



**World Food
Programme**

მსოფლიო
სახსრებათა
პროგრამა

Всемирная
Продовольственная
Программа

Country Office, Georgia

Final Progress Report

Food Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Conflict Affected Populations

1. Background

Growing tension between Russia and Georgia erupted on 8 August 2008 in the Georgian breakaway province of South Ossetia and led to the displacement of more than 130,000 people. Most were concentrated in and around the capital of Tbilisi, residing in hastily established collective centres. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) were also accommodated in other regions of Georgia in collective centres and with host families.

WFP quickly responded. Within 24 hours, the first cargoes of food assistance moved from WFP's warehouse in Tbilisi; the agency used in-country stocks to provide immediate assistance for conflict-affected populations. Advance financing mechanisms facilitated the start up of WFP's emergency operation — additional food was immediately airlifted from WFP's humanitarian depot in Italy. By the end of August 2008, WFP food assistance reached 138,000 people. Beneficiaries included IDPs and local populations in the conflict-affected areas of Shida Kartli region.

WFP established 3 logistics hubs in Poti, Gori and Tbilisi with 1,800, 1,000 and 3,500 square meters storage spaces respectively. Poti is mainly used as a forwarding hub for commodities to Gori and Tbilisi, using rail and road transport. WFP used commercial transporters / forwarding agents to transport the goods to the beneficiaries. WFP further provided logistics—warehouse and transport—support to the humanitarian community, ensuring food and NFIs reached beneficiaries.

On 18 August 2008, the UN Humanitarian Coordination Group launched the initial Flash Appeal to cover the needs of affected populations for a six-month period. In October, the UN launched a revised Flash Appeal to cover the winter months through March 2009.

With the withdrawal of Russian troops during October, over 100,000 people were able to return to their homes. Some 30,000 remained displaced, mostly those from South Ossetia, Kodory Valley (Abkhazia) and areas adjacent to the conflict zone (former buffer zone). The food security cluster advised emergency food rations and cash transfers to 100,000 IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable groups affected by the conflict.

Food Security

WFP conducted the initial Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) during August-September 2008. Main findings included:

- IDPs were completely dependent upon government and international aid to meet their basic needs.
- In the return villages within the "buffer zone," war and displacement resulted in loss of productive assets and, most critically, the complete loss of the 2008 harvest.

28, Zhgenti Str., Il Nutsbidze Plateau,
0183, Tbilisi, Georgia
Telephone: (+995 32) 317253/63/65/85
Facsimile: (+995 32) 317296
Satellite:
E-Mail Address: wfp.tbilisi@wfp.org

Pouch Address:
United Nations World Food Programme
Caucasus Regional Office
c/o UNHCR, Tbilisi, Georgia
Post Office Box No.2500
CH1211 Geneva
Depot 2 Switzerland



The EFSA recommended:

- Complementary food or cash to purchase complementary food was critical to secure a balanced diet for the IDPs, particularly during the winter months.
- Complementary food for people residing in the buffer zone to cover the loss of harvest.

In February-March 2009, WFP, with UNICEF and FAO, conducted a Food Security, Nutrition and Agricultural Livelihoods Assessment (FSNAL) among conflict-affected population in Georgia as a follow up to the 2008 EFSA. Main findings included:

- Food security was found to be adequate for IDPs in collective centres, in resettlements, and in conflict areas, mainly due to food assistance. A lack of dietary diversity remained the issue for most of the beneficiaries.
- Nutrition was also adequate, though findings included a problem of overweight children, largely attributed to a lack of dietary diversity.
- Georgia's food markets are widespread, offer a variety of foods and are functioning.
- Assets, e.g., land, harvest, cattle were destroyed in conflict areas, resulting in losses of income for people returning home.
- Resettled families were given small land plots that varied in quality and potential for agriculture, including raising livestock.
- Restoration of livelihoods was necessary to achieve a sustained food security among resettled and returned populations.

Main recommendations included:

- Continuation of food assistance to the most vulnerable, with an emphasis on provision of complementary food or provision of cash to purchase food.
- Improve small-scale agricultural production by establishing and/or restoring agricultural assets including rehabilitating irrigation systems, developing kitchen gardens, providing farm inputs, digging wells and improving rainwater management.
- Tools employed should include food-for-work (FFW) and cash-for-work (CFW)

WFP's current PRRO began in July 2009 and runs through June 2011. WFP will continue relief food distribution to the most vulnerable, cash-for-work and food-for-work activities for 130,000 beneficiaries.

