BAMBA CHAKULA

Cash-based food assistance in Kenya's refugee camps

Quick facts about Bamba Chakula:

WFP dubbed the new programme BAMBA CHAKULA, literally translating from Swahili-based Sheng to "Get your food".

The programme delivers cash electronically through mobile phones, so that refugees can buy food in the local markets.

WFP started Bamba Chakula in Kakuma in August 2015, with an initial transfer value of 100 Kenya Shillings per person. This first cycle's transfers totaled 13.5 million Kenya Shillings injected directly into the camp markets.

The transfer value is small (100 KES is the equivalent of about 1 USD per person) because the system is new and needs to be tested, and because it is better to introduce new demand gradually into the camp markets to avoid food shortages and price increases.

WFP plans to increase the voucher value in November, and will start up in Dadaab in the same month.

There is plenty more information on Bamba Chakula. To request previous editions of this update click here.

INSIDE THIS UPDATE:
- The latest Bamba Chakula Challenge: SIM distribution to unaccompanied minors
- Training traders
- Households in Kakuma receive their first transfers!
- What Raouf Mazou, UNHCR Representative in Kenya, has to say about Bamba Chakula

IN THE NEXT UPDATE:
- Did the transfers affect food prices in Kakuma?
- WFP's plan to increase the transfer value
- Trader selection in Dadaab
- Community assistants – refugees helping each other to learn how to use mobile money

For feedback on these updates, or to request back issues, contact: Kenya.Feedback@wfp.org

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SIM cards to households in Kakuma

In the first half of July, WFP distributed SIM cards to 35,000 households in the Kakuma camps so that they could receive their transfers in August. The SIM card distribution was done at the same time as the monthly food distribution, so households that came to collect food were given their SIM cards.

There are 37,000 households currently registered and eligible to receive food in the Kakuma camps, but only 95% of these households came to collect food in July. The 2,000 that did not show up can pick up a SIM card at any time, and will receive transfers so long as they pass through the routine biometrics ID checks each month to prove that they are still eligible.

Camps	How many households were eligible in proGres to receive food in July?	How many households collected food and received a SIM card in July?	Percentage of eligible households that received SIM cards
Kakuma 1 and 2	13,900	12,800	92%
Kakuma 3	15,500	15,000	97%
Kakuma 4	7,500	7,200	96%
TOTAL	36,900	35,000	95%

How we did it...

1. WFP and FilmAid launched a mass communication campaign in the camps to ensure that everyone knew how and when to collect their SIM card.

2. WFP integrated SIM card distribution with the general food distribution, to make sure that no one missed out. Every household that collected food also received a SIM card. SIM cards were given to each registered head of household.

3. WFP and UNHCR developed a piece of software to pull information from proGres to identify the heads of household, and to track the SIM cards being given to them.

4. A special process was put in place for unaccompanied minors. The exercise revealed that there were more of these than expected in Kakuma.

5. The exercise took two full weeks. A normal monthly general food distribution would last about 1 week in Kakuma.

The first batch of traders in Kakuma have been contracted!

Also in July, WFP organized a week of training sessions for the 317 traders that had been selected in the first round to participate in Bamba Chakula. The training is a pre-requisite to being contracted by WFP. Topics included:

- The terms of your contract and county licensing requirements (delivered by WFP and the County Revenue Officer)

- Food safety and quality standards (delivered by WFP and the Public Health Officer)

- How to use Lipa na M-Pesa, SurePay, and other related Safaricom products (delivered by Safaricom)

- Giving good service to customers, and special consideration to vulnerable groups (delivered by WFP)

Total training time for each trader was 6 hours. To address the challenge of language barriers, WFP buddied multi-lingual traders with those that spoke only one language.

Of the 317 traders that had been selected, 253 showed up for the training, and 124 signed contracts at the end of the training. Others had to produce documents before they could sign their contracts. At the time of writing this update, 177 have signed contracts, and were ready to transact. The number is increasing daily.

