harmful coping mechanisms. When asked on coping measures taken by members of the household in the past four weeks prior to receiving cash from UNHCR to overcome food shortage, **86% reported having to reduce general expenditure on water, hygiene, health, or education**, **80% had to reduce expenditure on medical care** and **58% had to borrow money**. In addition, and while less than the previous month, still 16% of families had to refrain from sending children to school, 7% had to engage in child labour and 2% had to beg.



Receiving and managing the cash assistance

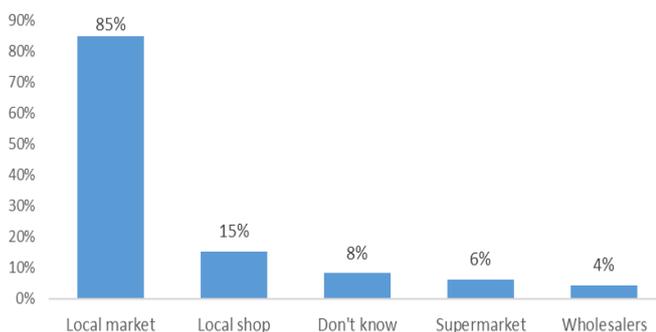


81% of families were very satisfied with the amount they received, 19% were satisfied and only 1% reported not being satisfied.

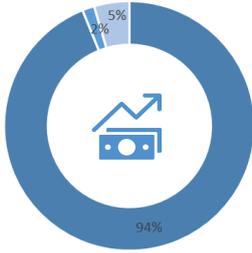


99% of the respondents mentioned that they felt safe while receiving the cash assistance. Only 1% mentioned they felt unsafe while doing so. Out of those 5% who felt unsafe, 36% highlighted that they feared being exposed to COVID-19. The feeling of safety is thus closely linked to the adherence by partners to COVID-19 protocols at distribution sites.

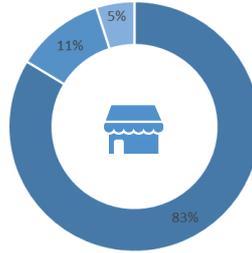
Where was the cash assistance spent?



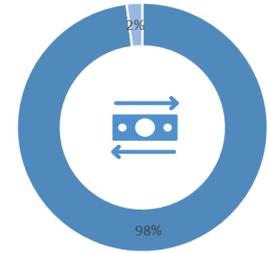
85% of the respondents spent the assistance on local markets, 15% in local shops and 6% in supermarkets. Due to the regularity of the cash assistance, local shops are better able to stock enough goods for households to purchase. As a result, beneficiary families do not have to travel long distances or buy from supermarkets reaffirming the direct positive impact of cash assistance on strengthening local business and sustaining local markets.



94% of the respondents indicated that prices increased in the last four weeks. This may explain why some 92% (5% higher than in April) of the respondents reported not being able to meet half or all of their basic needs during the reporting period.

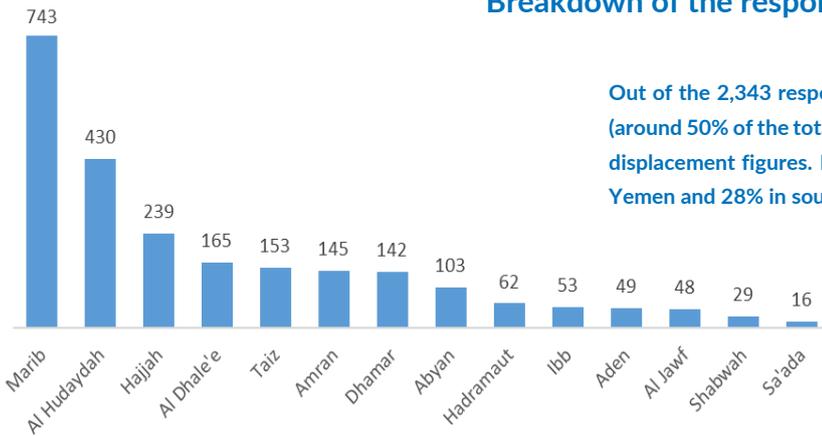


83% of the respondents found everything they needed in the local market, while 11% found most of it. Only 5% reported not being able to find what they were looking for. This demonstrates that the local markets provide sufficient options for displaced families to respond to their most pressing needs, including food. Food remains available but not affordable by many in Yemen, in particular IDPs.



98% of the respondents did not face any security, access, or safety problems spending the assistance in markets and local shops.

Breakdown of the respondents



Out of the 2,343 respondents, 743 were from Marib and 430 from Al-Hudaydah (around 50% of the total respondents) which are the governorates with the highest displacement figures. In total, 72% of the respondents were residing in northern Yemen and 28% in southern Yemen.

Respondents by type

Age and gender breakdown

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