



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief January 2023



© WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud

Operational Context

WFP started its first operation in Bangladesh in 1974. While significant economic growth was seen in the past decade, the country still faces challenges with nearly one third of the population facing food insecurity and 20 percent living below the national poverty line. Bangladesh is also vulnerable to natural hazards with most of the population residing in areas prone to floods and cyclones. Meanwhile, the global food crisis – exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine, unstable exchange rates and a foreign exchange shortage – is jeopardizing the country’s post-pandemic economic recovery. Country Strategic Plan 2022-2026 reinforces WFP’s commitment to work with the Government to improve the food security, nutrition and resilience of vulnerable communities across the country, while also providing emergency food assistance to people affected by disasters.

Since 2017, in response to the influx of over 745,000 Rohingya from Myanmar to Cox’s Bazar, WFP has been providing food assistance and nutrition services in the overcrowded refugee camps as well as life-skills training, disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities and common engineering services. WFP also supports the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities nearby the camps through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions. The UN has been closely monitoring developments at the Myanmar border given reports of shelling in the area (late 2022) and of Rohingya living in a no man’s land being forced from their settlements in mid-January 2023.

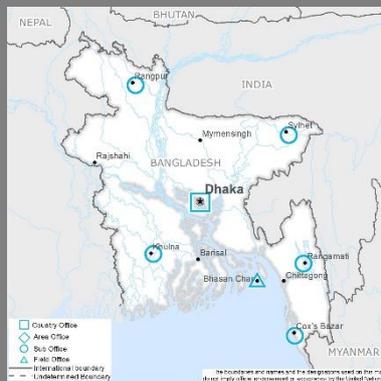
From late 2021, UN agencies have been supporting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, following several small government relocations to the island. WFP provides food assistance and nutrition services to the population, which reached 29,340 refugees by end-January 2023.

Population:
167 million people

Income Level:
Lower middle

2021-22 Human Development
Index: **129 out of 190**

Chronic malnutrition:
31% of children 6-59 months



Contact: Emily Pittman (emily.pittman@wfp.org), Sharika Tafannum (sharika.tafannum@wfp.org), Anika Asgar (anika.asgar@wfp.org)
Officer-in-charge: Simone Parchment (simone.parchment@wfp.org)
Further information: wfp.org/countries/Bangladesh and wfp.org/publications/what-wfp-doing-bangladesh

This operational brief is based on the best available information at the time of drafting. Figures may vary if unique beneficiaries are considered.

In Numbers

981.8 mt of food distributed



US\$12.5 million cash-based transfers made



US\$99.2 million net funding requirements
(March-August 2023)



1 million people assisted



Operational Updates

- WFP is urgently appealing for **US\$125 million** to prevent food ration cuts for the Rohingya refugee population in Cox’s Bazar and maintain current blanket food assistance levels until end-2023. US\$80 million will be required to limit to one ration cut in 2023 (assuming US\$10 per person per month from March until December).
- In **Cox’s Bazar**, WFP provided general food assistance to 905,600 Rohingya via a US\$12 e-voucher per person per month with an additional US\$3 provided to households most vulnerable to food insecurity to complement their nutritious needs via fresh food products. Two outlets were closed in January to enhance cost savings; nineteen outlets are now serving the refugee population with a selection of cereals, fresh food items and spices. The US\$12 e-voucher allows refugees to consume 2,100 kcal per day in alignment with global humanitarian standards.
- WFP continued to provide preventive and curative **nutrition services** to Bangladeshis at 130 community clinics along with refugees at 45 integrated nutrition sites to address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. More than 196,300 pregnant and lactating women, and children aged 6-59 months were reached, including 74,300 refugee children 24-59 months who received a US\$3 nutrition-sensitive e-voucher.
- On **Bhasan Char** WFP supported all 28,300 Rohingya refugees with WFP food assistance and continued a small-scale e-voucher pilot on the island, which reached 2,670 people with a US\$3 top-up to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. Through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes on the island, WFP supported 7,800 pregnant and nursing women, and children aged 6-59 months with specialized nutritious foods.
- The Government and WFP completed a feasibility study to determine the best modality for the National **School Feeding Programme**, which is planned to start in July. In Cox’s Bazar, WFP continued school feeding in camp learning centres, but ended biscuit distributions in most community-based learning facilities due to monitoring and accountability challenges. WFP still provided fortified biscuits to 251,300 refugee and 62,000 Bangladeshi children, and is working with the Education Sector to find alternate support for children affected by the change. An additional 8,600 primary-aged children were supported via school feeding on Bhasan Char.
- Self-Reliance activities for refugees, and livelihoods interventions for the surrounding Bangladeshi community are planned to resume by late February, along with disaster risk reduction programming to enhance food security and nutrition in Cox’s Bazar.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
1.62 bn	408 m	99.2 m

Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Outcome 1: Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises

Focus: Crisis response

Activity 1: Provide food, nutrition and self-reliance assistance to crisis-affected populations.

Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Outcome 2: By 2026, the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes

Focus: Root causes

Activity 2: Support national institutions in strengthening their capacity to design and implement inclusive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes to meet the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups.

Result 4: Food Systems are Sustainable

Outcome 3: By 2026, vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible, nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes.

Focus: Resilience building

Activity 3: Assist national institutions and communities in strengthening their capacity to implement inclusive, responsive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes and in disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations.

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

Outcome 4: Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises

Focus: Crisis response

Activity 4: Provide coordination and common services to humanitarian and development partners and the Government

Success Story



Sahera, a mother of four children, is a participant in the seasonal livelihoods programme in Kurigram which provided her with training, a monthly subsistence allowance and a one-off cash grant to help her start cultivating mushrooms. [Learn](#) how WFP support is helping Bangladeshis vulnerable to climate shocks to provide for their families, no matter the season.

Donors

Australia, Bangladesh, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Royal DSM, Norway, METRO AG, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Share the Meal, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and World Bank.

- In January, WFP completed the last distributions to people affected by severe June 2022 floods in northeast Bangladesh. With UN Central Emergency Response Fund support, a total of 119,000 people received food (40 kg rice, 4 kg pulses per household) and unconditional cash assistance (BDT 2,500/USD 25 per household) after the disaster. This complemented WFP's life-saving response in June, which reached 176,800 affected people with 85 mt of fortified biscuits.
- Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional cash transfers to 13,200 people vulnerable to food insecurity in two low-income areas of Dhaka. The programme offers a cash top-up for purchasing nutritious food, along with social and behaviour change messaging and UN Population Fund distribution of menstrual pads. Evidence generated through the programme will inform the development of future government social safety nets for the low-income people in urban areas.
- In collaboration with the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council and the Cabinet Division, WFP conducted a district-level training on basic nutrition and nutrition-sensitive programming to help the Government integrate nutrition-sensitive approaches into its social safety net programmes.
- WFP and the Department of Women Affairs presented a series of recommendations to the Central Bank and financial service providers to enable stronger digital financial inclusion within the **Vulnerable Women Benefit Programme**.

Programme	Beneficiaries
Food Assistance	933,900
Nutrition	204,100
School Feeding	321,000
Emergency Response in Sylhet	119,200 (cumulative)

Monitoring

- The WFP community feedback and response hotline received 676 calls throughout the month. As the Sylhet flood response ended, about 200 less calls were received, while roughly the same number of calls emanated from Cox's Bazar as in December.
- WFP completed 100 of 105 planned monitoring visits for the Urban Food Assistance Programme in Dhaka (71 of 75 visits conducted) and seasonal livelihoods programme in Kurigram (29 of 30 visits completed).

Challenges

- Unless significant funding is received, WFP will need to introduce a food ration cut for all refugees in Cox's Bazar from 1 March 2023. As the Rohingya population has no means for employment and self-sufficiency, this scenario is expected to lead to higher levels of malnutrition across the camp population with particularly acute consequences for pregnant and lactating women, and children under 5, who have the greatest nutritional needs.