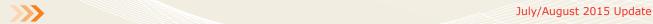## After the training, the butchers were worried...

Butchers were worried when the public health officer told them that he would begin enforcing hygiene requirements, for example: cement floors, painted walls, and ablution blocks. The government has actively discouraged permanent structures in the camps so butchers have been prevented from meeting these shop infrastructure standards. WFP will continue to engage with the Department of Refugee Affairs, public health and county revenue officials to improve the infrastructure in the camp markets.

The first cycle of transfers were made!

Between 28 August and 2 September, WFP transferred a total of 13.5 million Kenya Shillings to 33,934 households in the first round of Bamba Chakula transfers in Kakuma, 97% of the households that received SIM cards in July. Refugees began shopping immediately. By the time this update was going to publication, 11 million Kenya Shillings had been used to buy food, more than 80% of what had been transferred.

There were, of course, a number of system glitches and other 'teething problems' as everyone used the system live for the first time. Community assistants and WFP staff were active in the markets, helping beneficiaries and traders to transact, and WFP's helpline received 630 calls for information and support.

WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR…

FEBRUARY 2015

- WFP selected the voucher delivery mechanism.
- WFP established a technical working group for the new programme.

MARCH 2015

- WFP held operational planning meetings with all stakeholders.
- FilmAid carried out communications research in Kakuma and Dadaab.

APRIL 2015

- WFP finalized the Operational and M&E plans.
- FilmAid finalized the communication strategy.
- WFP launched the trader selection process in Kakuma, and received 660 applications.

MAY 2015

- Trader selection continued, with shortlisting and verification visits to the shops.
- WFP held M&E training to prepare for the baseline in Kakuma.

JUNE 2015

- WFP, UNHCR, and Safaricom integrated their systems, and linked the transfers to biometrics.
- WFP and UNHCR developed an application to track the SIM cards, and capture the phone numbers for each household in proGres.
- WFP and FilmAid launched the communication campaign in Kakuma.

JULY / AUGUST 2015

July and August were 'all hands on deck' in Kakuma where:

- WFP, the County Government, and Safaricom trained 253 traders.
- WFP issued contracts to 177 traders.
- WFP and UNHCR issued 35,000 SIM cards to households.
- WFP collected baseline data and launched the SMS market monitoring system.
- Kimetrica completed the design of a study for measuring the impact of the programme.
- WFP trained 36 community helpers, and launched its Helpline. And…
- The first cycle of transfers were made!

The latest Bamba Chakula challenge

Giving SIM cards to children

In Kakuma in July, an unexpectedly large number of unaccompanied minors came to collect SIM cards.

Their parents had moved on or gone home, and left the children in the camps. These children pass through biometrics and collect food each month, *but should we issue them with SIM cards so that they can also receive transfers?* In consultation with UNHCR, WFP decided that we should…within limits. Children 12 and above without parents in the camp, and without a foster parent, received a SIM card.

Who CAN receive SIMs	Who CANNOT receive SIMs
The Head of a Household that receives GFD	Other alternate food collectors
Foster Parents who collect their foster children's GFD ration	A food collector who is not a head of household
Children who collect their own GFD rations	

During the SIM card distribution, UNHCR child protection officers set up special stations at the food distribution centres to handle the undocumented, unaccompanied minors, and to find foster parents for as many of them as possible. Most did have someone who was looking out for them, so these people were officially registered as foster parents in UNHCR's database (called proGres), and the absent parent (head of household) was deactivated.

The communication campaign in numbers

6 languages used (**English, Swahili, Juba Arabic, Somali, Dinka and Nuer**).

18 mass awareness exercises using loudspeakers mounted on vehicles driving through the camps
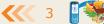
4 pre-screenings with beneficiaries of the Bamba Chakula video

3 radio 'talk back' shows with WFP and UNHCR staff

116 radio spots aired

100 pocket guides with key messages about Bamba Chakula distributed to partners

630 calls to the WFP Helpline

Interview with Raouf Mazou,

UNHCR Representative in Kenya

In July, on the eve of launching Bamba Chakula in Kakuma, we had a chance to speak to Raouf Mazou on the potential opportunities that cash-based assistance may afford in Kenya and beyond.

