



Cash-based transfers in Nigeria help displaced women to start earning an income again

Food security and livelihoods project by FSC partner *Premiere-Urgence Internationale* supports thousands of vulnerable households

Kaltum Abubakar Gambo is from Maidugui, Borno state in northeast Nigeria. When non-state armed groups (NSAGs) attacked her neighbourhood in 2010, she lost two of her eight children and the family's house and cattle were burnt to ashes, leaving them with nothing. She fled with her husband and remaining six children to Kaduna state, 300km south. As internally displaced persons (IDPs), destitute and forced to depend on others for support, driving Kaltum to return to Maiduguri in the hope of receiving support from her community.

Northeast Nigeria has been **beset by insurgency for the past ten years**, displacing millions of people within the country as well as to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and leading to soaring levels of acute food insecurity. Thousands have been killed, insecurity is rife and the region is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the history of the country. *Premiere Urgence Internationale* (PUI) is an FSC partner working in Borno State to assist millions of displaced people and the already vulnerable communities now hosting those who have lost their homes and means of making ends meet.

Needs assessments show most people in Borno state are food insecure, whether host communities, IDPs or returnee families. People rely mainly markets to buy food, with home production rare in this urban area and much of the food that is available is unaffordable for those with little or no income. As such, in 2016 PUI launched a **cash-based food assistance programme to cover the costs of the average food basket**. Beneficiaries were targeted based on socio-economic vulnerability, although specific protection risks and needs were also accounted for. Each household received an e-card allowing the combination of both cash and food vouchers, offering flexibility and freedom of choice at their usual vendors.

As of 2019, a **livelihoods component was introduced** to the programme to complement food assistance: those beneficiaries who had first received food assistance (based on their protection vulnerabilities) were now also selected to restart their livelihoods activity of choice, based on their work experience and willingness. Kaltum was one of these, having first been referred for food assistance by the protection team for 8 months. She says of this

experience: “When I returned from Kaduna state in 2015, I had no shelter, very little food, I was pregnant and undernourished. My husband was unemployed; there was no money to send the children to school or pay for health services. I couldn’t even afford to buy essential sanitary items.”

After those 8 months she was selected for the livelihoods programme, taking part in the training sessions delivered by PUI on marketing, income-generating activities (IGA) development, book-keeping and finances. **She received a cash grant to resume her former skill of food processing, which was the turning point of her new life.** “I think the most significant change in my life is that we are now self-reliant, which brings dignity and self-confidence to my family. This has encouraged me to continue working hard on my income with support from PUI. The cash grant of USD 250 and the business training I received have surely changed the course of my life.”



Kaltum processing soya beans to make cakes to sell to community members. She was able to buy the grinding mill with money gained from her IGA through PUI.

“Thanks to this PUI programme, my family is now happy and food secure. I gained self-confidence and we managed to rebuild our house from the IGA income. Now I also have access to better health facilities.”

Kaltum

There are thousands of people whose needs are not being met and new IDPs arrive every day from neighbouring insecure states. Most still have no access to farmland and depend on food security actors like PUI for support. PUI and the FSC in Nigeria aim to continue providing

integrated programmes like these to **meet emergency and basic needs** such as food, health, nutrition and protection services, **while investing in sustainable livelihoods** to help people get back on their feet and back to supporting themselves.

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