



WFP in Bangladesh 2014 in Review

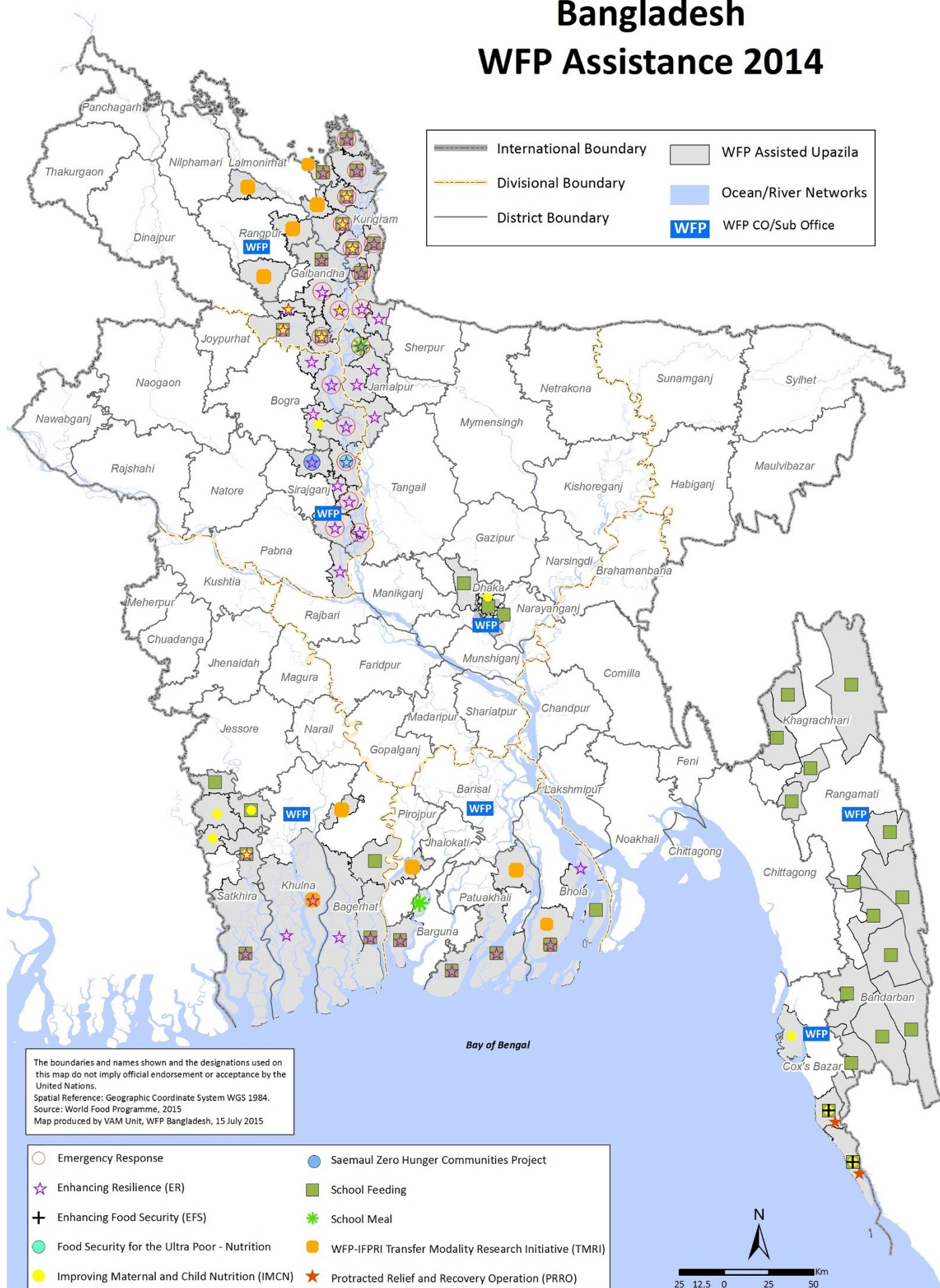
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World Food Programme

Bangladesh

WFP Assistance 2014



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A Message from the WFP Representative

In Bangladesh, every dollar spent on nutrition during a child's first 1,000 days can save as much as USD 62 for the country. For Bangladesh to continue the recent years' significant economic progress and social development, a focus on reducing undernutrition is crucial. Encouragingly, the Government of Bangladesh is increasingly taking charge of safeguarding citizens from poverty, food insecurity and undernutrition. In the spirit of the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge, WFP will continue to push for nutrition and food security to be high on the national agenda, create valuable evidence to support the Government and development community as well as assist those most in need through our operations.

In 2014, the Transfer Modality Research Initiative (TMRI) conducted by WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) demonstrated that a combination of cash transfers and nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC) for ultra-poor women with small children can make a significant difference in the prevention of child stunting.

WFP was also engaged in the finalization of the Common Narrative on Nutrition, a document supporting the country in setting clear nutrition policy and programme goals. The first statistically valid upazila-level undernutrition maps and the updated poverty maps are now aiding decision-makers within the development sector in targeting the poorest and most undernourished upazilas.

In 2014, we finalized and presented the results of a study on the effects of climate-change-related shocks and stresses on nutrition and food security in selected parts of rural Bangladesh. In addition, our emergency response capacity was tested and proved effective when floods hit the northwest of the country during the monsoon season.

We continued to remain operational in challenged areas, and we further enhanced our partnership with the



WFP/Leonora Beck

Government of Bangladesh in their implementation of the national School Feeding in Poverty-Prone Areas, the Enhancing Resilience and the Vulnerable Group Development programmes. 2015 will see us engage deeper in Level 3 emergency preparedness and the preparation of a new country strategy based on a thorough and independent food security and nutrition analysis and in support of the Government's medium-term plans.

