



# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief January 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## Operational Context

COVID-19 cases continued to increase in Bangladesh. By 31 January there were 534,770 positive cases in the country, including 5,505 positive cases in host communities in Cox's Bazar and 381 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**

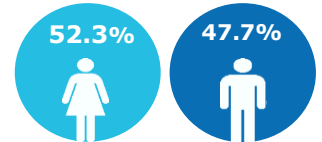
## In Numbers

**3911.50 mt** of food distributed

**US\$8.88 million** cash-based transfers made

**US\$56.76 million** six months (January - June 2021) net funding requirements, of which **US\$46.15 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

**1.11 million people** assisted in January 2021



## Situational Updates

The Government relocated a third group, of 3,242 Rohingya refugees to Bhashan Char island on 29 and 30 January. This brings the total number of refugees on the island to almost 7,000, including 3,446 relocated in December and 306 who were rescued at sea in April.

Fires were reported in Cox's Bazar camps in January. The worst was on 13 January in the Nayapara Registered Camp and Camp 26 in Teknaf sub-district. Approximately 561 households (3,530 individuals) lost their shelters and belongings, including 560 Rohingya households and one Bangladeshi host community household.

The first moderate-scale internal relocation of refugees in Cox's Bazar took place on 13 January. The Government relocated 66 Rohingya households (300 individuals) from Shamlapur to the Kutupalong mega camp.

## Operational Updates

WFP provided **General Food Assistance (GFA)** to 853,856 Rohingya refugees. Almost 99 percent (840,141 people) received e-vouchers offering 11 items at 21 outlets, while the remaining 13,715 beneficiaries received in-kind assistance at one distribution point. **Building Blocks**, WFP's blockchain-based digital ledger, was operational in 16 outlets, serving 84 percent of the total refugee population.

WFP provided rapid response in-kind food assistance to 1,510 households affected by the fires and refugees relocated from Camp 23.

**Social Safety Nets:** Through the urban food security programme in two slums in Dhaka since August 2020, WFP has so far provided 181,385 individuals with cash transfers and food. This includes the distribution of in-kind food to 149,885 individuals in quarantine and isolation. The programme also has a cash-back element to incentivize nutrition and dietary diversity among beneficiaries. In January, WFP provided support to 30,660 individuals (7,300 households) with this cash-back element in January.

The cash-back element is intended to incentivize nutrition and dietary diversity among beneficiaries, and to support government safety nets to 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-ups of up to 25 percent from the designated shops.

**Contact info:** Sharika Tafannum ([sharika.tafannum@wfp.org](mailto:sharika.tafannum@wfp.org)) and Fenella Henderson-Howat ([fenella.henderson@wfp.org](mailto:fenella.henderson@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Richard Ragan ([richard.ragan@wfp.org](mailto:richard.ragan@wfp.org))

Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/bangladesh](http://www.wfp.org/countries/bangladesh)

Photo: © WFP/Mehedi Rahman

## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

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

### 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).

**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. WFP is supporting the Government in scaling up rice fortification in the food friendly programme (FFP) and the vulnerable group development (VGD) programme in 120 new upazilas in 2021 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

**School feeding:** In January, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, WFP reached 25,912 students in Cox's Bazar's host community with 82 mt of high energy biscuits, and reached 186,028 households in refugee camps with 232.5 mt of high energy biscuits. A total of 38 mt of high-energy biscuits was distributed as take-home rations to 10,204 children of government primary and NGO schools in Bandarban district.

**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 January, WFP provided malnutrition prevention and treatment services to 42,929 pregnant and nursing mothers and 174,465 children under 5 in the camps and host communities.

WFP participated in the first preparatory national dialogue for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, which is to be held later this year. WFP is the global lead for Action Track 5: "Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress".

**Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar:** WFP distributed US\$247,628 in allowances to almost 10,000 women, 85 percent of whom received their allowances through bKash.

## 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.

Follow [WFP Bangladesh](#) on Facebook, [@rraganwfp](#) on Twitter and [humanitarian\\_pup](#) on Instagram for more information on WFP Bangladesh.