



World Food Programme Delivering with Cash and Vouchers

WFP delivers millions of tons of food each year, but, increasingly, the organisation gives hungry people cash or vouchers to buy food for themselves.

Through innovative smart cards and “e-vouchers” delivered by text messaging, WFP’s “digital food” is addressing hunger in places where there is food in the market but where poor people cannot afford to buy it.

Cash and vouchers (C&V) 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. WFP’s implementing partners may include banks, institutions providing microcredit and other financial services for the poor, post offices and money-transfer companies, telecom companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

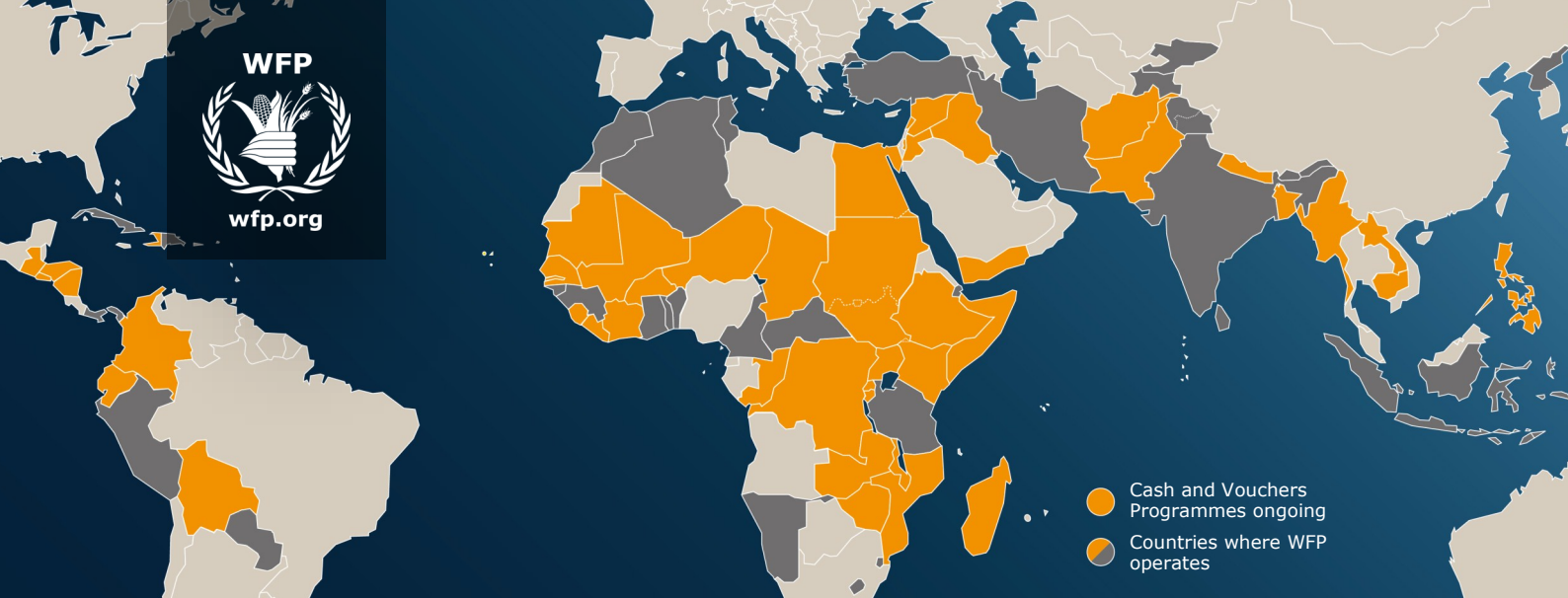
For WFP, cash and vouchers can cut down the costs of transporting and storing food. They benefit the local economy and harness WFP’s potential to strengthen local markets and help smallholder farmers.

WFP is also keen to maximize the use of C&V transfers as an immediate response in emergencies when food is available for purchase on the local market. Cash and vouchers can be integrated into broader social protection and safety net systems. WFP recognizes the importance of building and/or using government systems and infrastructure to support this kind of quick and effective deployment. (See next page for more information.)

Yet it shouldn’t be assumed that cash and vouchers are always more efficient and effective than traditional food assistance. There are many contexts in which cash and vouchers may be not be feasible, for example where the supply of food in the market is unreliable. WFP conducts in-depth analysis in order to choose the most effective way of achieving the results needed whether it be through vouchers, food or cash. For example, where dietary diversity is a concern, fresh food vouchers for dairy, meat and vegetables may be the best option.

Cash and vouchers lend themselves to delivering all kinds of assistance — not just food, and with this in mind, WFP, with its expertise in humanitarian assistance and its wide global reach, is building delivery platforms for its own C&V programmes in such a way as to accommodate other UN agencies, NGOs and partners.





In 2014, WFP is using cash and voucher transfer modalities in 87 projects across 56 countries worldwide. This has grown from 2009 when WFP used cash and vouchers in just 26 projects in 19 countries.

Growth Trend

Since WFP first embraced cash and vouchers as appropriate tools to address hunger, the approved cash and voucher programme of work has grown from US\$10 million in 2009 to US\$837 million last year, a figure which represented 17 percent of WFP's total programme of work. This figure is expected to exceed US\$1.25 billion in 2014. This trend of growth is expected to continue in the coming years.

WFP reached nearly 8 million people with C&V transfers in 2013 which represents, on average, a 35 percent annual increase in C&V beneficiaries over the last five years.

The Syria regional emergency operation provides voucher assistance to Syrian refugees in five neighbouring countries. This has been the largest cash and/or voucher programme that WFP has ever implemented, transferring US\$308 million to 1.4 million people in 2013.

In Sudan, voucher assistance in North Kordofan has been used as a rapid response mechanism to assist newly displaced people in urban areas where traders have capacity and can be mobilised quickly. Over 2014, across Sudan, WFP has planned voucher transfers of US\$40 million to nearly 600,000 people.

This year, the second largest planned cash and voucher programme is taking place in Niger. The three-year programme (running from 2014-2016) is due to transfer US\$230 million in cash to 1.9 million people. The cash transfer assistance is a safety net for very poor households during lean seasons, and is implemented to protect assets and livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition.

In 2013, WFP launched an emergency operation in the Philippines to assist people affected by Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). WFP was quickly able to deploy cash and voucher assistance, where feasible, in order to provide life-saving food assistance for people whose homes and livelihoods had been destroyed. In this rapid response context, WFP, collaborating closely with the Government, transferred cash and voucher assistance through the government-owned safety net infrastructure.