Christa Räder
Representative
World Food Programme Bangladesh

Facts and figures

Number of people assisted across all programmes	1,607,224
Number of schoolchildren assisted (under both the Country Programme and the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation)	927,600
Food and cash for work participants	81,023
Trained participants (in IMCN, School Feeding and Enhancing Resilience programmes)	160,247
Metric tons of food distributed	21,192
Cash distributed in USD (under the Enhancing Resilience and Enhancing Food Security programmes, the Transfer Modality Research Initiative, and through food assistance to refugees as well as in emergencies)	4,280,872

2014 at a Glance

96% of the children enrolled in WFP's Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition programme had fully recovered by the end of the year. Read how on page 6.

15,000



taka (USD 190) is the amount that women receive to invest in income-generating activities in the Government's Investment Component of the Vulnerable Group Development programme, assisted by WFP. See page 12.

65,800 women found employment outside their homes through WFP's Enhancing Resilience programme. Read more on page 10.



2.7
million



schoolchildren ate a nutritious snack every day they attended class. Most of these kids were supported by the Government following a successful programme scale-up. Read more on page 8.

97,315 flood-affected people benefitted from cash transfers that WFP provided in the wake of the August 2014 flood. Read more on page 14.



Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition

Undernutrition remains a major challenge in Bangladesh with significant consequences for individuals, the economy and health systems, costing more than USD 1 billion in lost productivity every year. Despite having achieved important progress, high numbers continue to burden Bangladesh.

Approximately 40 percent of all children under five are too short for their age, a condition also referred to as stunting. Stunting may chronically deprive the body of necessary building blocks to develop the brain, body and immune system. The effects of this deprivation last a lifetime, leading to lower productivity and cognitive capacity as well as higher morbidity and mortality.

Around 15 percent of children under five are acutely undernourished, or wasted, meaning they are too thin for their height. Especially in the first 1,000 days after conception, human potential shrivels if stunting affects the growth of the child.

Involving communities to boost nutrition

The aim of WFP's activities in Bangladesh is to support the Government in breaking the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition by giving priority to a child's first 1,000 days of life. To address undernutrition, WFP treats undernourished pregnant and lactating women and children under five through the programme Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition (IMCN).

WFP focuses on empowering communities to ensure adequate coverage and greater involvement. Activities are carried out through government health clinics and together with frontline staff to guarantee ownership and sustainability.

As an essential element in addressing undernutrition, WFP trains mothers, caretakers and family members to help them change nutritional behaviour. Changes in feeding behaviour, such as practicing exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life, can significantly improve child health and nutritional status.

A prominent research project, conducted by WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) from 2012 to 2014, demonstrated a significant positive impact on child growth when cash transfers were combined with behaviour change communication (BCC). Aiming to integrate a strong and effective BCC-for-nutrition component in its programmes, WFP reviewed in 2014 its current BCC delivery methodology and developed an evidence-based, cost-conscious and actionable BCC strategy.

Moderately undernourished children receive Super Cereal Plus, a specialized nutritious food made from wheat, soya, oil, milk powder and sugar, fortified with essential vitamins and minerals. Undernourished women receive oil and Super Cereal, a wheat-soya flour mixed with sugar and micronutrients.

The Government recognizes the remaining challenge in tackling undernutrition. In 2014, WFP commenced the integration of IMCN in the Government's Health Population and Nutrition Sector Development Programme (2011-2016) and its corresponding operational plan for nutrition, the National Nutrition Services (NNS).

In 2014, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), Germany (through BMZ) and corporate partners Tilda and Unilever provided funding for the IMCN programme.



502

health facilities were assisted under the programme.

49,308

children aged 6 months to 5 years of age, and 29,009 pregnant women, nursing mothers and adolescent girls received specialized food to help them get the nutrition they need.



Kakuli inspires women in her community

Kakuli Nondi from Tala upazila in Satkhira heard about the IMCN programme through a neighbour. With both her and her 9-month-old daughter Krishna suffering from poor nutritional status, both were enrolled.

“I delivered twin babies by surgical operation at the local hospital, but one of my babies died immediately. When I returned to my husband’s house, we did not have much food because of his small rickshaw income.”

Although Kakuli wanted to breastfeed Krishna, her undernourished body was often not able to produce adequate amounts of milk. Both the mother and daughter’s nutritional status have improved significantly after receiving specialized nutritious food and nutrition education through the IMCN programme.

“I have changed my cooking process. I prioritize cleanliness. And we try to eat vegetables and eggs regularly.”

Kakuli also uses her knowledge to inspire other women in her community.

“My neighbours want to be healthier too. They ask about hygiene and cooking processes and I share what I have learned.”

Highlights

49,308 children were enrolled in the IMCN programme in 2014 because they suffered from moderate acute undernutrition. By the end of the year, 96 percent had fully recovered after receiving specialized nutritious food.

In line with a strategic partnership agreement with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, WFP has adopted a new model of implementation. The IMCN programme is increasingly integrated into the national health service delivery system instead of exclusively relying on NGOs and community nutrition volunteers.

The number of community clinics assisted increased from 400 to 502. For the new project areas, WFP provided training to union-level, district-level and frontline government health staff as well as refresher training for already involved government staff.

A special effort was made to reach out to male community members for behaviour change communication (BCC) activities, aiming to create a supportive environment in families and communities to allow mothers to use the knowledge and improve current practices.

The 2014 IMCN outcome survey showed that nutrition BCC contributed to improvements in child feeding and in basic nutrition, health and sanitation practices. 74 percent of the households followed three or more nutrition, hygiene and sanitation practices – up from 58 percent in 2012.

