



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief January 2024



Launch of fortified rice for the first time in the Rohingya camps of Cox's Bazar. WFP/Ziaur Rahman

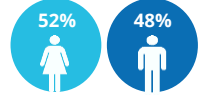
## In Numbers

**976.3 mt** food distributed

**US\$ 10.7 million** distributed in cash-based transfers

**US\$ 32.91 million** net funding requirements under the country strategic plan (February – July 2024)<sup>3</sup>

**1 million** people assisted



## Operational Updates

- This year started with some uplifting news with the partial restoration of the food rations from US\$8 per person per month to US\$10 for the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar. For the first time in the response, fortified rice became available in WFP's food basket. However, WFP urgently needs **US\$37 million** to restore the full US\$12.50 ration for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar for the whole year.
- A total of 912,300 Rohingya refugees<sup>1</sup> were reached through **general food assistance** (GFA) and 220,855 most vulnerable households also received additional US\$3 for fresh foods. Malnutrition **prevention and treatment** services were provided at 177 sites in the camps and Bangladeshi communities with 190,400 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and children aged 6-59 months assisted. Meanwhile, **school feeding** activities reached 303,280 refugee and Bangladeshi children.
- In response to the large fire in camp 5 in Cox's Bazar on 7 January, WFP provided 770 affected households with fortified biscuits, followed by hot meals for lunch and dinner for 15 days until families were reintegrated into the regular food assistance. WFP also supported through Rohingya volunteers in fire control, debris clearance and improve access in the affected areas through its disaster risk reduction (DRR) programme.
- On Bhasan Char, the entire Rohingya population (31,181<sup>2</sup>) received WFP **general food assistance**, with 58 percent using commodity vouchers and the rest using e-vouchers. About 80 households utilized the alternative collector system which allows refugees to collect another household's entitlement upon prior mutual consent. WFP will maintain a GFA ration size at US\$15 per person per month for the first quarter of 2024 to facilitate market assessment and other preparations before introducing the new ration of US\$13, following an analysis of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB).
- Through the **livelihoods** programme in Cox's Bazar, WFP engages Bangladeshi women in self-help groups with monthly subsistence allowances and income generating activities.

## 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.

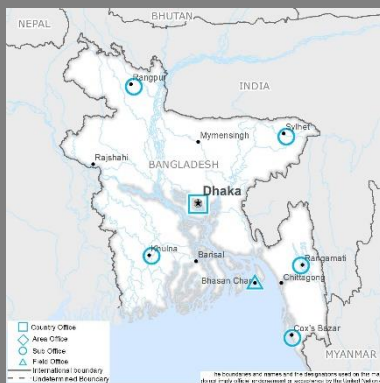
Since 2017, in response to the influx of approximately 745,000 Rohingya from Myanmar to Cox's Bazar, WFP has been providing food assistance and nutrition services, as well as implementing self-reliance and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, in the camps. In Cox's Bazar, WFP also supports Bangladeshi 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 32,560 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 aged 6-59**  
months



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Note: Figures may include duplication (some people benefit from more than one programme).

<sup>1,2</sup> WFP assistance reached fewer refugees than initially planned for the month, due to relocations and absentee households.

<sup>3,4</sup> Funding needs as of 22 January 2024.

| Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026) |                                   |   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Total Requirement (in US\$)        | Allocated Contributions (in US\$) | Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) <sup>2</sup> |
| 1.62 b                             | 623.02 m                          | 32.91 m   |

| # of people assisted |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| GFA 912,300          | Emergency relief 33,080 |
| Nutrition 196,500    | School Feeding 314,300  |
| Urban 12,400         |                         |

**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.

- In the Cox’s Bazar camps, WFP’s **self-reliance** programme engages refugees in homestead gardening, aquaculture, upcycling and communication with communities. WFP thanks Norway for their new contribution to Safe Access to Fuel and Energy project in the refugee camps.
- To support the Government’s pandemic response, WFP launched an urban food assistance pilot in Dhaka slums. The programme shifted from its initial purpose (emergency COVID-19 response) to supporting the Government with longer-term evidence generation for urban social protection programme. Through the **Urban Food Assistance** Programme, WFP transferred BDT 10 million (US\$91,300) to 2,922 households living in Dhaka slums.
- WFP sustained support to communities affected by **floods** in Chattogram Hill Tracts, assisting 5,558 households with BDT 29 million (US\$237,400). A pilot of PlugPAY (direct cash transfer from WFP to beneficiary account) payments started on a small scale, coupled with nutrition-related messaging via mobile SMS in different languages.
- WFP **social protection** team organized a strategic consultation workshop with government officials on urban social protection, followed by a field visit to slums in Dhaka. Programme orientations were conducted for newly appointed officials of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and discussions are underway to strengthen the Ministry’s policy leadership and advocacy unit.
- Following the reopening of schools in January 2024, the distribution of fortified biscuits resumed, and WFP continued to support the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education with technical support for the **school feeding project proposal** in preparation for the Project Evaluation Committee meeting in the Planning Commission.

**Story from the field**



[Shohida](#), a young Rohingya girl on Bhasan Char Island, attends a WFP-supported school, enjoys fortified biscuits with her friends. The fortified biscuits, packed with nutrients, enhance nutrition, health, and educational outcomes.

**Donors and funding sources - including carryover of unspent 2023 contributions**

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Thailand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA and other funding sources (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, IFPRI, WFP USA, UNCF, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, UN World Food Programme, UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, UN World Food Programme, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, UN World Food Programme)

**Monitoring**

WFP completed 882 monitoring visits in Cox’s Bazar (861 in the camps, 21 in local communities) – exceeding the planned number (858) – and received 733 calls on its toll-free hotline.

**Challenges**

Due to the national election, rice distribution for the entire country under the Vulnerable Women Benefit programme was suspended for January. The Government may likely distribute food rations for two months together in February to compensate for the delay.