



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief April 2024



WFP's nutritious fortified biscuits help Rohingya children meet their nutrition needs. WFP/Saikat Mojumder

Operational Context

WFP started operations in Bangladesh in 1974. Despite significant economic growth over the past decade, 20 percent, or 16.5 million people are food insecure and 24 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.

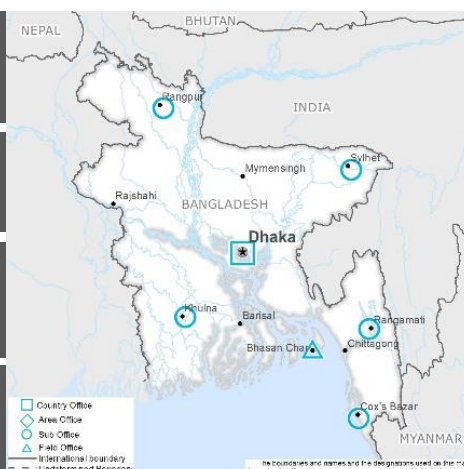
Since 2017, in response to the massive influx of the Rohingya people fleeing Myanmar, WFP has been providing critical food, nutrition, self-reliance, school feeding and disaster risk reduction (DRR) assistance for the Rohingya population. In Cox's Bazar, WFP also supports Bangladeshi communities most 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 35,000 refugees who have been relocated from the camps in Cox's Bazar.

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**



In Numbers



832.8 mt food distributed



US\$ 10.9 million distributed in cash-based transfers



US\$ 46.5 million net funding requirements under the country strategic plan (May – October 2024)¹



1 million people assisted



Operational Updates

Social Protection

- WFP, in collaboration with development partners, EU, World Bank and UNICEF reviewed the implementation directive of the **mother and child benefit programme**. Recommendations were put forth to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
- WFP assisted the Department of Women and Children Affairs in organizing the performance management committee meeting for the **vulnerable women benefit** (VWB) programme. Discussions were held on adopting the model of the [Investment Component for Vulnerable Group Development](#) project to align with the National Social Security Strategy. This initiative focuses on building the capacity and providing business support to vulnerable women, aiming to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and enable them to engage in economic activities.
- In collaboration with IFPRI, WFP provided food baskets to 1,095 and cash support to 1,056 beneficiaries of the **mother and child benefit programme**.

Rice fortification

- With WFP's assistance, the government distributed **fortified rice** to 1.7 million beneficiaries of the **vulnerable women benefit programme** across 165 sub-districts. Additionally, WFP facilitated **direct distribution** to 227,000 beneficiaries.
- WFP and Nutrition International conducted three divisional-level quality and monitoring training sessions on **rice fortification** for district-level government officials.

School feeding

- The country faced its most prolonged heatwave in 75 years, leading to a nationwide closure of educational institutions for two weeks, including primary schools directly assisted by WFP's school feeding programme.
- WFP supported the Directorate of Primary Education in compiling qualitative and quantitative data on the previous national school feeding project for submission to the government's Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED). IMED's evaluation report informed the development of the project proposal for the upcoming national school feeding project. One key finding was that schools supported by feeding programme showed higher educational outcomes, such as improved literacy and attendance rates, compared to those that were not.

¹³This figure, valid as of 14 May 2024, is based on confirmed contributions and excludes opportunities under discussion with development partners.

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) ³
1.62 b	670.18 m	46.5 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.

2024 Contributions

Australia, ECHO, Germany BMZ, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA, UN CERF, and private donors.

New contributions from ECHO, FCDO, USAID were received in April towards WFP's Rohingya response.

³ WFP assistance reached fewer refugees than initially planned for the month, due to relocations and absentee households.

Anticipatory action

- Before the monsoon season, WFP finalized beneficiary databases for flood-prone areas in the northeast and cyclone-prone areas in the southwestern regions as part of **anticipatory action** initiatives.

Resilience building initiatives

- WFP published a [review](#) of the **enhancing food security and nutrition (EFSN) - livelihoods programme** in Cox's Bazar, highlighting its success in enhancing food security, nutrition, and economic and social empowerment for vulnerable women. The review recommended increased government ownership, improved data management, and extended programme duration for sustainable impacts.

Rohingya refugee response

- For the Rohingya refugees, WFP continues to try and restore the full ration. The ration size currently stands at US\$10 per person per month. With a more positive funding outlook, WFP plans to increase the food ration to US\$11 from June, whereas the full ration stands at US\$12.5, with fortified rice added.
- Since the beginning of 2024, WFP has begun using fortified rice in its assistance package. This initiative aims to effectively tackle malnutrition among children and boost the population's nutrient intake. Coverage is expected to reach 100 percent by June.
- A total of 918,200 Rohingya refugees² were reached through **general food assistance** and 235,000 most vulnerable refugees also received an additional US\$3 for **fresh food**.
- Malnutrition prevention and treatment** services were provided at 179 sites in Cox's Bazar camps and Bangladeshi communities, as well as on Bhasan Char island, reaching 208,600 pregnant and breastfeeding women, girls and children aged 6-59 months.
- On Bhasan Char, all Rohingya now receive their food assistance through e-vouchers as commodity vouchers have been phased out. Preparation for distribution of fortified rice distribution is underway.
- The Republic of Korea has provided WFP its largest contribution of the year through a multi-year in-kind (rice) contribution, valued at US\$13.9 million for the first year for the Rohingya refugee operation.
- Through the **resilience programme for refugees**, WFP engaged 31,235 Rohingyas in skills development activities including homestead vegetable gardening, aquaculture, and upcycling. Another 16,100 refugees including 505 **persons with disabilities** were engaged in disaster risk reduction activities in Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps.

Monitoring

- The latest [market monitoring report](#) showed a 2 percent decline in overall inflation to 9.67 percent, driven by decreases in both food and non-food inflation. However, year-on-year comparisons revealed a 10 percent increase in general inflation and a significant 16 percent rise in food inflation.