The proportion of mothers in Bangladesh who fed their infants exclusively with breast milk from 0-5 months of age increased from 48 percent in 2012 to 64 percent in 2014, according to BDHS 2014.



Photos: WFP/Ranak Martin, WFP/Leonora Beck

923

community health workers and staff and volunteers of partner organizations were trained to screen for acute undernutrition, to distribute specialized nutritious food, and to deliver information on nutrition, infant feeding, hygiene and sanitation.

79,225

women participated in sessions to learn how to ensure good health and nutrition, especially during pregnancy and for young children.

School Feeding

Feeding minds changes lives. Keeping children in school is one of the most effective ways to increase their future income-earning potential. However, poor families often need children to work or care for younger siblings while the parents work, which may prevent children from receiving proper education. 3.3 out of 20 million children of primary school age remain out of school and only eight in ten complete five years of primary education.

As a powerful incentive for poor households to send and keep their children in school, WFP works with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Directorate of Primary Education. It provides biscuits fortified with vitamins and minerals to pre-primary and primary schoolchildren in high poverty-prone areas.

The results of school feeding are encouraging. Enrolment in WFP-targeted schools increased by 10 percent from 2012 to 2014, and the attendance rate rose from 71 percent in 2007 to 86 percent in 2014.

Causating beneficial ripple effects

School feeding leads to outcomes that are mutually reinforcing, helping lift households out of poverty and end the intergenerational cycle of hunger. In addition to increasing enrolment and attendance, nutritious biscuits provide children with the energy to concentrate in class and help address widespread micronutrient deficiencies. Fortified with essential vitamins and minerals, the biscuits ensure children meet 67 percent of their daily vitamin and mineral needs.

The benefits of education can also transmit across generations as more educated people have fewer children, better job opportunities, marry later and provide their children with better food choices and education. Curbing this intergenerational transmission of poverty is especially important for girls and women.

The school feeding programme also includes an essential learning package for the children and their parents as well as teachers and other community members. Activities focus on vegetable gardening, dietary diversity, health, nutrition and hygiene including reinforcing good practices such as hand washing. In 2014, awareness modules about pertinent social issues were integrated including girls' education, dowry, child marriage and early pregnancy.

In addition to biscuit distribution, WFP organizes community mobilization workshops and women leadership development trainings for the school management committee members, 42 percent of whom are women.

Cooked meals for schoolchildren

To explore opportunities and modalities within school feeding, WFP has since 2013 run a pilot initiative with cooked school meals, working with communities to provide a home-grown lunch instead of biscuits. Vegetables, fruit and spices are purchased from local women farmers and cooked by women, helping entire communities to benefit from the programme.

In 2014, the school feeding programme was funded by Australia, Bangladesh, the United States and corporate donors Bidvest and Unilever.



99% of children in WFP-assisted primary schools continued to the next grade in 2014.

6,306 schools in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar and Dhaka were assisted by WFP in 2014.

The Government is committed to step up

A combination of effective policies and sustained national investments in education have resulted in tremendous gains in access to schooling in Bangladesh. The Government introduced a national school feeding programme in 2011 as part of its goal to achieve universal primary education. The programme, which initially supported 55,000 students, reached 1.8 million children in 2014. In 2015, the Government is almost doubling its support by assisting 3 million children.

Made possible by the Government's commitment to gradually scale up school feeding throughout the country, WFP has, in parallel, halved the number of assisted schoolchildren from around 1 million in 2014 by handing over more than 500,000 youths to the Government's programme in 2015.

Without the Government taking over, reaching 3.5 million children would have required nearly USD 90 million annually from donors.

With funding from donors, WFP is providing tailored technical assistance to relevant government agencies working on the national school feeding programme. Having established a capacity-support unit within the Government in 2011, WFP has been engaged in programme design, implementation guidelines, logistics and procurement, monitoring and evaluation, and implementation oversight. WFP Bangladesh together with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is presently working with the Government in preparing a National School Feeding Policy and Strategy.

Highlights

The Government's national school feeding programme has grown significantly. In 2011, it reached 55,000 schoolchildren. By 2014 this number has increased to 3 million. WFP is handing over 534,000 schoolchildren from our school feeding programme to the Government's programme in 2015.

WFP works with the Government to strengthen the skills of officials in managing school feeding, including monitoring and evaluation. WFP also assists in the establishment of logistics facilities in schools and in the areas of quality control and supply chain management. In 2014, WFP assisted or trained over 200 government and NGO staff in developing policies, strategies or legislation.

The Government requested WFP and GAIN to assist in developing a National School Feeding Policy and Strategy under the guidance of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

All fortified biscuits used in both WFP and Government-assisted school feeding are produced in Bangladesh. WFP works with local suppliers to ensure that increased demand can be met while maintaining high quality standards.

The Government continues to donate to WFP for school feeding in Bangladesh as a contribution to the United Nations. In 2012, the Government donated over 10,000 metric tons of wheat for the continuation and expansion of activities in food-insecure and poverty-prone areas.



Photos: WFP/Ranak Martin

920,483

children in
WFP-assisted
schools received
nutritious biscuits
every day they
attended class in
2014.

10%

more children
enrolled in 2014 in
WFP-assisted
schools.

Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change

Bangladesh tops the list of countries most vulnerable to climate change. Natural disasters and climate change is already pushing vulnerable people in low-lying Bangladesh further into poverty, offsetting gains in poverty reduction and agricultural production. About 20 percent of Bangladesh is flooded in a normal year and up to 70 percent is inundated in the case of extreme floods. The threat of a major cyclone remains, especially for communities in the southern coastal belt and along the major rivers.

