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MAIN OUTCOMES OF CASH ASSISTANCE IN 2021



Findings from Post Distribution Monitoring

This document presents the results of 2021 Cash Assistance Post Distribution Monitoring from 44 countries. Cash assistance was effective in responding to people's needs and helped improving their living conditions and overall well-being. Cash remained the preferred modality for assistance as compared to in-kind assistance. The findings, however, also highlight sustained needs and exacerbated protection risks in the long-term, including for children.

The findings in this report are based on UNHCR's Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data. The data was collected through 19,699 household interviews in 44 countries between January 2021 and March 2022.¹ Some comparisons are made between 2020 and 2021 findings, but these remain indicative and can only be used to depict some rough tendencies.

UNHCR's Cash Assistance in 2021

In 2021, UNHCR delivered USD 670 million to some 9.3 million people in 96 countries. UNHCR used cash for a wide range of purposes, including protection, basic needs, education, shelter, health, and livelihoods. A significant part of the cash was dedicated to meet specific protection purposes.

95% of the cash was disbursed without restrictions, meaning that refugees chose how to spend it. UNHCR's assistance complements governments' social assistance efforts by contributing an additional safety net for vulnerable refugees and others of concern – those left behind.

CASH IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS AND WELL-BEING

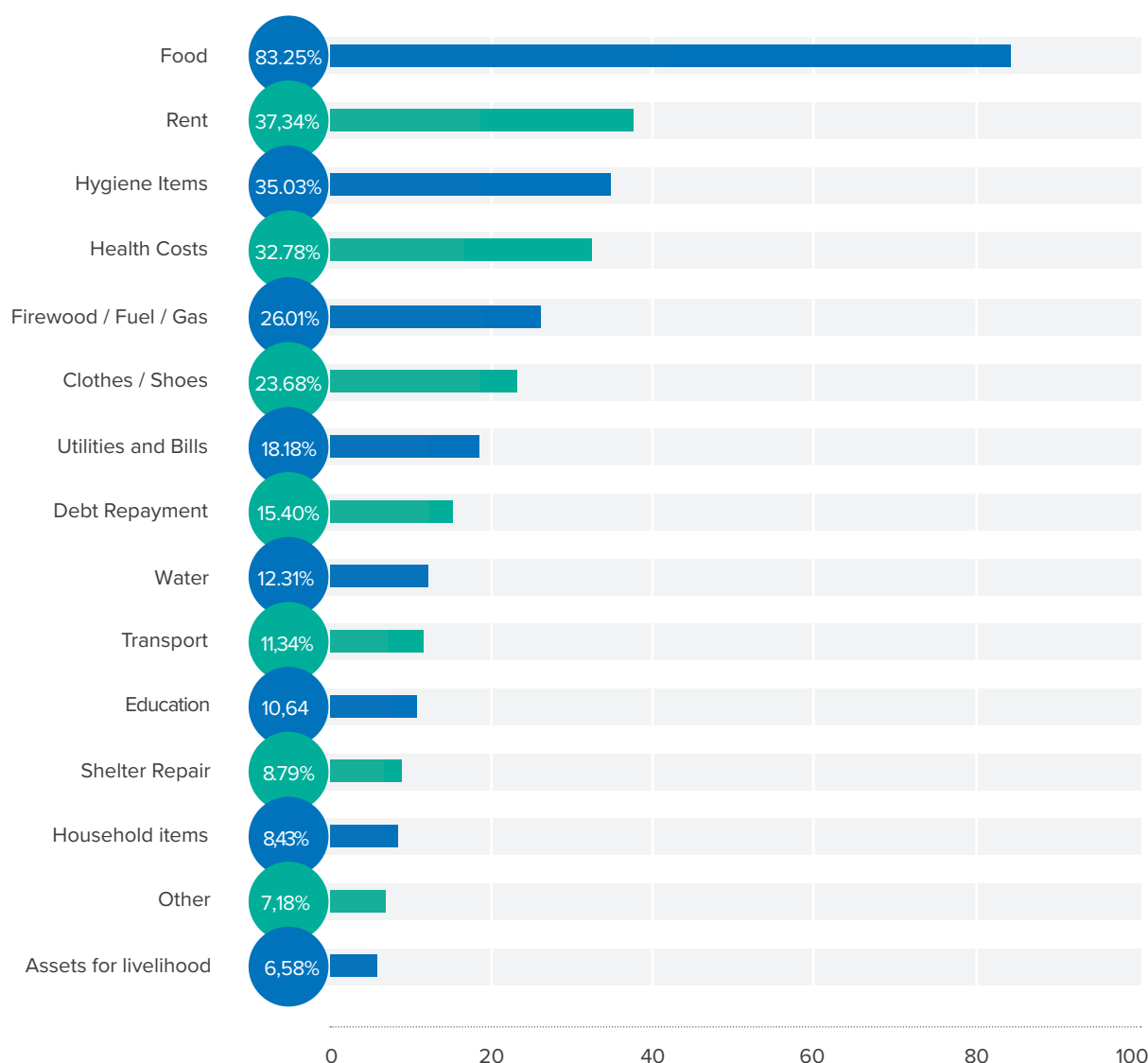
Cash assistance has been critical for the wellbeing of refugees and others of concern in 2021. 94% of the respondents reported that cash assistance has improved their living conditions, which is in line with the findings in 2020. Of these, 23% stated that cash assistance has significantly improved their living conditions while 70% reported moderate or slight improvements. Cash assistance has also helped to reduce feelings of stress for 92% of the surveyed households, showing that cash assistance can have an important, positive psychosocial effect on the well-being of individuals.

