



WFP Bangladesh

Country Brief

March 2023

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



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 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.

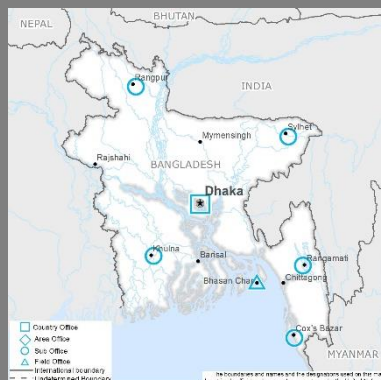
From late 2021, UN agencies have been supporting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, following several small government relocations to the island. WFP provides food assistance and nutrition services to the population, which reached 29,810 refugees by end-March 2023.

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



In Numbers

1,271.4 mt of food distributed



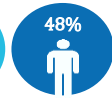
US\$9.7 million cash-based transfers made



US\$67.6 million net funding requirements (May-October 2023)



1.06 million people assisted



Operational Updates

- Funding situation:** WFP urgently needs **US\$94 million** to restore the e-voucher value to US\$12 per person per month from May until the end of the year. **US\$75 million** will ensure WFP can avoid further ration cuts and maintain the current e-voucher value (US\$10 per person per month or 83 percent of full assistance) until end-2023. WFP is grateful for new confirmed contributions from France, Japan, and, Switzerland and USA.
- In March, WFP reduced the value of life-saving **food assistance** to the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar for the first time since the 2017 refugee influx. Due to a lack of funds, all 908,100 refugees received an **e-voucher** valued at US\$10 rather than US\$12. Families most vulnerable to food insecurity (women, elderly, or child-headed households; households with persons with disabilities) continued to receive an additional US\$3 to purchase fresh food products along with basic assistance.
- 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 196,800 pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-59 months were reached in March, including 73,200 refugee children aged 24-59 months who received a US\$3 nutrition-sensitive e-voucher, in lieu of specialized nutritious foods.
- On **Bhasan Char**, WFP supported all Rohingya refugees with a fixed food basket of 11 items and continued a small-scale e-voucher pilot, reaching 2,780 people with a US\$3 top-up to spend on fruits and vegetables. The first phase of this pilot is planned to end in June. Through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes on the island, WFP supported 8,200 pregnant and lactating women, and children aged 6-59 months with specialized nutritious foods.
- The Government and WFP completed a feasibility study on the **National School Feeding Programme** intended to launch in mid-2023. Results indicate that, while the existing regulatory framework in Bangladesh provides a solid foundation for a national programme, gaps remain in the guideline development, supply chain management, monitoring and evaluation, infrastructure and funding. To ensure full coverage of schools for fortified biscuits, hot meals and staple foods, geographical prioritization (based on poverty levels) and external support are required.
- In Cox's Bazar, WFP continued **school feeding** in schools and camp learning centres and provided fortified biscuits to 252,000 refugee and 62,700 Bangladeshi children. An additional 9,300 primary-aged children were supported through school feeding on Bhasan Char.
- WFP **livelihoods** programme in Cox's Bazar supported 9,650 vulnerable Bangladeshi women with training to set up micro-businesses. US\$9,600 was saved by 382 self-help groups. **Self-Reliance** activities for refugees are planned to resume in May.

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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.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
1.62 bn	432.6 m	67.6 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

- Under the **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** programme, refugees conducted 5,200 m of drainage clearance and maintained 73,200 tree seedlings.
- Together with the Ministry of Food and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, WFP tested the Open Market Sale mechanism under the government **public food distribution programme** to connect marginalized people in urban areas with nutrient-rich foods at an affordable price. WFP focused on enabling improved consumer targeting and tracking and making the distribution process leaner.
- To support the Government, WFP distributed **fortified rice** to 144,275 beneficiaries of Vulnerable Women Benefit programme in 17 sub-districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional cash transfers to 13,200 people 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 distributions.
- WFP organized a two-day workshop for officials and stakeholders from the Government's **Forecast-based Financing** Taskforce. The event will assist the Government in developing the standard operating procedure for anticipatory actions in flood- and cyclone-prone areas.

Programme	# of people reached
Food Assistance (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	937,000
Nutrition (Cox's Bazar)	205,000
School Feeding (Cox's Bazar)	324,000
Urban Food Security (Dhaka)	13,200

- Monitoring**
- The WFP community feedback and response hotline received 607 calls throughout the month. WFP completed 163 of 165 planned monitoring visits for food assistance outlets, retail shops, nutrition centres and school feeding programme.
 - The most recent [WFP Market Monitor](#) found that household purchasing power is being eroded as the cost of essential commodities and services continue to increase faster than the value of assistance. The latest [Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping](#) report found that the food security situation has mostly stayed the same in Bangladesh with a slight improvement from January to February.

- Challenges**
- On 5 March, a large fire broke out in Rohingya Camp 11, affecting some 13,500 refugees. One nutrition facility, which stored 17.25 mt of nutrition commodities for young children, and pregnant and lactating women, was destroyed. WFP, UNICEF and Site Maintenance and Engineering Project constructed a temporary nutrition site, while hot meals were delivered from a temporary food distribution point.

Page 1 photo (WFP/Shakil Hossain): SMEP and DRR labourers prepare a temporary distribution site to serve refugees affected by the 5 March fire.

Story from the field



Every day, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh face unimaginable hardships. Now they face yet another devastating blow - ration cuts. [Watch this short video](#) to hear Alumara's take on the situation.

2023 Donors/Funding Sources

(in alphabetical order including carryover of unspent 2022 contributions)

Governments: 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: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CANADEM, Royal DSM, IFPRI, Metro A.G., Norwegian Refugee Council, RED R, Share the Meal

United Nations: UNCF, UN SDG