

# World Food Programme

## Cash and Vouchers



- Cash transfers provide beneficiaries with money, while vouchers can be used to purchase food for a given quantity or value in selected shops.
- WFP is scaling up the use of cash and vouchers as an alternative, or complement, to traditional food assistance.
- WFP is forging innovative partnerships to deliver and manage assistance, including the use of debit cards, mobile phones, on-line facilities and a broad range of services offered by the private sector.
- For WFP, cash and vouchers can cut down the costs of transporting and storing food and benefit the local economy. They can harness WFP's potential to strengthen local markets and help small farmers. Yet, it shouldn't be assumed that cash and vouchers are always more efficient and effective than in-kind food assistance.
- Cash and vouchers are particularly useful where food is available in the marketplace, but people lack the resources to buy it -- where access to food is the problem, rather than availability.
- Implementing partners may include banks, institutions providing microcredit and other financial services for the poor, post offices and money-transfer companies, telecom companies and NGOs. Governments are usually involved in the planning and implementation of cash transfer pilots.
- Cash and vouchers can be integrated into broader social protection and safety net systems.
- WFP is working with the International Food Policy Research Institute to undertake detailed research on the impact of cash and vouchers in five countries.





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**WFP is currently implementing cash and voucher schemes in 25 countries, including Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Syria and Zambia.**

- In **Burkina Faso**, WFP launched its first voucher operation in Africa in February 2009—reaching more than 200,000 people in the capital, Ouagadougou and the city of Bobo-Dioulasso. The scheme was aimed at people living in urban environments where food was available in the market, but at very high prices.

- In **Syria**, thousands of Iraqi refugees receive their WFP entitlement in the form of a text message code on their mobile phone. Refugees exchange the electronic vouchers for food items including fresh foods such as cheese and eggs, which would not normally be part of a traditional aid ration. In September 2010, the scheme was extended to cities outside Damascus.

- In the **Philippines**, dubbed the “texting capital of the world,” WFP began a pilot project in October 2010 which uses SMS messages to distribute payments earned on Cash-For-Work projects.



(right) A Zambian shopkeeper is paid electronically - and instantly - for food rations provided to WFP beneficiaries who pay using a scratch card voucher. The electronic voucher system is currently being used for the WFP social safety net protection programme, SPLASH (Sustainable Programme for Livelihoods and Solutions for Hunger).



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For more information go to:  
[www.wfp.org/content/revolution-food-aid-food-assistance-innovations-overcoming-hunger](http://www.wfp.org/content/revolution-food-aid-food-assistance-innovations-overcoming-hunger)

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