



World Food Programme

Cash and Vouchers for Food

- ◆ WFP delivers hundreds of thousands of tons of food each year, but increasingly, gives hungry people cash or vouchers to buy food for themselves.
- ◆ By 2015, WFP expects almost a third of its assistance programmes to be delivered in the form of cash, vouchers and new kinds of “digital food”.
- ◆ Through mobile phones, smart cards, e-vouchers delivered by text messaging, and other innovative methods, WFP is addressing hunger in new ways.
- ◆ Cash and vouchers are particularly useful where food is available but people lack the resources to buy it – where access to food is the problem, rather than availability.
- ◆ For WFP, cash and vouchers can cut down the costs of transporting and storing food. They benefit the local economy and harness WFP’s potential to strengthen local markets and help smallholder farmers. Yet it shouldn’t be assumed that cash and vouchers are always more efficient and effective than in-kind food assistance.
- ◆ 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 voucher distributions in five countries.



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The number of planned cash and voucher projects has increased ten-fold, from five projects in 2008 to 51 in 2011. In 2011, WFP programmed a total of US\$208 million in distributions using cash or vouchers.

WFP is currently implementing cash and voucher projects in 38 different countries including Afghanistan, Niger, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Philippines and Zambia.

- In **Afghanistan**, WFP has provided vouchers to poor city-dwellers in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Mazar to help them cope with high food prices.
- In **Burkina Faso**, WFP launched its first voucher operation in Africa in February 2009 – reaching more than 200,000 people. The scheme was aimed at people living in urban environments where food was available in the market, but at very high prices.
- In **Kenya**, WFP has two projects running over a six-year period with a combined cash and voucher transfer value of approximately US\$114 million.
- In **Niger**, as part of a massive operation during the 2010 food crisis, more than US\$7 million in cash was distributed to more than 90,000 households; three quarters of those receiving money were women.



Afghanistan



Niger



(left) 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 WFP's **SPLASH** project (Sustainable Programme for Livelihoods and Solutions for Hunger).