2. Executive Summary of the completed project.

Overall Goal: to improve food security

Objectives: 1) to ensure basic food needs are met for targeted beneficiaries; and 2) to re-establish livelihoods in resettlement and return areas.

Beneficiaries:

- 90,000 IDPs and conflict-affected local populations residing in areas adjacent to the conflict zone and resettlements

Activities:

- General relief food distribution (including provision of bread ingredients to bakeries to distribute baked bread to beneficiaries without ovens)
- Direct cash transfers
- Food for Work (FFW)
- Cash for Work (CFW)

Budget:

Total = US\$5 million

Project period: December 2008 – August 2009

Budget breakdown:

- US\$4 million procured 5,048 MT of food commodities (including regional/local procurement)



- US\$1 million provided through cash transfers and CFW.

Activity Breakdown:

- Direct cash transfers (DCT) were provided to 28,600 IDPs during the period of February-April 2009.
- Relief distributions supported 90,000 beneficiaries.
- FFW and CFW assisted 65,000 beneficiaries.

Results:

- The 2009 FSNAL Assessment provides evidence that WFP and partners were successful in maintaining adequate levels of food consumption for the beneficiary populations during the harshest winter months.
- WFP's evaluation of the DCT programme found that most people spent cash on the intended items, including food (WFP), clothing for winter (UNHCR), and specific food/NFIs for children under 2 years (UNICEF). The programme helped to improve beneficiaries food consumption score.
- FFW and CFW activities were proposed and implemented by the beneficiaries in coordination with local authorities.
- FFW and CFW rehabilitated 540 km of irrigation over 28,900 hectares of land; constructed 6,560 m³ of gabions; improved quality of over 180 hectares of arable land; constructed/rehabilitated 27 km potable water pipeline; fenced 295 hectares of land, planted 800 seedlings; dug 25 water wells; gravelled 3 km of feeder road and rehabilitated 35 km of road gutter channels.

3. Detailed summary of overall project activities, results and lessons learned as well as recommendations for future development efforts.**3.1. General food distribution**

WFP's food basket consisted of wheat flour, pasta, vegetable oil, beans, sugar and iodised salt. Individual daily rations (Table 1) covered 100% caloric requirement (2,100 kcal/person/day) as well as the full requirements for protein and fat. Composition of the food basket was based on the local habits. Most of the commodities were procured locally or within the region, allowing WFP to ship commodities to the country within a shorter period of time.

Table 1: Rations

Commodity	Ration (grams/person/day)
Wheat flour	300
Pasta	150
Vegetable Oil	30
Beans	50
Sugar	20
Iodised Salt	5

General distribution of dry food rations was conducted for most of the beneficiaries. However, WFP provided ingredients to bakeries to distribute baked bread to IDPs in collective centres and in those new settlements without baking facilities. Since August 2008, WFP has contracted 10 bakeries to provide bread. The 2009 FSNAL Assessment showed that beneficiaries had maintained adequate food consumption and nutrition during the winter months.

WFP carried out the distributions in partnership with international NGOs World Vision International, CARE, Save the Children and International Orthodox Christian Charity (IOCC).



3.2. Direct Cash Transfer Programme

WFP's cash transfer was intended to complement the WFP food basket, which, while meeting basic energy and protein needs is deficient in micronutrients. It also contributed to supplying the additional calories required during the cold winter months. The amount of cash support considered market prices and was equivalent to 25 GEL per month for IDPs above 2-years of age.

The project targeted 28,600 displaced persons who were officially registered in the Civil Registry Agency of Georgia (CRA). The 3-month project was initially to begin in January 2009, but was delayed to February due to registration difficulties related to the movement of IDPs from collective centres to the Government-built new settlements. Thus, the project was implemented from February – April 2009.

WFP's direct cash transfer project was implemented in parallel with the cash assistance projects carried by two other UN agencies, UNICEF and UNHCR. WFP led the joint efforts of the UN agencies through administering beneficiary lists and setting-up the cash transfer mechanism.

The Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation (MRA) and CRA were the main partners of WFP in this programme, responsible for the beneficiary list as defined by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in early January 2009.

By the close of the project, 10,300 IDP households received 2,241,125 GEL in cash. This amount was lower than the output set at the start of the project due to the declining number of IDPs over the project implementation period.

Cash transfers were carried-out through the People's Bank of Georgia (PBG), a WFP partner in earlier cash projects. Beneficiary family accounts were opened by the PBG and plastic bankcards were distributed to the beneficiary households. 85 percent card-holders were women.

