



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief July 2023



WFP Executive Director, Cindy McCain met H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Bangladesh to discuss how WFP can continue to support the road to #Agenda2030, #UNSDGs and #Vision2041.

## 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 working with the Government to improve food security, nutrition, and resilience of vulnerable communities across the country, while also providing emergency 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 in Cox’s Bazar through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions. The security situation in the camps has worsened, and camp residents fear it could deteriorate further if more ration cuts are to take place.

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 30,456 refugees by end-July 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

1,004 mt of food distributed



US\$ 9.7 million cash-based transfers made



US\$ 65 million net funding requirements for WFP’s Country Strategic Plan (Sep’23-Feb’24)



1.05 million people assisted



## Operational Updates

- Monthly rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar fell to US\$8 per person per month in June, down from US\$10 (in May) and US\$12 (full assistance, before March). To restore full rations from August until July 2024, WFP **urgently needs US\$110 million**. According to the ration reduction outcome survey, 94 percent of the population reported deterioration of food and nutrition, and borrowing food and money nearly doubled from 26 percent to 51 percent, since the ration cuts. WFP is grateful for new confirmed contributions from the governments of Australia and the Republic of Korea.
- In Cox’s Bazar, 912,900 Rohingya refugees received **e-vouchers** valued at only US\$8. To insulate families most vulnerable to food insecurity, WFP continued to provide an additional food voucher of US\$3 to women, elderly, and child-headed households, and households with persons with disabilities. This enables them to buy fresh and nutritious food from WFP outlets. Meanwhile, WFP reduced the available food options at e-voucher shops from more than 40 items to 19 items amidst the ration cuts; and introduced flattened rice priced lower compared to regular rice.
- WFP continued to provide preventive and curative **nutrition services** to refugees at 45 integrated nutrition sites and to Bangladeshis at 132 community clinics. More than 200,400 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and children aged 6-59 months were reached in July, including 77,000 refugee children aged 24-59 months who received a US\$3 fresh food voucher to help meet their nutrition needs.
- In **Bhasan Char**, WFP supported 29,100<sup>1</sup> Rohingya refugees with a fixed food basket of 11 items and continued its small-scale e-voucher pilot, reaching 7,600 people with 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, 9,693 primary-aged children were supported through WFP school feeding on the island.
- WFP supported the Government in joining the School Meals Coalition – a commitment to continue improving the quality of school meals and strengthen the school meal system. In Cox’s Bazar, WFP continued **school feeding**, providing fortified biscuits to 250,900 refugee children in camp learning centres and 60,700 Bangladeshi children in schools. In July, 120 mt of dates was distributed among 60,000 pupils in 211 schools in Ukhiya, Teknaf and Kutubdia.
- Under the **disaster risk reduction** programme, 21,000 Rohingya volunteers cleaned 203 km of drains and constructed 2.2 km of drainage, 5.6 km of pedestrian pathway, 682 m of access road, 32 m of brick guide wall and 776 m<sup>2</sup> of brick stairs, and one bamboo bridge. To reduce flood risks during the monsoon, refugees also maintained 275,500 tree seedlings and stabilized 6.3 m<sup>2</sup> slope. In the surrounding community, 4,800 Bangladeshis were engaged in reforestation, slope protection, and canal and drainage works to protect agricultural infrastructure against hazards.

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

- WFP trained 23,800 vulnerable Bangladeshi women to start micro businesses under its **livelihoods** programme in Cox's Bazar. Twenty-six participants earned US\$ 3,300 by selling produce at WFP aggregation centres. In addition, 931 self-help groups saved US\$23,500. The **self-reliance** programme engaged 29,231 of the most vulnerable refugees in waste collection, upcycling, Communication with Communities, and other activities.
- With WFP technical assistance, and in collaboration with the European Union, the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) tested the interoperability of the Management Information System (MIS) for the **Mother and Child Benefit Programme** in Gangachara Upazila, Rangpur District. WFP supported DWA in making its MIS compatible with the Directorate General of Family Planning and the Directorate General of Health Services, ensuring accurate verification of pregnancy information provided by applicants.
- In July, WFP expanded its **anticipatory action** in the Padma River basin and Sylhet Haor areas, verifying 150,000 households in 11 flood-prone districts to support the potential activation of **forecast-based financing**. WFP also launched **Flood Index Insurance**, directly protecting 1,800 households, and indirectly helping 6,400 people. Additionally, 500 participants of the **seasonal livelihoods programme** received an investment grant to start income-generating activities after completing their chosen business skill training. The first Monthly Subsistence Allowance (MSA) was provided to all 500 participants.
- At the request of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, WFP distributed **fortified rice** to 130,000 women in 17 sub-districts.
- Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional mobile money transfers and nutrition messaging to 12,500 people. US\$96,800 was distributed and 83 percent of which was spent on healthy food items in the WFP-contracted shops.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
1.62b	519m	65m

**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** H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Foreign of Bangladesh announced Bangladesh's participation in the Global School Meals Coalition, while Mr. Farid Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education signed the declaration of commitment on the opening day of the UN Food Systems Summit +2.  
[Read more](#)








**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 | UNCF, UN Sustainable Development Goals Fund

Programme	# of people reached
 General Food Assistance (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	942,000
 Nutrition (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	208,300
 Resilience (Cox's Bazar)	74,000
 School Feeding (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char)	321,300
 Urban Food Security (Dhaka)	12,500

**Monitoring**

- WFP community feedback and response hotline received 901 calls in July and completed 98 percent of the monitoring visits (168 out of 171).

**Challenges**

- Out-migration of participants in WFP's urban food assistance programme remains a challenge. Due to rising inflation and price hikes, many participants who left for their villages during Eid-ul-Adha vacation in June have not returned to Dhaka. This has impeded the follow-up for the social and behaviour change communication components of the programme.