



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief April 2023



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.

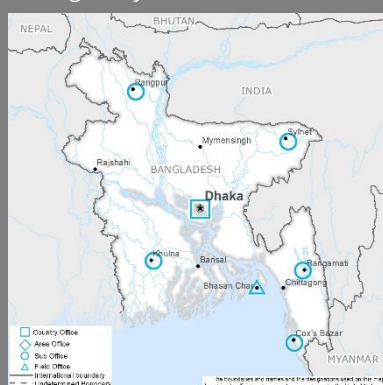
From late 2021, UN agencies have been supporting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, following several small government relocations to the island. WFP provides food assistance and nutrition services to the population, which reached 29,810 refugees by end-March 2023.

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

832.4 mt of food distributed



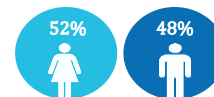
US\$10.8 million cash-based transfers made



US\$85 million net funding requirements for the whole of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (June-November 2023)



1.02 million people assisted



Operational Updates

- **Funding situation:** As of 15 May, WFP urgently needs US\$56 million to restore full rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar until end-2023. In June, monthly rations will be further reduced to US\$8 per person per month, entailing a significant drop in refugees' food intake (67 percent of full assistance; only 83 percent of energy requirements per SPHERE standards).
- In Cox's Bazar, 911,600 refugees received **e-vouchers** valued at US\$10 rather than US\$12 due to shortage of funds. Rohingya 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. Several fires broke out on 19-29 April, which affected some 475 refugees who received immediate life-saving rations of fortified biscuits and hot meals from WFP.
- WFP continued to provide preventive and curative **nutrition services** to refugees at 45 integrated nutrition sites and Bangladeshis at 132 community clinics to address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. More than 193,900 pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6-59 months were reached in April, including 74,300 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 2,734 people with a US\$3 top-up to spend on fruits and vegetables. From May, phase two of this pilot will allow up to 5,500 refugees to purchase packaged items, such as rice, oil, salt and sugar. Through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes on the island, WFP supported 7,800 pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children aged 6-59 months with specialized nutritious foods. In addition, 9,300 primary-aged children were supported through school feeding on Bhasan Char.
- WFP continued to support the finalization of the Education Ministry's new national **school feeding** programme proposal (July 2023-June 2026), which will be put forward for overall government approval in June. In Cox's Bazar, WFP continued school feeding in schools and camp learning centres and provided fortified biscuits to 252,000 refugee and 60,700 Bangladeshi children.
- The **self-reliance** programme engaged 3,575 of the most vulnerable refugees in partaking in waste collection, upcycling, Communication with Communities and other activities.
- Under the **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** programme, 1,765 refugees conducted 37 km of drainage clearance and 37,100 m³ of canal re-excavation. In preparation for the cyclone and monsoon season, 158 m of drain was also constructed and 95,327 tree seedlings maintained.

Contact: Emily Pittman (emily.pittman@wfp.org); Sharika Tafannum (sharika.tafannum@wfp.org); Anika Asgar (anika.asgar@wfp.org)
Country Director: Dom Scalpelli (domenico.scalpelli@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.

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	85 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

Story from the field



Back in Myanmar, [Ziaur Rahman](#) used to help people in his neighbourhood by offering physical labour as required. In the Rohingya camps, the 32-year-old provides porter services to help the extremely vulnerable carry their monthly food rations back to their shelters.

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: UN CERF, UN SDG

- In collaboration with International Food Policy Research Institute, WFP is conducting a study on joint interventions to improve birth outcomes and nutrition in Bangladesh. As part of the study, WFP provided BDT 1,000 (US\$10) to 769 women and in-kind food assistance to another 769 women (10 kg of rice, 3.5 kg of lentils and 1 litre of oil) to test whether food or cash is most effective for supporting beneficiaries in the Mother and Child Benefit programme.

- Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, WFP is supporting the Ministry of Food's Open Market Sale **public food distribution programme** which connects marginalized people in urban areas with nutrient-rich food items at a more affordable price. In March, WFP finished testing digital SCOPE distributions with 3,000 people in Dhaka and Shariatpur districts, and is currently exploring potential scale-up plans with the Directorate General of Food.

- WFP distributed **fortified rice** to 527,000 women in 25 sub-districts, including 17 sub-districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. All recipients are beneficiaries of two government social protection programmes (Vulnerable Women Benefit and Food Friendly programmes).

- Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional cash transfers and nutrition messaging to 12,800 people in two low-income areas of Dhaka, contributing to longer term evidence generation for urban social protection programmes for Bangladesh. The programme offers a cash top-up as an incentive for purchasing nutritious food, along with UN Population Fund distributions of menstrual products for women and girls.

Programme	# of people reached
 Food Assistance (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	940,600
 Nutrition (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	201,626
 School Feeding (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	322,000
 Urban Food Security (Dhaka)	12,800

Monitoring

- The WFP community feedback and response hotline received 853 calls throughout the month. WFP completed all 93 planned monitoring visits in Cox's Bazar (51 in the camps and 42 in the surrounding communities).
- The latest [WFP Market Monitor](#) found that food basket costs in Cox's Bazar remained 9 percent higher year-on-year, straining households' purchasing capacities. The latest [Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping](#) found that food security deteriorated by 4 percentage points with 15 percent of households moderately food-insecure.

Challenges

As the first cyclone season of the year got underway, severe lightning strikes posed a risk to infrastructure built and maintained by the WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Sector and required maintenance to restore connectivity.

Photo (page 1): Women working on pumpkin cultivation in Kurigram as part of climate resilience programming (WFP/Lena Von Zabern)