PBG was responsible for providing transaction reports to WFP whenever beneficiary accounts were activated via the bank cards. This system allowed WFP to track beneficiary access to transferred cash: by the end of September a total of GEL 53,625 (US\$ 32,110), 3.2% of the project amount, was identified as unused and returned to WFP. USAID has agreed that WFP will use this amount for ongoing CFW activities.

In July 2009, WFP evaluated the direct cash transfer programme. The results showed that direct cash transfer contributed towards overall improving of households' food consumption score.

Most of the beneficiaries spent the largest share (60-70 percent) of the transfer on purchasing food commodities. Health expenditures constituted about 20-30 percent of share in cash spending. Clothing, transport, hygienic or other items, and repayment of loans, were mentioned as other expenditures.

The two largest sources for food expenditures were the cash transfer and food aid, representing forty-five and forty percent respectively. A majority of households reported increasing consumption of meat, vegetables and fruit, and increasing expenditures on health care and hygienic items.

The project was successful in reaching the target group at low cost through a well-organized communication campaign and cash transfer system. The project reached its objectives of increased food spending by the IDPs to acquire vegetables/fruit and other protein rich food.

Along with many accomplishments, a number of obstacles were identified: i) a consistent and accurate beneficiary identification mechanism remained a major challenge during the



project implementation, often leading to a time-consuming verification process; and ii) identification of eligible IDPs sheltered by relatives in the private sector was extremely difficult largely due to a lack of information.

Problems related to beneficiary identification/verification affected timely implementation of the project. The possible solution might be strengthening collaboration/coordination with partners and more support of institutional capacity-building for the government, MRA and CRA.

3.3. Food-for-work and cash-for-work projects

Following the immediate emergency response period, WFP shifted focus from relief to support sustainable livelihoods among the targeted population groups. In June 2009, FFW and CFW activities were initiated in resettlement and return areas.

The overall goal was to improve food security. FFW and CFW helped participant households rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure to increase food production. A total of 61 projects were approved for 65,000 beneficiaries, including 15,000 IDPs.

Projects were implemented in rural areas and included rehabilitating irrigation channels, arable land, feeder roads, potable water pipelines, land-protecting gabions and green belts. Beneficiaries could fence their new houses with kitchen gardens and agricultural land allocated to them and arrange water wells in the settlements.

Based on the prioritized needs of the whole community, the project proposals were prepared by the communities themselves with support and training from WFP field staff and in coordination with the local authorities.

One person representing a household participated in the project activities and received a four-member family food ration or cash incentive for each day worked at the project site.

The FFW ration consisted of 2.2 kgs of wheat flour, 120 gms of vegetable oil and 120 gms of sugar. The cash value of the family ration was 5 GEL per day.¹ One person per household could work for a maximum of 22 days per month receiving a total monthly amount of 110 GEL, in line with the minimum subsistence level of 113 GEL per month.

Through FFW and CFW interventions, WFP helped beneficiaries rehabilitate 540 km of irrigation scheme to improve irrigation over 28,900 hectares of land; construct 6,560 m³ gabions to protect 1,900 hectares of agricultural land; improve quality of over 180 hectares of arable land; construct/rehabilitate 27 km potable water pipeline; fence 295 hectares of land, plant 800 seedlings to arrange green belt on 0.45 hectare of land, dig out 25 water wells; gravel 3 km of feeder road and rehabilitate 35 km of road gutter channels.

4. Cumulative totals for numerical targets, success at accomplishing intermediate results, including a comparison of actual vs. planned accomplishments (as set forth in the work plans) and an explanation any shortfalls if they occurred.

4.1. Beneficiaries

The actual beneficiary figures are based on the report from implementing partners as well as WFP's monitoring reports. A decreasing trend in the overall numbers of beneficiaries continued during the period of October 2008-March 2009, the period covered by the UN Emergency Flash Appeal that was the basis for WFP to plan its activities.

¹ Monitoring results found daily and seasonal labour rates vary from 15 GEL in villages near large farms and district centres to 7 GEL in remote villages. The 5 GEL amount was agreed following extensive discussions among implementing agencies and the Government.



A sharp decrease in number of displaced people from August to October 2008, was followed by the relatively slow movement of IDPs back to their houses after the acute emergency period. Initially, 31,000 people were estimated as unable to return home in the foreseeable future and would be granted IDP status. However, the final number of persons eligible for the cash transfer agreed with the MRA and CRA figure of 28,600.

The estimated number of the people requiring relief food aid in the adjacent area was 69,000. This support was planned to last through March 2009.

