



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief December 2019



## Operational Context

Bangladesh is expected to formally transition to a middle-income country in 2021 and is making significant advances on the nutrition and food security front. According to the World Economic League Table, Bangladesh is set to enter 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 five, which is a hindrance to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh.

WFP has been present in Bangladesh since 1974 and transitioned to a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in April 2017. The CSP reinforces WFP's commitment to strengthening the capacities of government counterparts, providing food assistance in emergencies, and creating evidence on innovative approaches to resilience.

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 880,000 refugees besides implementing a range of livelihood programmes for both the host and refugee communities.



Population: 164 million

2018 Human Development Index: 135 out of 189

Income Level: Least Developed Country

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

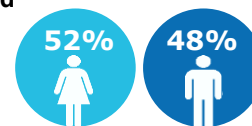
## In Numbers

**8,000 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$4.45 million** cash based transfers made

**US\$31.35 million** six months (January 2020-June 2020) net funding requirements, of which US\$ 24.83 million is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response

**1.12 million people assisted** in December 2019



## Situational Updates

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and Chair Emeritus of BRAC, a major partner of WFP globally, passed away on 20 December 2019. WFP joined the larger humanitarian community in mourning his loss and celebrating his achievements in Bangladesh and globally.

With the monsoon season over and seas relatively calm, Bangladeshi authorities stated an increasing number of Rohingya refugees are once again risking their lives in an attempt to reach Malaysia or Indonesia. The authorities said they are stopping one or two boats a week leaving the country's shores.

Based on media reports, it is predicted that the planned relocation of Rohingya refugees to Bhashan Char will not start before the end of January 2020.

## Operational Updates

In December, WFP assisted 844,505 refugees with General Food Assistance. Of these, WFP provided 390,290 refugees with in-kind food distributions, and 454,215 refugees with e-vouchers. Families can buy their staples, fresh produce and proteins using a WFP Assistance Card (prepaid to US\$9 per person per month) for up to 20 food items at 13 e-voucher outlets and 27 shops in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

WFP shared initial recommendations from the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis during an advocacy event with key stakeholders held on 4 December. This event will help develop a common understanding of the factors driving affordability of a nutritious diet in Bangladesh and include an agreement on the way forward.

WFP will host a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) inception mission in January 2020. The purpose of the mission is to conduct a mid-term review of WFP Bangladesh's CSP 2017-2020. It is expected the mission will share preliminary findings at the end of January 2020. The full report is expected to be completed by March 2020.

The Joint Response Plan 2020 is expected to be finalized at the end of January 2020, targeting 840,000 refugees and 444,000 people from the host communities. Currently, WFP is providing comments to the final draft version to the Inter-Sector Coordination Group.

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## Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
969.12 m	588.63 m	31.35 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:**

- Act 1 Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets.
- Act 2 Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition.
- Act 3 Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling up post-harvest rice fortification.
- Act 4 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:**

- Act 5 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar.
- Act 6 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Act 7 Deliver food assistance in emergencies.

### 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:**

- Act 8 Evidence creation on innovative approaches to enhance resilience.
- Act 9 Implement the Nobo 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

**Activities:**

- Act 10 Capacity strengthening for emergency response.
- Act 11 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, emergency telecommunication, site maintenance and engineering project crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**

- Act 12 Coordinate the LS/C and provide efficient common logistics services to support the humanitarian community's response.
- Act 13 Coordinate the ETS/C and provide efficient common services to support the humanitarian community response.
- Act 14 Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP).

WFP launched a "[Farmers' Market](#)" pilot in December 2019 which allows small-scale farmers in the host communities, aggregators, and retailers, to sell fresh vegetables and fruits to Rohingya refugees. The primary objective is to improve dietary diversity by facilitating direct access to fresh food items, particularly protein (chicken and fish).

With the support of two retailers, WFP has established a "Fresh Fish" corner in two outlets (Mainnerghona and Burmara). Considering the high demand of fish in the camps, preliminary monitoring shows fish sales are relatively higher than fresh vegetables during the first month of operations in November 2019.

WFP launched the "Take Care Children" pilot project in Cox's Bazar refugee Camp 20 in December 2019 for female workers to facilitate and improve women's participation in the site maintenance and engineering project activities by ensuring safe care and feeding of their young children.

In December 2019, WFP piloted bio-degradable paper bags in the e-voucher outlets with the aim of enhancing environmental sustainability in WFP's Cox's Bazar operations.

WFP and UNHCR have published their [Joint Assessment Mission \(JAM\) Report 2019: Cox's Bazar](#), Bangladesh. The report provides an in-depth situational analysis of the different sectors and provides recommendations.

### Voices from the community



In Cox's Bazar, child marriage is common, as it is elsewhere in Bangladesh, with over half of girls in the country married before the age of 18. WFP's livelihoods project uses art to put women's issues centre stage with the organization of theatre session to raise awareness around the issue. Read the full story [here](#).

### Donors

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