



World Food Programme

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief

October 2018

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Bangladesh is poised to transition into a middle-income country 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 consistent socio-economic growth in the future. Prevalence of child marriage, adolescent pregnancies and undernutrition in mothers and adolescent girls are considerable impediments to these goals. 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 the Country Strategic Plan in April 2017. The CSP reinforces WFP's commitment to capacity strengthening of the government counterparts, facilitating direct provision of food assistance in emergencies and activities aimed at evidence creation.

Furthermore, in response to the unprecedented influx of the Rohingya population in August 2017, the CSP was amended to facilitate WFP's tailored response to the refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar. Presently, WFP is providing food and nutrition assistance to over 870,000 refugees besides implementing a range of livelihood programmes for both the host and refugee communities.



Population: **165 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **139 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

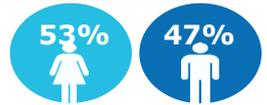
12,648 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 3.2 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 193 m total confirmed contribution for Cox's Bazar L3 Emergency Response

US\$ 36.9 m six months (Nov 2018 - April 2019) net funding requirements for CSP of which **US\$ 33.1 m** is for Cox's Bazar L3 Emergency Response

1.27 m people assisted in October 2018



Operational Updates

- WFP Executive Director visits Rohingya refugee camps:** WFP's Executive Director, David Beasley, and the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Ms Ulla Tornaes, visited Cox's Bazar Rohingya refugee camps to understand WFP's Emergency operation and related Danish Government and NGO activities. As of November 2018, the total population of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar stands at 923,000 ([ISCG reports](#)).
- Life-saving Food Assistance:** The 25th round of General Food Assistance (GFA) was completed, reaching 146,500 households with in-kind food; e-voucher assistance reached 45,800 households (211,700 individuals).
- Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Programmes:** 182,000 children under five years of age (CU5) and 35,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women from both the refugee camps and host communities received nutrition assistance.

Country Level Programmes

- Rice Fortification:** Fortified rice distribution has been incorporated in the Food Friendly Programme (FFP), one of the largest Government social safety net initiatives, targeting over 600,000 beneficiaries across ten sub-districts. It is planned to be scaled up to 15 sub-districts by 2019.
- First time cash distribution through Forecast Based Financing (FbF):** WFP made a first-of-its-kind mobile cash transfer to around 3,400 extremely poor and disaster-prone households. This was part of a simulation exercise on the FbF Flood Early Action protocol to test resiliency of the model. It was organized simultaneously in WFP Country Office, Rangpur Sub Office and the Financial Service Provider's Office.
- Nutrition Workshop inaugurated by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare:** The workshop on the National Plan of Action was organized in Sirajganj involving relevant Government departments and NGOs.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Nov – April Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
530.9 m	360.8 m	33.1 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.

- The CIP2 (Second Country Investment Plan) articulated within a framework of nutrition sensitive food systems was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Food, and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. The cohesion between NPAN2 action plan and CIP2 investment plan in achieving key nutrition outcomes and supporting coordination structure in Bangladesh needs to be closely followed-up.
- **School Feeding:** 361,000 children have received micro-nutrient fortified biscuits and 18,000 children cooked meals daily across learning centres and Government-run schools in Bangladesh, including Cox's Bazar.
- **Vulnerable Group Development (VGD):** The National Committee has recommended approval of US\$ 35 million for VGD reform through the expansion of the investment component to cover 100,000 women (500,000 beneficiaries) in 64 upazilas across Bangladesh with WFP's technical assistance.

Monitoring

- During October, over 450 calls were received by Dhaka out of which 73 percent were from female beneficiaries across Cox's Bazar, Forecast based Financing in Kurigram and Nobo Jatra Project (NJP) in Khulna.
- In Cox's Bazar, 63 percent of the calls received were specific distribution related complaints: delay in receiving food, distribution schedule and venue queries, duplicate membership amongst others.
- In the Nobo Jatra project, complainants highlighted several issues pertaining to delays in cash transfer and bKash account hacking.



Stories from the field

"Nobojatra assistance has helped shape my identity", retorts Shahanara

In April 2018, Shahanara was enrolled into the Nobojatra project during her trimester. She receives BDT 2,200 (US\$ 26) every month alongside participating in a focused training in Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC). She concedes, "I feel more free and confident now, I can decide for myself and my family". The cash assistance has not just helped her elevate living-standards of her family but has also raised her status in front of her husband. 'Previously, my days were spent just cooking – it was tiresome. Now surprisingly, my husband cooks for me, I couldn't be happier', Shahanara retorts. During pregnancy the likes of Shahanara are much relieved by such assistance and can concentrate solely on their health.

Challenges

- **Forthcoming general elections:** Bangladesh goes for general elections end of this year. As previously recorded, this is a time of elevated security mishaps due to organized political strikes by competing groups that could have significant impact on WFP operations across the country.
- **Ongoing cyclone season:** Cox's Bazar was on high alert, for Cyclone Titli. Persisting rainfall in this season is a veritable hindrance to swift implementation of programmes on the ground.

Major Donors

Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, DFID-UK, European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, UN Common Funds and Agencies, UN CERF, USA, WFP Share the Meal, and Multilateral and Private Donors.