



Bangladesh, 2024 © WFP/ Saikat Mojumder



Nutrition

Access to nutritious diets for a healthier future for all

Malnutrition remains a major concern in Bangladesh. One in four children under five is stunted, and only a third receive the recommended diet they need for healthy growth (BDHS 2022). Anaemia affects both children and women, with nearly one in three women found to be anaemic (National Micronutrient Survey 2019–20). Among Rohingya refugees, the situation is even more severe. Over 15 percent of young children are acutely malnourished - an emergency level, and 4 in 10 are stunted. Just 16 percent receive an adequate diet, while anaemia remains widespread among both children and women (Standard Expanded Nutrition Survey 2023).

Families in rural, urban slum, and climate-vulnerable areas often lack access to nutritious food, putting children and mothers at greatest risk. Early undernutrition causes lasting harm and perpetuates poverty across generations. WFP partners with the Government of Bangladesh to break the cycle of malnutrition by shaping policies and programmes that deliver real impact.

In close collaboration with the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), WFP provides technical expertise to design, strengthen, and implement nutrition strategies and programmes that are evidence-based and nationally owned.

Whether through life-saving treatment, school meals, or integrating nutrition into national safety nets and emergencies, WFP's work aims to ensure that everyone, no matter their background or circumstance, has the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive.

Lifesaving nutrition support

As part of the Rohingya response, WFP provides lifesaving nutrition support to Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host communities. Working closely with UNICEF, UNHCR, and other partners, WFP delivers a coordinated package of curative and preventive services including:

Targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP) with the provision of Specialized Nutritious Foods (SNF), through community-based management of acute

malnutrition (CMAM) for children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP)

with SNF distributions for children 6-23 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Fresh food e-vouchers conditional on growth monitoring participation for children 24-59 months.

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities

to promote key nutrition, childcare, and hygiene practices through SBC activities, encouraging diverse diets and optimal maternal and child feeding to increase demand for nutritious food.

Transforming systems for long-term nutrition gains

WFP integrates nutrition across its programmes, including food assistance to Rohingya, school feeding, resilience, and emergency response, as well as safety nets and self-reliance - embedding clear nutrition objectives and indicators in design. With strong leadership from the Ministries of Food and Women and Children Affairs, and WFP's technical support, fortified rice has become a core part of national social protection programmes, ensuring vulnerable populations are not just fed, but nourished. WFP also works with millers, factories, laboratories, and the private sector to strengthen the fortified rice value chain through capacity building and policy dialogue.

WFP's SBC efforts promote nutrition at the household level. WFP supports the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in strengthening the design of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme, integrating context-specific SBC tools and nutrition-sensitive approaches.

In 2022, fortified rice entered Bangladesh's commercial market, supported by WFP's efforts to reduce fortification costs and raise consumer awareness through a nationwide SBC campaign - shifting towards a sustainable, market-driven model that broadens access beyond vulnerable groups.

By 2024, fortified rice reached Rohingya refugees via WFP's food assistance, advancing access to culturally acceptable, nutritious food. That same year, WFP

launched a national SBC strategy based on research into household food habits, cultural norms, and gender roles. The strategy pinpoints key moments along the food journey, from purchase to plate, where positive change can be made, reinforcing WFP's commitment to long-term nutrition gains.

Evidence generation

To strengthen accountability and learning, WFP continues to invest in evidence generation that informs policy and improves programme design. As part of its evidence-driven approach, WFP is implementing the Joint UN Initiative for the Prevention of Wasting with UNICEF and WHO, supporting early prevention, detection, and the management of child wasting through nationally led, context-specific solutions.

In collaboration with the National Nutrition Service, WFP and UNICEF conducted the Integrated Phase Classification for Acute Malnutrition (IPC AMN), projecting that 1.6 million children will be affected by acute malnutrition in 2025.

Recent efforts include large-scale nutrition surveys in Rohingya camps, disaster-prone areas, and urban settings, which have shaped Bangladesh's evolving national nutrition strategy. At the Cox's Bazar level, WFP provides technical and financial support for key assessments such as the Nutrition Causal Analysis (NCA), Standard Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS), and Joint Assessment Mission (JAM).

Analyses, like the Cost of Diet and Fill the Nutrient Gap, have identified affordable ways to meet nutritional needs based on local food availability. In partnership with the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), WFP has supported operational research to adapt malnutrition treatment protocols to the Bangladeshi context. Additionally, WFP is conducting the Modelling and Mapping Risk of Inadequate Micronutrient Intake to identify nutrient gaps and evaluate food fortification strategies such as rice fortification to inform national policy.

Looking ahead

Malnutrition in Bangladesh is not inevitable. With sustained investment, better coordination, and systems that put people first, progress is within reach. WFP remains a committed partner to the Government of Bangladesh in building resilient and inclusive nutrition systems that leave no one behind – in emergencies and every day.

WFP Bangladesh

Facebook @WFPinBangladesh

Instagram @WFP_Bangladesh

X @WFP_Bangladesh