



WFP Bangladesh

Country Brief

February 2023

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

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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 Bangladeshi communities, most vulnerable to food insecurity, near the camps through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions. The UN is 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.

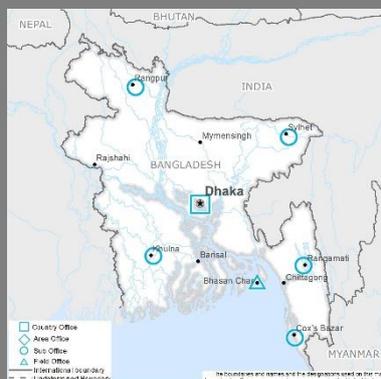
From late 2021, UN agencies have been supporting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, following several small government relocations to the island. WFP provides food assistance and nutrition services to the population, which reached 29,460 refugees by end-February 2023.

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



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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

998 mt of food distributed



US\$11.9 million cash-based transfers made



US\$86.6 million net funding requirements (April-September 2023)



1 million people assisted



Operational Updates

- Due to funding shortfall, WFP will introduce a **food ration cut** for all Cox’s Bazar refugees, reducing the **e-voucher** transfer value from US\$12 to 10 per person per month, starting from March 1.
- In **Cox’s Bazar**, WFP provided general food assistance to 908,200 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. Nineteen outlets are serving the refugee population with a selection of cereals, fresh food items and spices.
- With the addition of two new clinics at Bangladeshi local community, WFP continued to provide preventive and curative **nutrition services** to Bangladeshis at 132 community clinics and to refugees at 45 integrated nutrition sites to address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. More than 195,900 pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-59 months were reached, including 73,700 refugee children aged 24-59 months who received a US\$3 nutrition-sensitive e-voucher. In February, WFP reintroduced Vitamin A and fortified vegetable oil for pregnant and lactating women.
- On **Bhasan Char** WFP supported 28,850 Rohingya refugees with WFP food assistance and continued a small-scale e-voucher pilot on the island, which reached 2,700 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 8,100 pregnant and lactating 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 and provided fortified biscuits to 254,400 refugee and 62,500 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 from March, 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	86.6 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

- In January, WFP completed the last distributions to people affected by severe June 2022 **floods in northeast** Bangladesh. WFP reached a cumulative total of 268,000 people with either fortified biscuits; rice and pulses; an unconditional cash grant of BDT 2,500 (USD 25), or a combination of this life-saving assistance.
- 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.
- With WFP's technical assistance, the Government distributed **fortified rice** to 1.5 million women of Vulnerable Women Benefit programme, run by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
- 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	937,050
Nutrition	204,000
School Feeding	325,500
Emergency Response in Sylhet	268,000

Monitoring

- The WFP community feedback and response hotline received 471 calls throughout the month.
- WFP completed 227 of 237 planned monitoring visits for food assistance outlets, retail shops, nutrition centres and school feeding programme.

Challenges

- Funding shortage:** WFP urgently needs US\$123 million to provide full rations, or at a minimum, US\$99 million, to prevent further ration cuts in 2023.
- As the Rohingya population has no means for self-reliance or access to livelihoods, this scenario is expected to lead to higher levels of food insecurity and malnutrition across the camp population with particularly acute consequences for pregnant and lactating women, and children under 5, who have the greatest nutritional needs.

Success Story



WFP uses the blockchain-based platform known as Building Blocks to provide Dalia and more than 3,000 other households with support to buy nutritious food, along with menstrual hygiene and reproductive health products provided by the UN Population Fund. [Learn](#) how blockchain can power efforts to empower women and girls in Bangladesh.

Donors and Funding Sources*

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA.

Private sector: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CANADEM, DSM, IFPRI, Metro, Norwegian Refugee Council, RED R, Share the meal

UN: UNCERF, UN SDG, UNDP

*In alphabetical order