



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief June 2023



## In Numbers

912 mt of food distributed



US\$8.9 million cash-based transfers made



US\$ 82.4 million net funding requirements for WFP's Country Strategic Plan (July-December 2023)



1.04 million\* people assisted



## Operational Updates

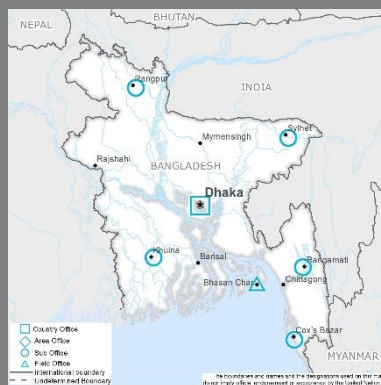
- Monthly rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar fell to US\$8 per person per month, down from US\$10 in March and US\$12 (full assistance) previously. To restore full rations from August until the end of 2023, WFP **urgently needs US\$45 million** (as of 10 July). Refugees' food intake has dropped to 67 percent of full assistance (only 83 percent of energy requirements per SPHERE standards).
- In Cox's Bazar, 912,300 Rohingya refugees received **e-vouchers** valued at only US\$8 due to the acute shortage of funds. To prevent further deterioration of food insecurity, WFP continued to provide an additional US\$3 to women-, elderly-, and child-headed households; and households with people with a disability; to enable them to buy fresh food items from WFP outlets. Meanwhile, WFP reduced the available food options at e-voucher shops to simplify food selection for beneficiaries amidst the ration cuts.
- WFP continued to provide preventive and curative **nutrition services** to refugees at 45 integrated nutrition sites and to Bangladeshis at 132 community clinics to address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. More than 198,400 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and children aged 6-59 months were reached in June, including 75,700 refugee children aged 24-59 months who received a US\$3 nutrition-sensitive e-voucher in lieu of the pricier, specialized nutritious foods given in the past.
- On **Bhasan Char**, WFP supported 29,000<sup>1</sup> Rohingya refugees with a fixed food basket and continued its small-scale e-voucher pilot, reaching 7,500 people with their choice of packaged items, such as rice, oil, salt and sugar and fruits and vegetables. Through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes on the island, WFP supported 7,900 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and children aged 6-59 months with specialized nutritious foods. In addition, 9,500 primary-aged children were supported through WFP's school feeding activities.
- In Cox's Bazar, WFP continued **school feeding** in schools and camp learning centres and provided fortified biscuits to 250,800 refugee and 60,700 Bangladeshi children. WFP will resume distributions in July for Bangladeshi children and refugees.
- Under the **disaster risk reduction** programme, 10,100 refugees cleaned 298 km of drains and constructed 1.6 km of drainage, 3.8 km of pedestrian pathway, 722 m of access road, 76 m of brick guide wall and 944 m<sup>2</sup> of brick stairs. To reduce flood risks during the monsoon season, refugees also maintained 171,400 tree seedlings. In the surrounding community, 2,100 Bangladeshis, including 109 people with a disability, were engaged in canal and drainage works to protect agricultural infrastructure against hazards; reforestation and slope protection. In Teknaf, six rain gauges and six flood markers were installed, which will enable WFP to release forecast-based financing to vulnerable households based on site-specific weather data, as well as national and international weather models.

## 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 security situation in 2023 has worsened, particularly inside Rohingya camps. Crime and hazards remained the main concerns for refugees with a significant increase in incidents and gun violence.

From late 2021, UN agencies have been supporting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, following several government relocations to the island. WFP provides general food assistance, school feeding and nutrition services to the population, which reached 30,300 refugees by end-June 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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Further information: [wfp.org/countries/Bangladesh](https://wfp.org/countries/Bangladesh) and [wfp.org/publications/what-wfp-doing-bangladesh](https://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.*

<sup>1</sup>WFP food assistance reached 29,000 beneficiaries due to relocations and absentee households.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
1.62 bn	487.4 m	82.4 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**



Everyday Jannat, a 5-year-old Rohingya refugee, hunts for bottles and cans in the camp where she lives. When she collects enough, she buys a snack to stave off her pangs of hunger. Read more about the effect of the ration cuts on children like Jannat [here](#).

**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, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA.

Private | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Buddhist Global Relief, CANADEM, Royal DSM, IFPRI, Metro A.G., Norwegian Refugee Council, RED R, Share the Meal

United Nations | UN CERF, UN Sustainable Development Goals Fund

WFP's Cox's Bazar **livelihoods** programme supported 23,800 vulnerable Bangladeshi women with training to set up microbusinesses and US\$3,300 was generated and shared among 487 beneficiaries selling produce at WFP aggregation centres. The **self-reliance** programme engaged 33,700 of the most vulnerable refugees in waste collection, upcycling and other activities.

With WFP assistance, the Department of Women Affairs has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorates General of Family Planning and Health Services to support the interoperability of their respective information management systems (MIS). The DWA's MIS is now compatible with that of the Departments of Health and Family Planning, ensuring the accuracy of applicants' pregnancy data under the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP). Supported by WFP, DWA signed another MoU with the Office of the Registrar General, which will allow the MCBP MIS to store beneficiaries' children's data and encourage mothers to register their children in the national birth registration system.

In June, WFP began verifying 150,000 households in its **anticipatory action** database in eight flood-prone districts to support the potential activation of forecast-based financing. At the request of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, WFP distributed **fortified rice** to 130,000 women in 17 sub-districts, complementing the government distribution to 1.7 million Vulnerable Women Benefit programme participants in 165 other sub-districts.

Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional mobile money transfers and nutrition messaging to 12,800 people. WFP distributed US\$113,600, of which 84 percent was spent on healthy food items in WFP-contracted shops.

Programme	# of people reached*
General Food Assistance (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	941,300
Nutrition (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	206,300
Resilience (Cox's Bazar)	69,700
School Feeding (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	321,000
Urban Food Security (Dhaka)	12,800

**Monitoring**

- WFP's community feedback and response hotline received 1,239 calls in June with 5,000 helpdesk issues logged in Cox's Bazar relating to the second ration cut.
- WFP published its annual [Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment \(REVA-6\)](#), which includes Bhasan Char for the first time. Findings indicate that, by end-2022, despite humanitarian assistance, 38 percent of Rohingya could not afford the minimum expenditure basket, and both Rohingya and Bangladeshi households in Cox's Bazar were struggling to put food on the table, frequently resorting to negative coping strategies.

**Challenges**

- Supply chain shortages for fresh food items hampered pre-scheduled mobilization plans for general food assistance in the camps. On 1 and 3 June, distributions were halted in two camps due to protests against the reduced US\$8 food entitlement, but resumed in less than 72 hours.
- Due to poor road conditions following heavy monsoon rainfall, WFP-supported blending millers were unable to distribute fortified rice in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

**Photo (page 1):** Syedul Arofa, 20, shown collecting her reduced ration, is eating less than she needs, but feels helpless when her children cry for more food (WFP/Nihab Rahman)