Strong partnership fosters results

To enhance communities' resilience to natural disasters and joint preparedness as well as to improve the food security of targeted ultra-poor households, the Government of Bangladesh and WFP run the Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change (ER) programme. The Government has over the years taken on a larger share of the costs and demonstrated its long-term commitment to the programme by taking ownership. WFP has decreased its resource share accordingly, but remains strongly engaged in technical support concerning programme design and evidence creation.

Building resilience is a multi-faceted exercise where building a home safe from flooding and gaining knowledge and skills to prepare for and cope with disasters are crucial, along with financial security to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of a shock. In 2014, the programme provided food and cash to more than 81,000 participants for efforts invested in work and training. Including the participants' families, a total of over 400,000 people in 129 disaster-prone unions benefited from the programme.

The projects are identified in a local-level planning process involving government officials, community members and NGO staff. Together, they review community needs with a focus on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation infrastructure. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives takes

the technical lead in the construction and maintenance of assets and is involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Knowledge to empower lives

In addition to the creation of assets that protect communities and revive the economy, training is provided on disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation, survival during crises as well as marketable post-disaster skills useful to generate income. The participants also learn practical life skills in the areas of nutrition, hygiene, health and women's empowerment.

Self-employment plays an important role in sustaining and accelerating gains made at the household level. Therefore, in a third programme year, women from 10,874 participating households received a 12,000 taka cash grant for investment as well as a monthly cash transfer of 500 taka for consumption support over six months. The monthly payment allowed them to grow their investment and build their families' economic resilience.

In 2014, funding was provided from Bangladesh, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom (DFID).



86% of participants during the first two years of the programme were women.

324km

of embankment-cum-roads and **40 canals** were constructed, and **65 homes** were raised above flood levels to protect homes and fields from disasters as well as to improve people's access to markets, schools and services.



Striving to reach a new level

WFP commissioned a strategic review of the Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change (ER) programme, carried out by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, which provided specific recommendations on how the programme could be further strengthened from a resilience concept and gender perspective.

Compared to similar programmes, ER is particular in the strength and closeness of the partnership between the Government of Bangladesh and WFP, the review found. To bring the programme to a new level, the review recommends to clarify the underlying theory of change and adjust the monitoring and evaluation framework in order to be able to better demonstrate and communicate the benefits of the programme. Additionally, the programme would benefit from empowering participants, especially women, to be more involved in decision making, and adjusting the work environment to their specific needs.

Muslim Aid and WFP have made a short film called 'Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters in Bangladesh.' Watch it on YouTube!

Highlights

In 2014, the community asset score for disaster risk reduction infrastructure showed an improvement in the targeted communities, which are prone to flooding, cyclones, tidal surges and salinity intrusions.

The ER programme provided work opportunities to more than 65,800 ultra-poor women seeking employment outside of the home. Earning regular wages and armed with new knowledge and skills, women are exercising more control over income and resources and are contributing to decisions that determine their families' future.

76 percent of the elected leaders of the Participant Groups, who consult with NGOs, help implement the programme and organize cash and food distributions, were women, compared to only 20 percent in 2007. As elected leaders, women play an important role in representing their peers and are recognised as contributing to their communities.

Once heavily bureaucratic, the cash transfer has been streamlined so that participants are paid faster. WFP continues to trial alternative cash transfer methods. In the third programme year, women receive grants for investment and monthly allowances through individual bank accounts.

Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WFP tailored an approach that in 2015 will support 3,266 ultra-poor households in the southern district of Satkhira in an adaptive early-recovery project to address waterlogging and pave the way for finding long-term solutions to the issue. Waterlogging, a chronic problem in this district, has caused widespread damage to agricultural livelihoods and created acute humanitarian needs among marginal farmers and landless ultra-poor households.



Photos: WFP/Ranak Martin

51%

was the average score for community resilience in WFP-assisted disaster-prone areas, up from 31 percent in 2012. Resilience is assessed by looking at infrastructure and vulnerability to disasters.

502,430

people benefited from the food and cash wages paid to programme participants in 2014. This includes cash assistance to flood victims.

Strengthening Social Safety Nets

For the Government, social safety nets are important for reducing poverty by half by the year 2021. USD 3.2 billion, or about 2.3 percent of GDP, has been allocated to social safety net programmes for the fiscal year 2014-15. The major programmes cover over 30 million people. Unfortunately, national safety nets suffer from leakage, inefficient targeting, and face criticism in their ability to effectively contribute to eradicating extreme poverty and, even more so, to improving child nutrition.

WFP supports the Government in strengthening existing safety nets, assists with planning and policy formulation, and contributes with evidence to the ongoing social protection policy dialogue by carrying out a number of innovative schemes and research projects.

Lifting ultra-poor out of poverty

WFP with funding from the United Kingdom (DFID) supports the Government in enhancing and reforming the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme, a social safety net programme targeting 750,000 ultra-poor women and their families. The aim is to make VGD more effective in enabling participants to move out of extreme poverty and improve their food security and nutrition situation.

With technical assistance from WFP and funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government has scaled up the distribution of rice, fortified with vitamins and minerals, as a first step toward gradually mainstreaming nutrition into the VGD programme.

The Government also agreed to launch an enhanced version of VGD, called Investment Component of VGD, where women, in addition to basic food and training assistance, receive a cash grant of 15,000 taka (USD 190) allowing them to establish their own income generating businesses. The scheme also comprises improved quality of training and nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC).

