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SAVING
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LIVES

Rohingya response in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char

Protecting lives. Building resilience.

Since August 2017, when over 700,000 Rohingya fled brutal violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Bangladesh continues to generously host one of the world's most urgent and protracted refugee crises. Today, over one million Rohingya live in overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar and on the remote island of Bhasan Char where they face restricted freedom of movement, lack legal status, and have limited livelihood opportunities. Fully dependent on humanitarian assistance, their survival hangs in the balance as this crisis enters its ninth year, with resources stretched thin.

Food assistance programme - Rohingya

WFP provides general food assistance to all Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and on Bhasan Char through e-vouchers, allowing families to choose from a variety of nutritious foods, while promoting dignity and dietary diversity. Vouchers can be redeemed at 22 WFP outlets (19 in Cox's Bazar and three in Bhasan Char), all featuring Fresh Food Corners. Each refugee in Cox's Bazar receives US\$12 per month and each refugee in Bhasan Char receives US\$13 (due to higher operational costs) to spend as they see fit.

Highly vulnerable households - those headed by children, women, the elderly, or including persons with disabilities - receive an additional US\$3 per person each month, redeemable for protein-rich foods (e.g., eggs, chicken, fish) and fresh produce. WFP also ensures inclusive access through porter services and mobility-friendly sites.

The Cox's Bazar camps are prone to disasters such as cyclones, fires, and landslides. In emergencies, affected families receive ready-to-eat food, with the duration of assistance adjusted based on needs and available cooking facilities. To deliver this, WFP activates community kitchens and engages local vendors to support meal preparation when needed. To deliver this, WFP activates community kitchens and engages local vendors to support meal preparation when needed.

Emergency nutrition programme - Rohingya and host community

WFP delivers integrated malnutrition prevention and treatment services to improve nutritional outcomes among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bhasan Char, and in host communities. Services are provided through 45 facilities in 33 refugee camps, two on Bhasan Char,

and 132 centres in the host community. In camps, WFP partners with UNICEF, UNHCR, and four NGOs under the Nutrition Sector; in host areas, with two NGOs and government health services. The programme focuses on children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW), aiming to reduce acute and chronic malnutrition, and prevent new cases. WFP implements two key interventions:

Wasting Prevention Programme: To help prevent malnutrition in the Rohingya camps, all children aged 6-23 months and PBW with no acute malnutrition receive a comprehensive nutrition package under the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP). Children aged 24-59 months without acute malnutrition receive US\$3 per month in e-vouchers for fresh foods, contingent on regular Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) sessions. The programme also includes Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and community engagement.

Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP): To treat Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM), children 6-59 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women receive specialized nutritious foods in camps and host communities. SBC activities support healthy practices and improve recovery outcomes.

School feeding programme – Rohingya and host community

WFP provides fortified biscuits daily to 250,000 Rohingya children in 4,000 learning centres in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, supporting their nutrition and learning. The programme also benefits Bangladeshi children in 212 primary schools through fortified biscuits, literacy and health education, deworming, and Water Sanitation and Health (WASH) services, in collaboration with the local government and other actors.

Resilience-building initiatives

Cox's Bazar, one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable regions, is under mounting environmental pressure from frequent climate shocks and the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. Since 2017, the arrival of nearly one million refugees has heightened risks of deforestation, landslides, and flooding, while intensifying competition over scarce resources and affecting both refugee and host communities.

To address these challenges, WFP implements a holistic resilience programme focused on six key areas to strengthen food systems, disaster preparedness, and long-term community wellbeing.

To reduce disaster risk and improve food security, **In Camps**, WFP promotes **natural resource management** by rehabilitating community infrastructure, stabilizing slopes improving flood control, especially in high-risk areas. **Reforestation** also helps restore degraded land. **Youth engagement** in camps builds life skills, community service opportunities, and disaster awareness among Rohingya adolescents, turning them into community leaders. Through **green skills development**, refugees - especially women and people with disabilities participate in, aquaculture, upcycling, and waste reuse/management, homestead gardening, seedling production to boost household food production, and nutrition. On Bhasan Char, similar activities promote self-reliance through rice fortification, composting, and upcycled waste initiatives.

In host community, WFP's **livelihood project** emphasizes **capacity strengthening**, particularly for women, aligning with local cultural dynamics. Participants received subsistence allowances, business grants, and training in literacy, entrepreneurship, agriculture, crafts, marketing, leadership, and digital skills - an impact that continues through post-programme follow-up. **Market access** is another key area of intervention, promoting sustainable smallholder farming, marketing and social cohesion. Across 62 aggregation centres in Cox's Bazar, WFP links Bangladeshi smallholder farmers - 80 percent of them women, with local retailers, producer groups, and Fresh Food Corners in refugee camps. Farmers receive training in climate-smart agriculture, price negotiation, post-harvest management, food safety, and digital marketing through the Farm2Go app. These initiatives are supported by the rehabilitation of aggregation centres, construction of market roads, and tree planting to boost productivity and strengthen community ties.

To better withstand future shocks, WFP supports **Anticipatory Action and Cyclone Preparedness initiatives**, helping host communities take preventive measures ahead of extreme weather events. Infrastructure upgrades, early warning systems, and close coordination with local disaster management bodies help reduce the impact of climate shocks before they strike.

This integrated approach supports both immediate needs and long-term climate resilience across Cox's Bazar.

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