



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief November 2023



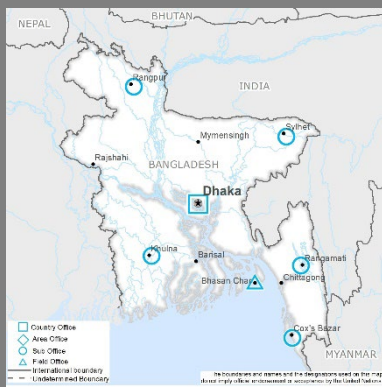
On Bhasan Char island, Rohingya children receive WFP fortified biscuits for every school day attended. WFP/Saikat Majumdar

## Operational Context

WFP started operations in Bangladesh in 1974. While significant economic growth was witnessed in the past decade, nearly one-third of the population still face food insecurity and 20 percent live below the national poverty line. Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to natural hazards with most of the population residing in areas prone to 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, while also providing emergency assistance to people affected by disasters.

Since 2017, in response to the influx of approximately 745,000 Rohingya from Myanmar to Cox's Bazar, WFP has been providing food assistance and nutrition services, as well as implementing self-reliance and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, in the camps. In Cox's Bazar, WFP also supports Bangladeshi communities most vulnerable to food insecurity through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions. From late 2021, WFP has been supporting the Rohingya on Bhasan Char Island, now home to approximately 30,000 government-relocated refugees.<sup>1</sup> Due to the ongoing ration cuts, 94 percent of refugees report a deterioration in food and nutrition, per WFP's monitoring report from June 2023, while borrowing food and money has nearly doubled to 51 percent.

- Population: **167 million people**
- Income Level: **Lower middle**
- 2021-22 Human Development Index: **129 out of 190 countries**
- Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children 6-59 months**



## In Numbers

1,045 mt of food distributed



9.63 million cash-based transfers made



US\$90.36 million net funding requirements under the Country Strategic Plan (December 2023 – May 2024)<sup>3</sup>



1.05 million people assisted



## Operational Updates

- From January 2024, WFP will be able to revert to an e-voucher of US\$10 per refugee per month in Cox's Bazar thanks to donors' generous funding. WFP will also add fortified rice to the items available in the camp outlets, slightly increasing the full ration value. WFP urgently needs **US\$61 million** to restore full US\$12.50 ration in 2024. WFP is grateful for new contributions from [USA](#) and ECHO.
- In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, WFP continued to support families affected by **severe floods** in August. In total, 7,472 families received BDT 5,500 (US\$50), and 1,034 families received BDT 1,800 (US\$16.40) which will be supplemented by a one-time in-kind food basket of rice, oil and lentils.
- In Cox's Bazar, 912,300 Rohingya refugees received **general food assistance** (GFA) through e-vouchers.<sup>2</sup> Most vulnerable households received an additional US\$3 to purchase fresh produce. **Malnutrition prevention and treatment services** were provided at 177 sites in the Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities. More than 199,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6-59 months were reached, including 80,300 Rohingya children through a US\$3 nutrition-sensitive e-voucher. WFP **school feeding** reached 307,450 refugee and Bangladeshi children.
- The Government relocated 569 refugees to Bhasan Char island in November; WFP provided food assistance to all relocated refugees as part of its rapid response. WFP continues to scale up the use of e-vouchers and supported 30,000 refugees with general food assistance, of which 43 percent received a US\$15 **e-voucher**, while the remainder received an 11-item fixed food basket. WFP provided **nutrition services** to 7,700 pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6-59 months, and **school feeding** activities reached 11,400 children.
- Through the **livelihoods** programme in Cox's Bazar, WFP engaged 23,600 Bangladeshi women, while WFP's **self-reliance** programme in the camps engaged 17,110 refugees in homestead gardening, aquaculture, upcycling and communication with communities. WFP is grateful for the new Swiss contribution for resilience activities for vulnerable Bangladeshis and refugees in Cox's Bazar.

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Note: Figures may include duplication (some people benefit from more than one programme).  
<sup>1,2</sup> WFP food assistance reached fewer refugees due to relocations and absentee households.  
<sup>3,4</sup> Funding needs as of 22 November 2023.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) <sup>a</sup>
1.62bn	619.03 m	90.36 m

# of people reached					
	GFA	942,300		Emergency relief	8,500
	Nutrition	206,700		School Feeding	318,850
	Resilience	43,410		Urban	12,600

**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

- For improved monsoon and cyclone preparedness., 2,700 Rohingya women and men were engaged under the **disaster risk reduction** programme in Cox's Bazar.
- WFP and the Department of Livestock Services organized a vaccination campaign for **seasonal livelihoods programme** beneficiaries engaged in livestock-based activities in Kurigram.
- In collaboration with several national government agencies, WFP facilitated a two-day consultation on the [Early Warnings for All \(EW4All\) initiative](#) – a global UN initiative that seeks to establish early warning systems for all vulnerable communities by 2027. At the workshop, stakeholders initiated a national EW4All roadmap to prepare for the UN Climate Change Conference ([COP28](#)).
- Together with Government, WFP is preparing a database of 45,000 vulnerable Bangladeshi households in three disaster-prone districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions, which will support [anticipatory actions](#) for the most vulnerable households in the event of a cyclone.
- With WFP technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 920,100 women received BDT800 (US\$7) cash assistance, and 1,050 women received one off food basket through the **Mother and Child Benefit Programme** (MCBP). At WFP-supported learning hubs, 9,326 MCBP beneficiaries were also reached with nutrition-based social and behavioural change sessions.
- WFP distributed **fortified rice** to 1.4 million beneficiaries of the Government's Food Friendly and Vulnerable Women Benefit Programme in 57 sub-districts. Under the **Urban Food Assistance Programme**, WFP provided nutrition messaging to 12,600 people.

**Monitoring**

Due to recurrent blockades as the national election approaches, WFP could only complete 52 percent of planned monitoring visits in Cox's Bazar (86 in the camps, 55 in local communities). The toll-free hotline received almost 688 feedback calls.

**Challenges**

The main opposition parties continued to organize frequent recurring national strikes and blockades of road, rail and water transport with the demand that national elections, scheduled for 7 January 2024, are held under a caretaker government. The UN remained operational, with most staff working remotely and essential movements proceeding as needed. In Cox's Bazar, retailers experienced a temporary shortage of short grain rice due to transportation delays.

**Story from the field**



Rohingya father, [Abdur](#) (pictured centre), his wife and children are surviving on rice and lentils, after monthly rations were cut to just US\$8 due to acute funding shortages. With donor support, WFP rations will moderately rebound to US\$10 in Cox's Bazar in January.

**2023 Donors**

*(including carryover of unspent 2022 contributions)*

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