In support of the Government's safety net design planning, WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) finalised a two-year research project that sheds light

on which kinds of social safety net interventions are most effective in improving food security and child nutrition in ultra-poor families. The study sought to determine the benefits of five different combinations of cash, food and nutrition BCC. In households of ultra-poor women with small children that received cash transfers combined with nutrition BCC over a two-year period, stunting among those children was reduced by 7.3 percent.

Building on top of valuable knowledge

After fruitful experiences with a previous two-year project, a new three-year Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) project commenced in 2014 in Cox's Bazar of southeastern Bangladesh. The programme consists of a comprehensive, multi-layered package of interventions focusing on both the immediate and longer term causes of undernutrition and seeks also to provide evidence of effective, integrated interventions.

In a strategic partnership, WFP and BRAC are collaborating to combine critical services related to nutrition and livelihood development. This is done through the innovative learning initiative Targeting the Ultra Poor-Nutrition (TUP-N), which involves women with small children in livelihood activities and intensive nutrition BCC. If the design proves successful in terms of stunting prevention, BRAC will be able to take it to scale.



1,122

government staff and NGO partner staff received training or technical assistance in programme implementation, policy development or related areas in 2014.

13.29

was Bangladesh's National Capacity Index (NCI) value in 2014, up from 10.7 in 2013. NCI indicates the capacity development of the Government for the VGD programme based on joint assessments with WFP.



No more days without any food

In Kodomtoli village, Belkuchi upazila in Sirajganj, 31-year-old Salma Khatun is waiting in line to collect her sack of 30 kg of rice that she as a Vulnerable Group Development participant is entitled to. “My husband used to weave fabric, but he died suddenly a year ago. Now it’s completely on me to maintain the family.”

After her husband’s death, Salma and her children sometimes went for days without any food. Now she weaves with her handloom with threads provided by a Mahajan (money lender) but there are days the Mahajan has no work for Salma, usually during monsoon season and political strikes. Salma got married right after finishing fifth grade. Weaving is all she has learnt by helping her husband.

“The benefit of this rice is that I don’t need to spend my money on buying rice any more. I can use the money that I earn for my daughter’s education,” she says.

She puts away 40 taka (USD 0.5) as savings each time she comes to receive her rice ration. After two years she hopes to save enough to buy a goat. “Right now, I have no cows, goats or chickens,” says Salma.

Highlights

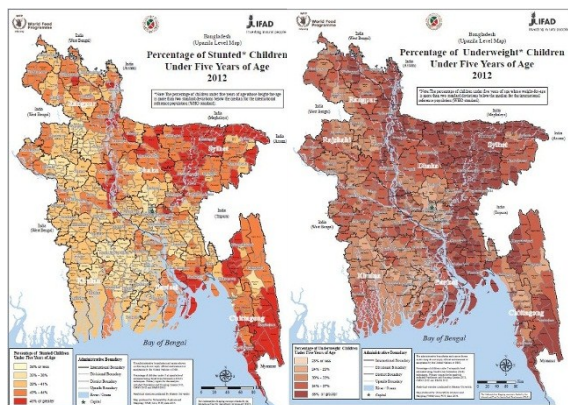
The Government and WFP agreed to launch a new programme design for the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme that includes a sizable cash grant for the ultra-poor women, allowing them to establish their own income-generating business. The pilot will reach 8,000 women and their families.

The Enhancing Food Security (EFS) project has shown to increase both mobility and strengthen women’s role in household decision-making. Husbands have shared that they now play a larger role in domestic tasks in order to enable their wives to undertake project and business activities. Additionally, cooperating-partner reports show that the women continued to accumulate monthly savings even after the end of the project in July 2014.

In 2013 and 2014, the Government supported more than 55,000 women and their families with fortified rice through the VGD programme. By the end of 2016, the Government plans to scale up to 250,000 people.

Findings from the Transfer Modality Research Initiative, conducted by WFP and IFPRI, show that the largest food security and nutrition impacts for ultra-poor women with small children come from social safety net interventions consisting of sizeable cash transfers combined with nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC).

In collaboration with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank, and with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), WFP launched the latest poverty maps of Bangladesh and the first ever statistically valid stunting and underweight maps at sub-district level. The maps will aid policy makers, planners and researchers in decision making on targeted and integrated nutrition-focused programming.



Photos: WFP/Ranak Martin

300

out of 544 sub-districts (upazilas) in Bangladesh had a stunting rate above 40 percent in 2012, the undernutrition maps published in 2014 show.

15,000

taka (USD 190) is the amount ultra-poor women receive as a one-off cash grant in the pilot project under the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme to invest in income-generating activities.

Responding to Emergencies

WFP stands ready to support the Government of Bangladesh in its response to emergencies. With offices in Dhaka, Rangpur, Sirajganj, Khulna, Barisal, Rangamati and Cox's Bazar, WFP staff throughout the country are continuously monitoring and assessing the food security situation. In the aftermath of a disaster, WFP plays a key role in coordinating and implementing rapid assessments to determine the food and nutrition needs among affected communities, and can speedily prepare a response.

Food stored in warehouses in 15 locations, from Gaibandha in the north to Cox's Bazar in the south, can be moved quickly to affected places. Pre-selected partner NGOs are ready to help distribute the food in the case of an emergency. WFP has a standing agreement with the Government of Bangladesh, which provides up to 20,000 metric tons of rice for WFP to distribute in an emergency.

Supporting flood-affected people in need

A quick response became necessary when nearly two million people in the northwestern parts of Bangladesh were affected by a destructive flood in August 2014. The flood water wrecked the system of dykes and flood barriers, leaving roads and houses inundated, and ruining vast parts of land and villages. WFP distributed 80 metric tons of biscuits fortified with vitamins and minerals to more than 106,000 flood victims as an immediate flood response.

