



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief August 2023



Jawata Afnan is holding up a bag of dates provided by Qatar as part of WFP's school feeding programme. ©WFP/Mostofa Amir Foyzal

In Numbers

1,113 mt of food distributed



US\$8.13 million cash-based transfers made



US\$82 million net funding requirements for WFP's Country Strategic Plan (October 2023 – March 2024)



1.23 million people assisted



Operational Updates

- Monthly rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar remain at US\$8 per person per month, after falling from US\$10 in June and US\$12 (full assistance) before March 2023. **US\$118 million is needed to restore the full ration for the next 12 months.** WFP is grateful for new confirmed contributions from the European Commission (ECHO) and WFP USA.
- Between 5 and 8 August, heavy monsoon rains brought flash floods and landslides across the Chattogram Division, including Bandarban (Chittagong Hill Tracts), where WFP distributed fortified biscuits as lifesaving assistance to 11,500 affected households. The joint [needs assessment](#), conducted in collaboration with the Government and supported by the Food Security Cluster (FSC) co-led by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), identified 1.3 million people impacted, of which, 600,000 are in critical need of assistance. The UN is appealing for US\$34 million under the [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) until January 2024, of which **US\$14.96 million** is required by the FSC; WFP is grateful for ECHO's contribution of US\$0.3 million towards the \$9.6 million it requires.
- Monsoon rains also caused floods and landslides in Cox's Bazar. From 7 August, 26,500 Bangladeshis vulnerable to flooding received cash assistance as part of WFP's [forecast-based financing programme](#) in Teknaf and some 50,000 people received early warning messages to help them protect their assets. In the camps, WFP distributed biscuits and hot meals to 357 flood-affected Rohingya households.
- In August, 913,200 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar received **e-vouchers** valued at US\$8. WFP continued to provide a top-up food voucher of US\$3 to enable families most vulnerable to buy fresh and protein-rich food at WFP outlets. Preventive and curative **nutrition services** were provided to Rohingya at 45 integrated nutrition sites and to Bangladeshis at 132 community clinics. More than 204,500 pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children aged 6-59 months were reached, including 77,000 Rohingya children through the US\$3 fresh food voucher. WFP's school feeding programme provided fortified biscuits to 246,100 refugee and 60,100 Bangladeshi children.
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and WFP phased out the **Site Management and Engineering Project (SMEP)** after more than five years of joint service to the humanitarian community. SMEP played a critical role in constructing roads and bridges to connect the camps, protecting lives and infrastructure from floods and cyclones. UNHCR and IOM will continue site management activities, while WFP engineers will maintain and repair e-voucher outlets, emergency telecommunications and nutrition sites.
- On Bhasan Char, WFP supported 29,250¹ Rohingya refugees with a **fixed food basket** of 11 items and continued its **e-voucher pilot**, reaching 7,600 people with choice of packaged items, fruits and vegetables. Through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes, WFP supported 7,834 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and children aged 6-59 months with specialized nutritious foods, while 10,600 primary-aged children were supported through WFP **school feeding**.

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 climate shocks like floods and cyclones. The 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.

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 30,607 refugees by end-August 2023.

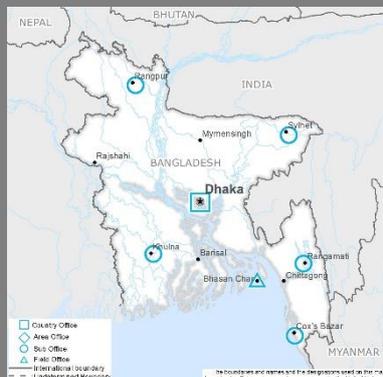
As a result of ration cuts to the Rohingya, the security situation in the Cox's Bazar camps has been worsening, and residents fear it could deteriorate further if more cuts are to take place.

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.

¹WFP food assistance reached 29,250 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\$) |
| 1.62bn | 523.9m | 82m |

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



Torrential rains wreaked havoc across Chattogram in August. Close to 60,000 people in Bandarban district in Chittagong Hill Tracts received fortified biscuits from WFP as immediate assistance, including [mothers, children and the elderly](#).

2023 Donors/Funding Sources

(in alphabetical order including carryover of unspent 2022 contributions)

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Buddhist Global Relief, CANADEM, Royal DSM, IFPRI, Metro A.G., WFP USA | UNCERF, UN Sustainable Development Goals Fund

- WFP is grateful for a new confirmed contribution from Nutrition International for scaling up its rice fortification programme.

- Under the **disaster risk reduction** programme in Cox's Bazar, 10,348 Rohingya cleaned 87.4 km of drains and constructed 2.2 km of drainage, 2 km of pedestrian pathway, 291 m of road, 23 m of guide wall and 861 m² of stairs. To reduce flood risks, refugees also maintained 210,190 tree seedlings, and rehabilitated two bamboo bridges. In the surrounding community, 1,729 Bangladeshis were engaged in reforestation; slope protection; and canal and drainage works to protect agricultural infrastructure against hazards.
- WFP's **livelihoods** programme provided training to 23,700 vulnerable Bangladeshi women to start micro businesses, and participants earned US\$2,240 selling produce at WFP aggregation centres. In the camps, the **self-reliance** programme engaged 34,400 of the most vulnerable refugees in waste collection, upcycling, communication with communities and other activities.
- In partnership with the Department of Women Affairs and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP conducted a two-day training of trainers on the **Mother and Child Benefit Programme** for 32 government and field staff. Sessions focused on building participants' capacity to deliver nutrition information to pregnant mothers, and social and behavioural change communication.
- As part of WFP's **Climate Risk Insurance** programme, a pay-out equivalent to US\$13,820 was distributed to 1,200 smallholder farmers in Kurigram District for paddy loss due to heavy rains in June and July.
- WFP and FAO presented on risk financing alternatives for **climate resilience** at the inaugural Bangladesh Agricultural Investment Forum initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture. The session highlighted the importance of risk financing for climate adaptation and financial risk management for improved resilience among the poor.
- Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided unconditional mobile cash assistance and nutrition messaging to 12,600 people. US\$97,903 was distributed, with 84 percent spent by beneficiaries on healthy food items.

| Programme | # of people reached |
|--|---------------------|
| Emergency relief (Bandarban) | 57,500 |
| General Food Assistance (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char) | 942,400 |
| Nutrition (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char) | 212,400 |
| Resilience (Cox's Bazar, including forecast-based financing) | 96,700 |
| School Feeding (Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char) | 316,900 |
| Urban Food Security (Dhaka) | 12,600 |

Monitoring

- WFP received 581 calls through its community feedback and response hotline in August and completed all 391 planned monitoring visits.
- A [Nutrition Sector study](#), co-authored by UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, revealed that the prevalence of acute malnutrition has increased since the ration cut. Both Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) admissions have gone up by 11 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

Challenges

- Due to the floods, some retailers in Cox's Bazar were not able to replenish stocks of certain items in the WFP outlets until affected roads were cleared. Low supply of short grain rice in the markets also led to shortages in the outlets.