

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES



# Cash-based transfers

## January 2019 update

### KEY FIGURES

- In 2018, WFP delivered US\$1.7 billion in cash-based transfers (CBT) —35 percent of its total assistance — in 62 countries and 95 operations.
- The top 5 operations by volume were: Turkey (US\$465 million), Lebanon (US\$275 million), Jordan (US\$160 million), Somalia (US\$115 million), and Yemen (US\$85 million, including commodity vouchers).
- The Syria + 5 crisis accounted for 53 percent of WFP's overall cash assistance in 2018 (US\$ 921,618 million).
- WFP is increasingly using unrestricted cash transfers in the Syria Regional Response Operation, empowering beneficiaries with choice to decide how to receive their assistance, and where and on what to spend it. While 48.3 percent of CBT transfer value was unrestricted cash in 2017 (US\$369 million), in 2018 73 percent (US\$ 676 million) was unrestricted cash.
- Projections for 2019 estimate that WFP will deliver US\$2.17 billion in CBT, representing 40 percent of the total transfer value — and up from US\$10 million in 2009.

WFP delivers cash transfers to empower vulnerable people with the means and choice to address their household essential needs in local markets according to their priorities. Food and nutrition are essential needs.

WFP is excellent at distributing food, vouchers and cash within integrated programmes. Depending on the context, WFP chooses the modality, or combination of modalities, that can obtain the best food and nutrition outcomes, and is able to sequence and/or switch between them across time and geography.

## ABOUT WFP CASH TRANSFERS

WFP cash programming connects vulnerable people to the providers of essential goods and services, while also enhancing financial and retail sectors.

### INITIAL FINDINGS

Our findings reaffirm the idea that choice is critical to improved food security: **when vulnerable households are empowered to address their own needs, they make choices that improve their food and nutrition security.**

- In Turkey, refugees receiving cash show significant improvements in coping strategies, debt and food security, with acceptable levels of food consumption increasing from 77 percent to 88 percent (July 2018).
- In Lebanon, 91 percent of families receiving multipurpose cash report prioritizing food in their household expenditure, followed by rent and medical fees. Their food consumption score increased by 13 percent (Nov 2017 – April 2018).

WFP's cash assistance can also provide a substantial **boost to local economies.** For example, studies in Lebanon, Rwanda and Uganda have shown that US\$1 given in cash to a refugee or vulnerable person translates into about US\$2 in the local economy, compared to US\$1.20 when food rations are provided.

Figure 1: Global trend in ratio of cash to vouchers

Modality	2017 (m)	2018 (m)	2017 (%)	2018 (%)
Unrestricted	707	1,079	49%	62%
Restricted	661	575	46%	33%
Commodity vouchers	77	91	5%	5%
Total	1,445	1,745	100%	100%

## ASSURANCES

**Choice for our beneficiaries comes with end-to-end assurances.** WFP is committed to mitigating cash-related risks, improving protection of beneficiaries and their data, and increasing accountability to people, donors, and governments through:

- **Improving the protection of vulnerable people** and their entitlements through adequate sensitization to ensure that they are not subject to fraud or any other kind of abuse or exploitation;
- Increased use of **digital technologies** and payments to trace every single dollar;
- **Strengthening reporting, analytics and segregation of duties** across the digital cash flow (from beneficiary payment list to transfer reconciliation) within more **robust systems** to quickly detect fraud and be accountable for the cash transferred, ensuring that the right amount reaches the right people at the right time.

Figure 2: Modalities by number of countries