WFP also provided unconditional cash transfers worth 9,000 taka (USD 115) in three mobile phone bank disbursements to 19,500 ultra-poor women and their families to further strengthen communities in the aftermath of the flood. The biscuits and cash transfers were funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) and the United Kingdom (DFID).

Together with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), WFP co-leads the Food Security Cluster, a group consisting of international NGOs, UN agencies, government representatives and donors. It was established to coordinate disaster preparedness activities, information management

and needs assessments as well as the food security response system during a humanitarian crisis. The cluster also builds capacity on disaster preparedness and response of humanitarian actors.

The Food Security Cluster has developed a contingency plan for floods and cyclones as well as standard operating procedures that provide a systematic overview of response activities. Trainings on Emergency Food Security Needs Assessments were provided to more than 100 enumerators focusing on different hazards in various regions. A resource pool has been created for capacity building of front line staff, and all participants have become part of a stand-by roster for emergency food security assessments. To assist enumerators, a handbook is available which focuses on participatory methods of data collection during detailed food security and livelihood assessments. There is also a standardized food package for immediate responses (1-7 days) and one for responses in the short to medium term.

Exploring cash transfer opportunities

Through the Cash Working Group (CWG), WFP helps facilitate the sharing of information on cash-based responses to maximize effectiveness and learning. The group has also created real-time tools for information sharing and coordination to harmonise interventions.



1.8 million people were affected, corresponding to 33 percent of the population in the area, when flood water inundated parts of northwestern Bangladesh.

232,000

people were forced to flee their flooded houses to embankments and shelters in August 2014.



Flood victims drew a sigh of relief

The unconditional cash transfer that Shadera and Abdul received from WFP between September and November 2014 was greatly needed. The flood wrecked the vulnerable twig walls of their house, leaving them exposed to the weather.

“We always suffer during lean season but this year the flood has made our situation even worse. The number of work opportunities are much fewer, so the money truly helps,” Shadera said.

They depend on work they find on a daily basis, but because of old age that is difficult. Shadera sometimes gets the opportunity to work as a maid servant, but right now there is just no work.

“We don’t own any land, so we have to work for others. But now when the flood has destroyed their land, I was concerned how we would survive,” said Abdul.

The couple used the 9,000 taka (USD 115) they received from WFP through mobile phone banking on food, medicine, clothes and house repairs.

The August 2014 flood left around 500,000 people homeless. Learn more about their struggles on YouTube. Search for ‘Flood in Bangladesh-2014.’

Highlights

WFP provided 80 metric tons of biscuits fortified with vitamins and minerals to more than 106,000 displaced flood victims. In areas where the floodwaters had receded, families returned home to discover, in many cases, that their food stocks, houses and livelihoods had been destroyed. Therefore WFP provided 19,500 ultra-poor women and their families with unconditional mobile phone cash transfer support. All women received orientation on mobile banking before the money was transferred to individual accounts.

Women received the biscuits and cash transfers on behalf of the household since women traditionally are responsible for preparing and distributing food within the household, but also with the aim of strengthening women's decision-making roles. Findings from post-distribution monitoring indicated that the women did indeed take charge: 40 percent of the women decided on their own how to use the cash transfer, whereas in 45 percent of the households the woman took this decision jointly with her husband.

The establishment of a hotline enabled WFP to receive timely feedback, respond immediately to emerging queries, questions and complaints from beneficiaries as well as monitor the emergency response in a new manner. The hotline is an innovation in terms of accountability to beneficiaries, who provided WFP with timely and first-hand information.

The proportion of households with poor food consumption declined from 27 percent before the flood-affected households received cash transfers to 5 percent after they received cash transfers. The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is used to measure the quantity and quality of people's diets.



Photos: WFP/Ranak Martin, WFP/Leonora Beck

9,000

taka (USD 115) of unconditional cash transfers from WFP helped 19,463 families to restore their lives after the flood in northwestern Bangladesh.

10%

of the households continued to use their mobile bank accounts in mid-December after the end of the operation, post-distribution monitoring showed.

Assisting Refugees and Ultra-Poor in Cox's Bazar

Under a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), WFP works in strong partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs to provide food assistance to 33,000 registered refugees from Myanmar living in two government-managed refugee camps in Cox's Bazar District. Due to restrictions on movement and employment, most refugees have no regular income and are highly dependent on assistance.

In 2014, WFP introduced an electronic FoodCard that works like a debit card and gives registered refugees the opportunity to purchase nutritious and diverse food according to their families' needs and preferences. Registered traders inside the refugee camps offer a selection of 18 different foods, including rice, pulses, oil, eggs, vegetables, fruit, salt, sugar and spices. The charge value is calculated based on price surveys in local markets and covers the food and nutritional needs of registered family members. Each card is biometrically coded and can only be used in combination with a fingerprint, making this one of the most secure and traceable systems for food distribution. The FoodCard is supported by SCOPE, which is WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform.

As women are in charge of preparing and distributing food within households, a woman is registered as a card holder in each household along with up to two alternates. This is also expected to strengthen women's position in their households and communities.

Safeguarding the most vulnerable

In addition, WFP continues special food assistance to the most vulnerable in the refugee camps: pregnant and nursing women, young children and schoolchildren. To help ensure children receive the nutrition they need during the critical first 1,000 days of life, WFP gives take-home rations of specialised nutritious food to pregnant women and nursing mothers as well as children aged 6-23 months and moderately undernourished children up to the age of 5. WFP also provides micronutrient-fortified biscuits to children in pre-primary and primary schools.

