



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief September 2018



Operational Context

Bangladesh is poised to transition to middle-income country status by 2020 and is making significant advances in the nutrition and food security front.

Facing critical levels of poverty and undernutrition, exacerbated by high population density, Bangladesh strives to continue with sustained growth and economic development in the future. Towards this end, high prevalence of child marriage, adolescent pregnancies and undernutrition in mothers and adolescent girls contributes to the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition. This is compounded by high rates of stunting in children under the age of 5 that is a perceptible hindrance to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh.

WFP, present in Bangladesh since 1974, transitioned to a new Country Strategic Plan in April 2017. The CSP reinforces WFP's commitment to capacity strengthening of the government counterparts, facilitates direct provision of food assistance in emergencies and activities aimed at evidence creation.

Besides, WFP is actively engaged in humanitarian response to the Rohingya refugee crisis triggered by the large-scale influx of the Rohingya population fleeing targeted violence and torture from Myanmar, which prompted activation of a Level 3 Emergency Response in Cox's Bazar in September 2017.



Population: **165 million**

2015 Human Development Index:
139 out of 188

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **36% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

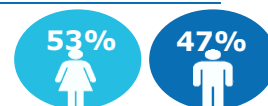
12,463.07 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 3.3 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 275 m total confirmed contribution for Cox's Bazar L3 Emergency Response

US\$ 27.7 m six months (Oct 2018 - March 2019) net funding requirements for CSP of which **US\$ 21.7 m** is for Cox's Bazar Emergency Response

1.3 m people assisted
in August 2018



Operational Updates

- WFP Rohingya Refugee Emergency Response:** The mid-term review of the [Joint Response Plan \(JRP\)](#) has been published, defining priorities for the rest of the year and incorporating lessons learnt from the ongoing emergency response. As of September 2018, there are an estimated 921,000 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar ([ISCG reports](#)).
- The JRP indicates slight decline in the **Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)** from 19.3 percent in October/November 2017 to 12 percent in April/May.
- Active Cyclone Preparedness Measures:** WFP is engaged in risk mitigation and emergency preparedness measures for the forthcoming cyclone season through prepositioning items and machinery, building cyclone shelters and capacity strengthening trainings and awareness programmes. Additionally, it is actively liaising with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the Government including the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), to reduce loss of lives and perceptible damages.
- Life-saving Food Assistance:** The 23rd round of General Food Assistance (GFA) was completed, reaching 145,320 households with in-kind food; E-voucher assistance reached 209,606 refugees.
- Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Programmes:** 163,226 children under five years of age and 33,841 pregnant and breastfeeding women from both the refugee and host communities were assisted at the Blanket/Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (B/TSFP).
- Rice Fortification:** WFP is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA) for the Food Friendly Programme – which aims to support 500,000 beneficiaries with fortified nutritious rice by the end of 2018.

Forecast based Financing (FbF): WFP is liaising with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) to formulate a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to ensure timeliness and effectiveness of cash distributions to the population impacted by floods.

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Oct - March Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
530.9 m	358.8 m	27.7 m

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with the national targets by 2020.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets.
 - Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition.
 - Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling up post-harvest rice fortification.
 - Policy advice and technical assistance to scale-up school feeding.
- As a pilot, FbF will target 4,000 households (mostly women-headed) in two areas in north-west Bangladesh.
 - **School Feeding:** As a pilot, WFP is managing community based cooked meal programme in two schools in Lama upazila (Bandarban district) and has plans to scale it up to 25,000 beneficiaries by December.
 - 341,000 children are receiving micro-nutrient fortified biscuits and 16,000 children are receiving cooked meals daily across schools in Bangladesh, including in Cox's Bazar.
 - **Vulnerable Group Development (VGD):** The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) has formally agreed to include 20,000 women from EFSN (Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition) programme within the folds of VGD.
 - VGD aims to improve the food security and nutritional status of ultra-poor women and their families through a combination of food allowance (30 kg wheat/rice per month), life skills and income generating trainings, intertwined with savings and credit facilities provided by non-governmental organization partners.

Monitoring

- During August, 19 food distribution points and 18 e-voucher shops were monitored; and 140 households were interviewed for monitoring nutrition programme.
- 99 percent of the interviewed beneficiaries were aware of their entitlements.
- Amongst 48 percent of the interviewed households, both men and women decide together on how to utilize their assistance, more so in the e-voucher modality.
- Fuel crisis remains a perceptible challenge for the beneficiaries – with a significant percentage still using firewood as their primary source.

- Therefore, WFP is actively promoting the usage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), through the inter-agency partnership project with IOM and FAO, SAFE. The first round of distribution started in September targeted 2500 households and plan is to scale it up to 9000 households.



Partnership Forum

- With the aim of consolidating programmatic focus and exploring opportunities for potential collaborations, the partners' forum was organized for the first time by WFP in Dhaka involving senior representatives of forty major national and international partners. Some of the key themes discussed were food safety and food systems, public awareness and behavioral change communications, hunger and poverty.
- The broad consensus was to focus on scaling up nutrition programmes, with targeted efforts to ensure food security by increasing productivity and investments in agriculture.

Challenges

- **Overstretched funding scenario:** WFP's emergency response in Cox's Bazar is facing significant funding limitations, especially to continue with in-kind food assistance, which currently serves approximately three-quarters of the refugee population.
- WFP is actively seeking support from partners and donors to continue with the emergency response in Cox's Bazar providing blanket food assistance to 865,000 refugees every month.

Donors

Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, DFID-UK, European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, TILDA, UN Common Funds and Agencies, UN CERF, USA, WPD Share the Meal, and Multilateral and Private Donors.