¹The sampling methodologies vary, and the data is not strictly comparable or representative between countries. Countries covered (44): Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, DRC, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Paraguay, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname and Northern Caribbean, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zambia.

CASH WAS USED TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Cash assistance has been a crucial safety net for refugees and IDPs, allowing them to meet their immediate basic needs. As in 2021, food, rent, hygiene items, and health were the largest expenditure categories in most operations. 15% of the interviewed households also used cash assistance to reimburse debt.

Top expenditures, per % of households doing the purchase



ITEMS AND SERVICES WERE READILY AVAILABLE IN THE MARKETS

86% of the households reported having access to key services and goods they needed in the local markets and shops. This shows a small increase as compared to last year where COVID-related restrictions were reported in several operations and reduced availability of items was reported during the peaks of lock-down periods.

CASH WAS THE PREFERRED MODALITY OF ASSISTANCE

A clear majority of UNHCR’s beneficiaries preferred cash or a combination of cash and in-kind as assistance modalities (90%), in line with the findings in 2020. In-kind or combination was preferred in countries where cash was new or where there were some access challenges.

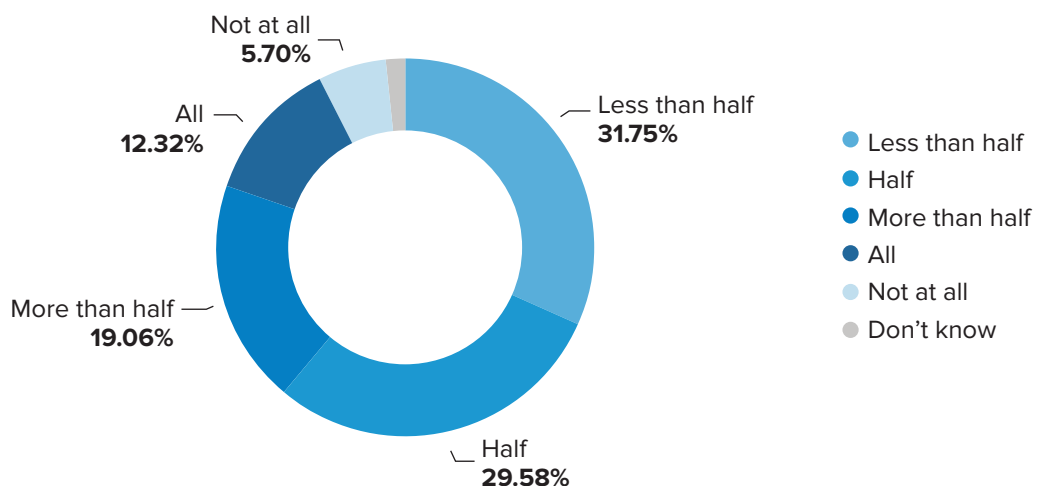
Assistance modality preference, per % of households

% of households who rate cash and/or combination of cash and in-kind as the preferred modality of assistance	90%
% of households who rate in-kind as their preferred modality of assistance	6.5%