The first Bamba Chakula transfers to refugees in Kakuma will happen next month. Do you think that this cash-based programme will bring new opportunities to the camps?

Yes, for sure, we have been talking about introducing vouchers for some time and we conducted some pilots in Dadaab. Of course, decisions to go with in-kind or cash or vouchers may partially be resource driven but we also look at the bigger picture of opportunities for beneficiaries, in this case, giving them a sense of normal life despite the abnormal circumstances of exile. Vouchers allow beneficiaries to go to shops and choose their own food. Vouchers also give us an opportunity to move away from the dependency model, to help refugees increase their own self-reliance.

We have the opportunity here to gradually and carefully introduce this new modality to take the chance to see what works well and what doesn't.

This new electronic voucher programme will give us the opportunity to change mindsets on ways of providing humanitarian assistance. It brings a world of new innovative opportunities to the table.

What are UNHCR's plans for supporting the new programme?

UNHCR and WFP's work in the refugee camps go hand in hand. We are carefully observing how the vouchers will be implemented and from there we will assess what more could be done. Food is the most important part of the assistance we provide in the camps and this makes vouchers for food a good observation case. Other assistance such as Non-Food items could also be provided through a voucher system. Many other opportunities for supporting livelihoods with cash or vouchers can be explored in close co-operation with a number of other partners.

What are the benefits and challenges that you foresee?

The big benefit for me is that vouchers give an opportunity to change assistance as we have known it in this part of the world. It creates a dialogue with existing markets and provides a potential for them to grow. We should be able to see beneficiaries exiting assistance programmes. While this may not happen in the very near future, we can look forward to it.

As to challenges, of course funding is always at the forefront – we have had to reduce food rations in Kenya by 30 percent until the end of the year – but we hope we don't encounter this for vouchers. Key areas that we need to watch are, one, how the market will react to the vouchers and two, the commodities that the vouchers will be used to purchase. Since we are engaging the private sector on ground in the programme, it will be interesting to observe how that works too.

In your opinion, are we ready for scaling up vouchers further? Is this on the UNHCR agenda?

Yes, it is on our agenda, and UNHCR is ready to change. Circumstances have forced us to be ready for change. We are moving toward a time when we won't be able to provide, for example, food assistance in-kind every two weeks. It is neither affordable nor practical. In the Kenyan context cash/vouchers are the future and should be seen as a step towards self-reliance.

Technology has made leaps and the humanitarian world should make the best of it. Of course there are many obstacles to change, some obstacles are created ourselves, however, with tools, strong methodologies and research we can overcome obstructive mind-sets.

In order to scale up further, what will be interesting to observe is how a population in need, local markets, and humanitarian understanding triangulate.

What is your message to refugees on the launch of the vouchers?

I would tell refugees that vouchers present a whole new approach. With vouchers, we are asking 'how can we build your capacity?' Vouchers will give refugees a sense of normality rather than one of stagnation in exile, it will support efforts aimed at fostering talents. I would also say that these vouchers are just the start.

How does Kenya stand in the global scheme of innovative humanitarian assistance, do we need to catch up?

There is no need to "catch up" as such. There is a need to evolve and adapt to a new environment. Humanitarian assistance cannot be eternal and in response to the increasingly protracted refugee situations we are experiencing, new models are necessary. Vouchers and cash assistance modalities must be seen in this context.

Milestones:
Continued...

WHAT WE HAVE AHEAD OF US THIS YEAR

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2015
- Clean up system glitches in Kakuma.
- Start-up in Dadaab.
- Launch a tender for data collection and analysis for the impact study.

NOVEMBER 2015
- First transfers in Dadaab.
- Increase the transfer value

DECEMBER 2015
- After action review for both locations.

To request documents and previous editions of this update contact: Kenya. Feedback@wfp.org

A big thank you goes to our donors who make this work on vouchers possible:

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