



Cash assistance as a socio-economic response to COVID-19 and floods in Bassikounou



1,594

Refugee
entrepreneur
households

In the districts of Bassikounou, which hosts refugees fleeing northern Mali, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in a context of decreasing humanitarian assistance; it also had a major impact on refugees and the local population with the slowdown in economic activity due to the limitations imposed to the freedom of movement of people and goods.



500

Affected host
community
households

In addition, during the month of August 2020, major flooding affected the host populations of Bassikounou, increasing their vulnerability with hundreds of houses destroyed and more than 6,000 households forced to leave their homes. In the aftermath of this disaster, the Wali (Governor) of Hodh Chargui region provided cash assistance to the affected households and called on international organisations to support the recovery efforts.

UNHCR, in response to these two serious situations, granted socioeconomic assistance through the cash modality to small entrepreneurs in Mbera camp and to the most vulnerable households within the host population affected by the floods and unable to benefit from the support provided by the Wali.

UNHCR provided each household with an amount in cash equivalent to two months of a full food ration. The amount (about 700 MRU per person) was based on the household size, with a ceiling of six persons per household.



9,288,800
MRU
distributed

A total of 1,594 households (6,891 refugees) and 500 affected households from the Bassikounou host populations benefited from this cash assistance as a socio-economic response to COVID-19 and the floods. From 23 to 29 November, UNHCR distributed 9,288,800 MRU (US\$251,797) through El Amana Bank.

This intervention is fully aligned with the approach of placing the host community at the centre of the interventions of the international community in the Hodh Chargui to preserve peaceful coexistence in the region while at the same time improving the resilience of refugees engaged in income-generating activities in Mbera camp. In this time of the pandemic, assistance to small entrepreneurs is a key element for the continuity of economic activities in Mbera camp.