



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief March 2019



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. According to the World Economic League Table, Bangladesh is expected to be among the top 25 economies by 2033.

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. Local elections are planned to be held in five phases across Bangladesh starting from March 2019.

WFP, present in Bangladesh since 1974, transitioned to the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 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 generation. 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**

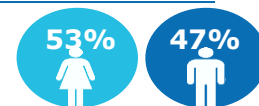
In Numbers

10,844 mt of food distributed

US\$ 3.85 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 98.55 million six-month (April-September 2019) net funding requirements for the CSP of which **US\$ 87.5 million** is for the L2 emergency response in Cox's Bazar

1.24 m people assisted
in March 2019



WFP Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar

- **Providing life-saving assistance and scaling up electronic vouchers:**

WFP continues to assist over 870,000 refugees through in-kind food and e-voucher assistance. Currently, one third of the refugee population is receiving assistance through the e-voucher modality across 21 e-voucher shops in eight locations. WFP plans to transition the entire refugee population from general food distributions to e-vouchers, providing them more choice and improving their dietary diversity.

- **Skill building for women to ensure food security:**

To enhance capacity and resilience through income generating skills development, WFP along with the United Nations United Population Fund (UNFPA) launched 10 Women-Led Community Centres, serving both the host and refugee communities.

- **Improving food security and nutrition for vulnerable women in the host community:**

The Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) project targets 20,000 most vulnerable women among the host communities of Cox's Bazar. An additional 20,000 women will be included in 2019.

Development Programmes

- **School Meals:**

In March, 196,000 children received fortified biscuits and 25,000 children received hot meals at their school through WFP school feeding. Following WFP's successful pilot of the hot meals programme since 2013, the Ministry of Primary & Mass Education announced an expansion of the hot meals programme to 16 sub-districts by July 2019 with government funds and WFP technical assistance. Through this initiative, around 400,000 children in about 2,000 schools will receive fresh, nutritious meals.

The Government also announced a cash contribution to WFP of US\$ 3.6 million for school feeding. This will enable WFP to reach more than 172,000 children for a year with micronutrient fortified biscuits.

Contact info: Shorif Sonia (Reports Officer): shorif.sonia@wfp.org

Country Director: Richard Ragan: richard.ragan@wfp.org

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/bangladesh

Photo Credit: Saikat Majumder

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Apr-Sep 2019 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
969.12 m	420.28 m	98.55 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 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.

Strategic Result 1: Access to Food

Strategic Outcome 2: The most vulnerable population of Cox's Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-stricken areas have enhanced food security and nutrition.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar.
- Deliver an integrated assistance package in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Evidence creation on innovative approaches to enhance resilience.
- Implement the Nono Jatra programme.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDG.

Strategic Outcome 4: The humanitarian response system for large-scale natural disasters in Bangladesh can respond with reduced cost and lead time

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Capacity strengthening for emergency response.
- Lead the logistics cluster and co-lead the food-security cluster.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, strengthen global partnership to support country efforts to achieve the SDG

Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to reliable services in the areas of supply chain and emergency telecommunication during crisis.

Focus area: Crisis response

- Coordinate the LS/C and provide efficient common logistics service to support the humanitarian community's response.
- Coordinate the ETS/C and provide efficient common services to support the humanitarian community response.
- Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP).

- **Rice Fortification:**

5,389 mt of fortified rice reached 889,280 beneficiaries in 16 sub-districts in March 2019 through the Ministry of Food's Food Friendly Programme (FFP). FFP is one of the largest social safety net programmes in Bangladesh, and with WFP technical support is beginning to include micronutrient-fortified rice in its distributions.

- **Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN):**

In March, as planned, 282 women received cash transfers under the EFSN programme in Chottogram Hill Tracts. Almost 1,200 women received skills training from government line departments based on their preference. Prior to the training, the women finalized a business plan in consultation with family members.

Monitoring

In March, WFP received over 193 calls of which 191 were responded to immediately. 65 percent of all callers were women. Inquiries and complaints were related to access to cash, food distribution schedule, request for inclusion of new members and the quality of food provided. In the context of the Cox's Bazar Emergency Response, 89 percent of the inquiries and complaints were distribution-related.

Voices from the community

"I plan to set up a tailoring shop in the camp after finishing the training. If I cannot start my business, I will at least be able to sew my own dresses. The one I am wearing now is torn, so I can at least sew it. Also, for my children. I can get them new dresses on the Eid days, which they missed last year," happily exclaims Khodiza, a refugee and a participant in WFP self-reliance programming in Cox's Bazar.

"The volunteers came to our house to let us know about this programme where we can build technical and life skills and do something on our own eventually. In the centre, we are learning tailoring, getting lessons for life skills, and also gardening. We got training to set up gardens, and they also provided us a small land and seeds, so that we can grow our own foods. I feel so confident after coming here, I could never imagine that I will get out of my house to learn something."

"Through this self-reliance programme, I also started receiving a stipend of 1,000 Bangladeshi taka per month. The very first time I received the money, I got some fish and meat for my children. My children cried seeing them in my hand. I am extremely happy to be part of this programme by WFP, and I really want to do something for my children with the training I am receiving."

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