The snacks encourage students to attend class, give them the energy to focus, and cover a substantial part of their micronutrient needs. Next to food insecurity, inadequate practices in the areas of child care, water, sanitation and hygiene are key causes for persistent undernutrition. To improve knowledge, attitudes and practices, WFP works with partners to ensure nutrition education for women and other caregivers for small children.

A multi-faceted approach outside the camps

Aside from assistance to registered refugees inside the camps, WFP supports the most vulnerable households and individuals in the highly disadvantaged district of Cox's Bazar through the programme Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (see pages 12-13). The programme deploys an integrated and converging package of five core interventions with a focus on women, adolescent girls and children. This includes subsistence support and training, strengthening social networks, nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC) for women of reproductive age, treatment of children suffering from acute undernutrition and school feeding. The programme is fully aligned with the policies and development priorities of the Government of Bangladesh.

In 2014, the programme in Cox's Bazar was funded by Australia, Germany, the United States and multilateral donors.



50% of people in leadership positions in project management committees inside the camps were women.

32,044 registered refugees received food purchased from camp stores through WFP's electronic vouchers, introduced in 2014.



Putting the power in the hands of women

50-year-old Khadiza Khatun has lived in Kutupalong refugee camp for over 20 years. Inside the camps and similarly in Rakhine State of Myanmar from where her family fled, an ultra-traditional culture prevails. The new, innovative food assistance system—electronic food vouchers—has significantly invigorated the role of women in the camps. Once confined to their homes, Khadiza and many other women now frequent the shops to take part in a novel reality, that of choosing and buying groceries for their families.

“Previously, we just got a fixed amount of six different foods that we received all at once. Now, with 18 different items, I have more decisions to make and more responsibility. I can go and shop like the men do outside the camps,” she says.

When the family needs food, Khadiza calculates her family’s FoodCard balance and allocates the money to ensure enough remains on her FoodCard for the rest of the month. She determines the groceries needed and either she or her husband takes them back to their home.

Want to learn more? Check out the video ‘FoodCard for refugees from Myanmar in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh’ on YouTube.

Highlights

Biometrically-coded electronic vouchers, known as the FoodCards, were introduced to deliver food assistance to refugees. The FoodCard replaces the in-kind distribution of a food basket consisting of rice, pulses, fortified oil, wheat soya blend, salt and sugar.

The electronic vouchers allow WFP to monitor transactions and trends in food selection.

WFP is assisting 33 percent more refugees inside the camps with food assistance after a joint UNHCR-Government verification exercise resulted in over 8,000 additional registrations.

Several months into implementation, beneficiary feedback has indicated that users are pleased with the FoodCard system. This is particularly the case for women given prevailing conservative customs, which keep them from purchasing food outside the camps. With safe shops inside the camps, female refugees are the main customers.

In 2014, WFP commenced a new multi-year Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) intervention in the district of Cox’s Bazar under its Country Programme.

WFP conducts sessions in the camps to inform refugees about the voucher system, and disseminates messages on intra-household decision making regarding the use of vouchers and food. WFP also operates a help desk, enabling refugees to seek immediate assistance and provide feedback.



Photos: WFP/Leonora Beck, WFP/Ranak Martin

1,067

pregnant and lactating women acquired knowledge and skills in nutrition trainings to help improve the health and nutrition of their families. In total, **3,389** caregivers of under-nourished children under 5 received nutrition training in the camps.

25

schools inside the refugee camps provided WFP’s micronutrient-fortified biscuits to **7,117** students every day they attended classes.

Innovative Solutions to Improve Nutrition and Operations

Good nutrition from conception to a child's second birthday is vital for proper brain development and physical growth. This time period is a unique 1,000-day window of opportunity to give children the best possible start in life. Fortification of staple food and specialized nutritious food supplements provided to pregnant and nursing women as well as children after the first six months of exclusive breastfeeding are two effective ways to ensure that those at high risk of undernutrition receive the nutrients they need.

Fortified rice

WFP works closely with the Government of Bangladesh to make rice fortified with vitamins and minerals available for those most in need of extra nutrients. Rice makes up the largest part of most people's daily diet and, if fortified, can deliver essential vitamins and minerals to help those who otherwise cannot afford them.

In 2013 and 2014, the Government supported nearly 56,000 people with fortified rice through its Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme, one of the largest social safety net programmes exclusively targeting ultra-poor women, and plans to scale up to 250,000 people by late 2016. In parallel, WFP plans to integrate fortified rice into its relevant programmes.

To make fortified rice a mainstream product on market places in Bangladesh, WFP is encouraging private companies to produce and market fortified kernels. This will contribute to improved nutritional status among the most vulnerable groups and the general public. For the first time, a private conglomerate in Bangladesh successfully produced fortified kernels under the overall technical guidance of WFP and global science company DSM. In addition, WFP encourages garment factory owners to offer fortified rice in their canteens or sell it at concessional rates as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives to address micronutrient deficiencies

among female workers. One major garment manufacturer already has made significant progress in this regard.

Complementary Food Supplements

WFP also works on developing and testing ready-to-eat Complementary Food Supplements (CFS) to promote growth and prevent child stunting and wasting. In the first six months after birth, exclusive breastfeeding is essential whereas appropriate complementary feeding alongside breastfeeding is needed thereafter. CFS can be added to fill the nutritional gap in children's diet. In a research partnership with Johns Hopkins University, the International Centre of Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), DSM and WFP, two locally produced CFS have been developed and tested. The results of the efficacy trial are expected to be published in 2015.

Mobile banking for cash transfers

WFP has over the past years gained valuable experience with mobile banking accounts to transfer cash directly to beneficiaries, both for regular programme transfers and in case of emergencies. This technology opens up for speed, scale, cost-effectiveness and improved accessibility for beneficiaries. Mobile phones also provide the opportunity to ensure accountability.