However, on a later stage of the emergency, WFP developed socio-economic targeting criteria to identify the most food insecure among the conflict affected people. This resulted in a gradual decrease of beneficiaries to 58,000 persons and further to 23,000 starting from May 2009, when WFP initiated FFW and CFW activities.

Component	Caseload	
	Planned	Actual
General Food Distribution (GFD)	100,000	90,000
Direct Cash Transfer	31,000	28,600
Food-for-work		50,000
Cash-for-Work		15,000

Total² 100,000 90,000

² IDPs under DCT and CFW as well as 50,000 FFW participants were assisted through GFD, thus counted only once.

4.2. Food commodities

Initially, WFP planned to procure 3,910 MT of the different food commodities. However, a significant reduction in international food prices and transport rates allowed WFP to buy more food, in two tranches to avoid prolonged storage of food commodities during the summer months.

Intervention	Food Planned		Food Purchased		Food Distributed	Balance as of 1 Nov 2009 ³
	US\$	MT	US\$	MT	MT	Mt
General Food Distribution	4,000,000	3,910	4,000,000	5,048	3,300	748
Food-for-work					1,000	

Total 4,000,000 3,910 4,000,000 5,048 4,300 748

³ This balance will be distributed through GFD and FFW at the next round of distribution.

4.3. Cash Interventions

The decrease in the IDP caseload resulted in reduction in the amount required for direct cash transfer. WFP proposed to use the available cash balance for CFW activities.

Intervention	Budget (US\$)	
	Plan	Actual
Direct Cash Transfer	1,000,000	477,890
Cash-for-Work		490,000

Total⁴ 1,000,000 967,890

⁴ Includes cash transferred to the beneficiaries as well as administrative costs. US\$32,110 is excluded from total



Success Story

Skra is one of 36 new settlements built by the Government of Georgia to provide accommodation for people displaced due to the August 2008 crisis. The settlement is situated next to the village of Skra, a few kilometres away from Gori town. A total of 86 families (298 people) live in the Skra settlement, hoping one day to return to their houses in the villages of Patara and Didi Liakhvi Gorge in South Ossetia.

In December 2008, the Government of Georgia allocated to each IDP household a house with 0.06 ha of land for kitchen gardening. The newly built houses consist of three rooms, including two bedrooms and a small kitchen. Outside toilets were built separately. In the Skra settlement there were no water supply systems or bathrooms in the new houses.

Later, the Government allocated to IDP households an additional 0.34 ha of land plots for farming activities. Seeds and agricultural tools were also provided by the Government for each family, allowing them to start cultivating their land plots and kitchen gardens. However, fencing of the allocated plots and small storage facilities remained an acute need to optimise use of land.

Another problem was water supply for the settlement - there was only one 70-meter deep well that was only water source for the whole community.

IDP households had scarce cash resources. The main source of their cash income was a monthly social allowance of GEL 24 per person. Even with WFP's monthly dry food rations, the social allowance does not allow IDPs to cover their requirements for additional food and essential non-food items.

Beneficiaries were constantly raising these issues with the Government authorities, representatives of donor organisations visiting the settlements, and NGOs operating in the area. Beneficiaries discussed the issues related to the scarce water availability with WFP monitors and proposed digging water wells as a CFW project.

The project proposal was designed by the IDP initiative group established in the settlement and the project was coordinated with the local district authorities. In May 2009, WFP approved the project for the period of May-August 2009 with participation of 32 IDPs. One member from household participated in the project works and received a daily cash incentive in the amount of GEL 5.

Gocha and Khatuna Khaxniashvili have lived in the Skra Settlement since December 2008. The couple was just married. Gocha was among the participants of CFW project, during which 25 wells (4-7 meters deep) were dug in the new settlement. Each well is shared by 2-4 IDP households.

Now Gocha's family has access to water and can irrigate the small kitchen garden around their house. Enough water is also available for other household needs.

Gocha received 110 GEL per month during the 4-month project period. The CFW intervention ensured a direct increase of household cash income and gave decision-making flexibility to the beneficiary household on how to prioritise expenditures to meet household needs.

With the income earned through CFW activities, Gocha managed to purchase necessary materials to construct a bathroom and a traditional Georgian storage facility "Nalia" to store their harvest.



Photos

Food distribution in IDPs settlement, village Akhalsopeli, Kareli district







Bread distribution in IDPs collective centre, Tbilisi





Food-for-work project – construction of land protecting gabion, village Kvenatkotsa, Kareli district





Cash-for-work project – digging water wells in the IDPs settlement, Village Skra, Gori district





Cash-for-work project – fencing of agricultural land and kitchen gardens in IDPs Settlement, village Akhalsopeli, Kareli district



