



SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

School Feeding In Bangladesh

Having food at school not only improves a child's nutrition and health, but also influences their educational outcomes and life achievements. Every US\$1 invested in school feeding programmes yields up to US\$10 in economic returns from improved health, education and productivity over a participant's lifetime.

Since 2011, WFP has worked with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to support pre-primary and primary children in the **National School Feeding Programme** in 104 poverty-prone subdistricts. WFP is managing implementation of the programme in 10 subdistricts, while the 94 others are managed by the Ministry with WFP technical assistance. This assistance spans many areas, including the selection of NGOs to implement activities; policy and project design, programme implementation and scale-up; establishment of minimum standards for biscuit factory selection; quality control and logistics support for delivering biscuits; monitoring and evaluation; identification of alternative school feeding modalities; and inter-agency coordination.

Under the programme, **fortified biscuits** are distributed to primary school students to ensure they receive key micro- and macro- nutrients to support their overall development

and to help achieve the country's quality primary education targets.

Between 2013 and 2020, WFP worked with Government and local communities to pilot daily **school meals** in Bamna and Lama subdistricts in southern Bangladesh and Islampur in the north. Pre-primary and primary school children received a nutritious meal of *khichuri* made from fortified rice and oil, pulses, eggs and locally-grown vegetables. The pilot project linked schools to local producers as most of the fresh vegetables and spices used for the meals were purchased from female farmers living nearby. In addition, school meals were prepared by local women to improve livelihoods opportunities in local communities. While the pilot was a success, the focus is likely to remain on the provision of dry foods until the capacity is sufficiently robust and operational arrangements are developed to manage the distribution of hot meals.

Under the current model, identified some 20 years ago as best suiting the national context, NGOs support schools with the logistics of biscuit distribution and related administration. Over the past years, the programme has evolved and is currently being reviewed to identify how it can be further adjusted for a country which will emerge as a middle-income country in the coming years.

November 2022

The biscuits provide 323 kCal per day and help children meet 71 percent of their daily micronutrient needs. Provided free-of-charge, the biscuits also provide parents with an incentive to keep boys and girls in school. The school feeding programme also delivers an “**essential learning package**” to parents, teachers, school management committees, children and community members. Activities include water and sanitation, health and nutrition education, as well as the establishment of school vegetable gardens. Women are actively engaged within school management committees to enhance their leadership and standing within the wider community.

**75 g packet
of biscuits
per day**

**provided at the
primary & pre-
primary levels**



ACHIEVEMENTS

- From 2012 to 2018, funding and day-to-day management of school feeding activities transferred from WFP to the Government in 11 districts, building on enhanced national capacities and ownership.
- WFP provided policy advice and technical assistance to the Government to design and formulate its first-ever National School Meals Policy. WFP ensured the policy is nutrition-sensitive. This policy was approved in 2019.
- Since 2020, WFP has assisted the Government to assess and adapt the programme to COVID-19 shocks, especially with the suspension of classroom learning. WFP provided technical support to the Government to develop home delivery guidelines, which enabled at-home distributions across the 104 subdistricts from May 2020, and to resume in-classroom school feeding from September 2021 when schools reopened. Through its partner, Room to Read, WFP assisted in the adaptation of several classroom resources for at-home use to support ongoing learning during school closures.
- WFP continues to support the management and implementing the school feeding programme in ten subdistricts, reaching a total of 166,000 Bangladeshi children. In Bandarban, WFP supports approximately 41,000 children per month in five sub-districts. In Cox's Bazar, WFP supports an average of 197,000 Rohingya children in camp learning centres each month as well as 125,000 Bangladeshi students at primary schools in five sub-districts in the surrounding community.
- Implementation in eight sub-districts is funded by the Government of Bangladesh through an annual contribution **US\$ 4.5 million**. In the remaining two sub-districts, Ukhiya and Kutubdia (both located in Cox's Bazar district), the programme is supported by a **US\$ 19 million** award for 2021-2023 from the **McGovern-Dole** International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, enables WFP to provide technical assistance to the Government in managing its national school feeding programme, which serves almost 3 million Bangladeshi schoolchildren across the country. In November, WFP launched its School Feeding Programme for refugees on Bhasan Char.



WFP PLANS

With WFP support, the Government is in the process of conducting a feasibility study to determine the modality for the new National School Feeding Programme which is expected to start in early 2023.

Annual requirement: US\$ 17.3 million of which US\$ 10.8 million for Bangladeshi schoolchildren and national capacity strengthening; and US\$ 6.5 million for refugee children

