



WFP in Northeast Nigeria



Credit: WFP/Adedeji Ademigbudi

CASH-BASED TRANSFERS FOR DELIVERING FOOD

Overview

WFP provides food assistance to some 1.1 million people monthly in Northeast Nigeria. Increasingly, food assistance comes through cash-based transfers (CBT) that allow beneficiaries to buy food in the market and be more in charge of key decisions that affect their lives.

In early 2017, WFP disbursed around US\$3 million on average each month to 193,000 people in 7 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Borno and Yobe states through CBT. By December 2017, the number of beneficiaries had increased to almost 300,000 in 8 LGAs—accounting for about 30 percent of WFP activities in the country. 56 percent of WFP CBT beneficiaries are women.

A scale up to up to 430,000 beneficiaries is planned for the first quarter of 2018, as a large proportion of the crisis-affected population live in urban areas with functional markets and good connectivity.

How we work

WFP uses a range of cash-based transfers including food vouchers and mobile money. Households are provided with 17,000 to 24,500 naira per month which is estimated to provide for a family size of up to five people.

CBT beneficiaries have been largely assisted through mobile money: vulnerable households receive a monthly electronic credit allocation on their phones. The recipients receive an SMS notification from WFP, and can then withdraw the cash or use the mobile money at local shops equipped with mobile-money services. 131 fixed agents run shops where beneficiaries can cash out when convenient—up from 32 fixed agents at the beginning of 2017.

WFP piloted e-vouchers (essentially pre-paid debit cards) in Borno and Yobe states in February 2017. Each card is automatically loaded with money each month, allowing beneficiaries to buy the food that they need, when they need it. The number of retailers providing food through e-vouchers increased from 29 to 48 in 2017, and is expected to increase to 80 during the first quarter of 2018.

SCOPE

WFP partners with IOM to conduct biometric registrations of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and imports beneficiary data into SCOPE, the central repository of WFP beneficiary data.

The SCOPE platform is an online database system used for beneficiary registration, intervention setups, distribution planning, transfers and distribution reporting. Once initial registration is complete, an ID card is provided to participants allowing a more efficient monitoring and tracking of food and cash distributions.

Partnerships

WFP engages with telecom companies and financial service providers, such as Airtel and Access Bank, as well as 41 local food retailers to optimize the food supply chain and ensure that consumers get the best possible price. As recent surveys show a gradual recovery of markets, WFP is contracting 50 additional retailers.

WFP, in collaboration with UNHCR, UNICEF, IMC and Plan International, is exploring new delivery mechanisms that could reduce transaction costs. WFP also intends to link up with partner efforts in inclusive financing and digital money to ensure beneficiaries can transition to more sustainable forms of self reliance.



Halima Garba

"The insurgency left everyone homeless and hungry. When the situation became calm, my husband had no job and I had to beg to cater for the children, while he did menial jobs," says a 40-year old Halima Garba. "Now, I was registered and given a blue card with my picture to receive a paper at a food store to collect food. Mungode (thanks) World Food Programme."

The mother of eight children says her children are in school now because they have food to eat and stay in class. Halima is one of thousands of vulnerable people living in Maiduguri.

Halima joins the thousands of IDPs inside a vast compound waiting patiently to register for WFP's newly introduced electronic voucher cards to get food from retailers approved by WFP. Powered by the SCOPE platform, the card allows them to buy food at participating stores.