NEEDS AND PROTECTION RISKS REMAINED SIGNIFICANT

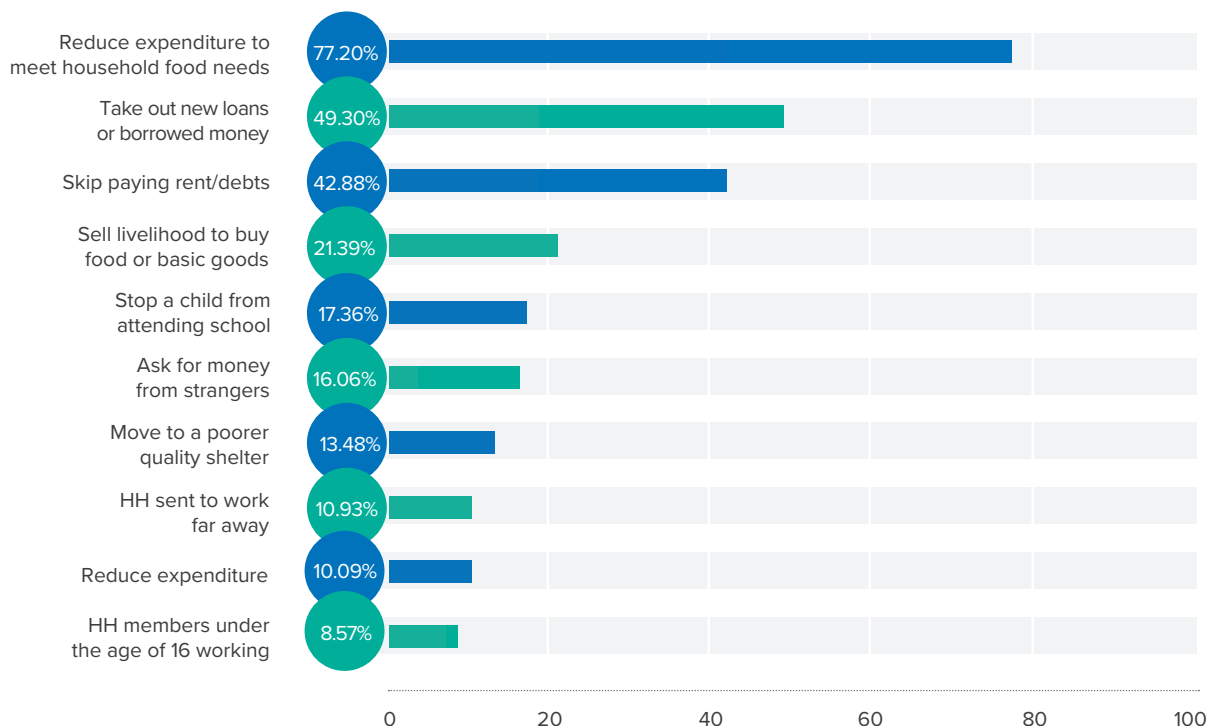
While cash assistance has undeniably helped refugees and others of concern to cover their basic needs, major gaps and protection risks remain. Overall, 66% of the households could meet only half or less of their basic needs, while only 12% and 19% report that they could meet all or more than half of their basic needs, respectively. This situation remains critical even if some improvements are noted as compared to last year, when 73% of the households reported that they could meet only half or less of their basic needs.

Ability to meet basic needs, per % of households



74% of the surveyed households, ranging from 9% to over 98% depending on the country, engaged in one or more negative coping mechanisms to meet their basic needs. The situation is particularly concerning for refugees due to their often limited rights (i.e., freedom of movement, right to work, access to land etc.), affecting their ability to engage in sustainable livelihoods.

Coping strategies used, per % of households using coping strategies



Refugees and IDPs engaged in various coping mechanisms making ends meet, as shown in the graphic above. While reducing spending to buy food was the most common coping strategy (77%), some 50% took out new loans. 43% skipped payments, including rent placing them at the risk of eviction, and 22% of the respondents reported sales of livelihoods assets. These indicators decreased somewhat from 2020, where 59% indicated that they skipped paying rent and other payments, and 27% reported sales of livelihoods assets. Such actions are having negative, long-term socio-economic consequences. Begging remained high at 16% which is comparable to 2020 and 9% of households engaged in child labour. These protection risks demonstrate a need for continued investment in humanitarian assistance coupled with robust protection interventions and case management.