



WFP Bangladesh Country Brief December 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

COVID-19 cases continued to increase in Bangladesh. By 31 December there were 513,510 positive cases in the country, including 5,358 positive cases in host communities in Cox's Bazar and 366 positive cases among Rohingya refugees.

Bangladesh is among the five fastest growing economies in the world with an average growth rate of 6.5 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic is, however, expected to weaken this growth significantly. The latest South East Asia Economic Focus released by the World Bank estimated that regional growth will fall to a range between 1.8 and 2.8 percent in 2020.

The Government of Bangladesh has ended the national lockdown which was in place from 26 March to 30 June, resulting in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many, especially those working in the informal sector. Wearing facemasks while outside remains compulsory to contain the spread of COVID-19.

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

In response to the influx of over 745,000 Rohingya refugees in August 2017, the CSP was amended to facilitate WFP's tailored response to the crisis in Cox's Bazar. Since the start of the crisis, WFP has provided food assistance and nutrition services as well as life-skills training, disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities and common engineering services to the camp population every month. WFP also supports host community populations through longer-term interventions, including nutrition assistance, school feeding, livelihoods programmes and DRR activities.



Population: **167 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **135 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

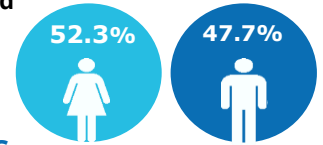
In Numbers

4,770.938 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$11.2 million cash-based transfers made

US\$56.8 million six months (January - June 2021) net funding requirements, of which **US\$46.2 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

1.2 million people assisted in December 2020



Situational Updates

The Government of Bangladesh started the relocation of Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char island and 3,750 refugees had been moved to the island by the end of 2020.

Operational Updates

Through the cash-back urban support programme in Dhaka city, WFP provided support to 73,412 individuals with cash-based transfers and food assistance in December. This included the provision of cash and food support to 31,500 individuals and food basket distribution to 41,912 individuals in quarantine and isolation.

Social Safety Nets: The urban food security programme, operational in two slums in Dhaka, builds in a cash-back element to incentivise nutrition and dietary diversity among beneficiaries, and is designed to support government safety nets become more nutrition sensitive. The project works through 30 designated shops where beneficiaries can use their monthly stipend to buy nutritious food items and avail cash back top-up of up to 25 percent from the designated shops.

School feeding: In December, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks for **2.7 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, WFP reached 25,912 students in Cox's Bazar host community with 82 mt of high energy biscuits, and 186,028 households in refugee camps with 233 mt of high energy biscuits. WFP distributed 38 mt of high-energy biscuits as take-home rations to 10,204 children in government primary and NGO schools in Bandarban district.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) approved a 6-month no-cost extension to the school feeding programme from January to June 2021 and the new development project is now being reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Rice Fortification: WFP continues to advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Government to scale up distribution of fortified rice through its social safety net programmes. The Government plans to expand to 40 new sub-districts under the Food Friendly Programme and 60 new sub-districts under the Vulnerable Group Development programme, reaching now 8 million vulnerable poor in 2021.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jan–June'21 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1,367.71 million	860.36 million*	56.76 million

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).

To increase reach in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, WFP will support the Government of Bangladesh in distributing fortified rice in 11 new sub-districts under the social safety net programmes.

Chittagong Hill Tracts: WFP provides an integrated assistance package in the most vulnerable areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In December, WFP provided monthly subsistence allowances to 2000 women beneficiaries of the Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition programme. In addition, 1100 women growers (smallholder farmers) received follow-up support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on agricultural training and inputs. WFP conducted 96 Self-Help Group (SHG) meetings remotely and provided feedback to beneficiaries on income generating activities.

Nutrition: As part of COVID-19 programmatic adaptations, WFP continues to implement the **targeted supplementary feeding programme** across 45 integrated nutrition sites in the refugee camps and 123 host community clinics. In December, WFP provided malnutrition prevention and treatment services to 42,870 pregnant and lactating women and 183,517 children under 5 in the camps and host communities.

General food assistance: WFP provided **General Food Assistance (GFA)** to 856,663 Rohingya refugees. Almost 99 percent (842,939 Rohingya refugees) received e-vouchers offering 11 items at 21 outlets and the remaining caseload (13,724 Rohingya refugees) received in-kind assistance at one distribution points. **Building Blocks**, WFP's blockchain-based digital ledger, was operational in 16 outlets, serving 85 percent of the total refugee population. To date, Building Blocks has processed US\$ 42.7 million of assistance. WFP opened two new **Fresh Food Corners** at GFA sites in the camps, bringing the total number of Fresh Food Corners to 11. WFP also launched the global **Retailer in a Box** project in Camp 23 transitioning 2,400 households to receive monthly food assistance through e-vouchers.

Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar: WFP started providing monthly allowances to beneficiaries through bKash (a national mobile financial service). This was the first distribution of its kind to take place in Cox's Bazar. The plan is for all possible distributions to take place through this modality by early 2021.

Self-reliance activities in the camps: WFP engaged 22,207 Rohingya refugees in mask production, recycling, traffic management and micro gardening activities in December. A total of 93,501 reusable facemasks were produced this month with over 700,000 produced overall in 2020.

Donors

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam.
 Contributions were also received from Multilateral, Private Donors, UN CERF and UN Pooled Funds.