WFP has a Cash and Voucher Committee, which discusses operational issues and compliance including identification of appropriate cash-transfer modalities. The Committee also suggests measures to help enhance the cash-transfer capacity of cooperating partners and Government agencies.

During the emergency flood response in 2014, a hotline was set up in Dhaka to provide a mechanism for direct beneficiary feedback, which allowed WFP to address concerns rapidly through timely, first-hand information.

141,010

ultra-poor people received rice fortified with vitamins and minerals through Government and WFP assisted programmes from June 2013 through December 2014.

217

calls were received by WFP through its hotline during the emergency flood response in 2014. The hotline allowed WFP to answer and address questions, requests and complaints rapidly.





The Power of Partnerships

A multi-sectoral approach to nutrition is fundamental to effectively and rapidly reduce the high rates of undernutrition in Bangladesh. Nutrition-focused interventions tap into knowledge from a wide range of sectors including health, agriculture and education. To refine outcomes and capitalise on each other's strengths and perspectives, WFP joins forces with state-of-the-art organizations and establishes strong partnerships with key players.

The close relationship between the Government and WFP has been exceptionally fruitful in terms of strengthening existing government systems, developing capacity among government staff, and integrating effective, evidence-based interventions of WFP into the Government's development programmes and safety nets. This partnership has ensured increased coverage and sustainability of the School Feeding and the Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change programmes. In addition, WFP works together with the Government on strengthening the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) safety net programme. In 2014, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and WFP partnered with the WFP Center of Excellence in Brazil and agreed on the scope of bilateral assistance to develop a national school feeding policy and strategy.

Cooperating NGO partners are adding significant value to WFP's programmes through their local knowledge and experience, particularly in participant selection and

identification of appropriate income-generating activities and resilience-enhancing schemes.

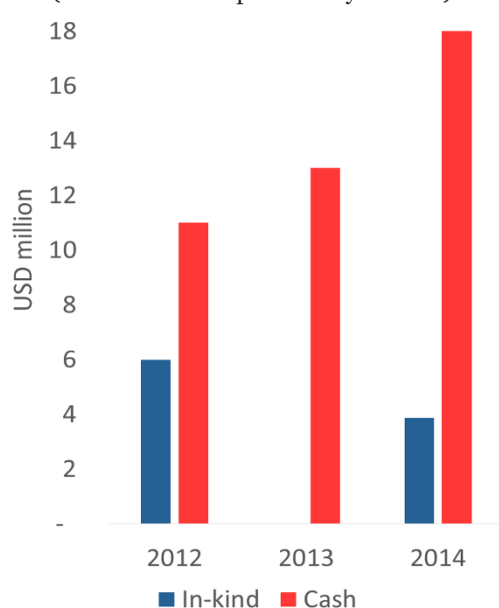
WFP is teaming up with its sister agencies in the UN. Since 2011, WFP has been a part of the UN REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition) Initiative, which assists Bangladesh to accelerate the scale-up of nutrition actions through strengthening multi-sectoral coordination and planning. The partnership consists of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the World Health Organization (WHO). In collaboration with major donors and development partners, UN REACH has developed a 'Common Narrative for Nutrition,' which forms the basis of joint advocacy and communications for nutrition. In 2014, WFP also worked with FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other stakeholders to develop a joint project on the mitigation of waterlogging in the southwest of Bangladesh.

To advance knowledge and contribute evidence in the areas of food security and nutrition, WFP Bangladesh collaborates with a number of national and international research institutions and universities.

In a research partnership between the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Helen Keller International, Institute of Development Studies, and WFP, and with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the study 'Impact of Climate-Related Shocks and Stresses on Nutrition and Food Security' was carried out in selected parts of rural Bangladesh. The study is the first of its kind and sheds light on this connection to develop an improved understanding of how climate change exacerbates undernutrition and food insecurity. Based on existing data sets, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the effects of six different types of climate-related shocks and stresses from 1998-2006.

WFP also partners with private companies. To ensure the availability of fortified rice in Bangladesh, a private conglomerate has produced fortified kernels under the overall technical guidance of WFP and the multinational company DSM. In 2014, another five-year public-private partnership project, Project Laser Beam, came to an end. The partnership of WFP, Unilever, Mondelez International Foundation, DSM and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was working towards creating a scalable, replicable and sustainable model to significantly reduce child undernutrition.

Evolution of Government Contributions (to WFP and complementary to WFP)



In-kind: Wheat contribution directly to WFP-assisted School Feeding.

Cash: Complementary funding of the joint Enhancing Resilience programme + cash grants for investments in the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme.

Focus on our Team



As of December 2014, WFP staff working in Bangladesh came from 16 different countries, but a large majority, or 88 percent, were Bangladeshi nationals. WFP is committed to maintain and enhance the capacity of its staff through in-house and external learning opportunities.

35 percent of WFP staff was based in the field, working in one of six WFP sub-offices throughout the country.

Overall, 45 percent of WFP staff was female. Many women working for WFP Bangladesh are in leading positions such as Head of Sub-Office, Section and Unit Head, Deputy Country Director and WFP Representative.

WFP strives for gender balance for national staff, among whom there are 43 percent women, and has increased efforts to attract qualified women.

Throughout the year, WFP was grateful for the help from volunteers and professionals who contributed their work for free or were funded by partners such as the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID), the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Staff Perspectives

Elora Chakma, Senior Programme Associate and in charge of the WFP Rangamati Field Office, responsible for the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Length of Service: 15+ years



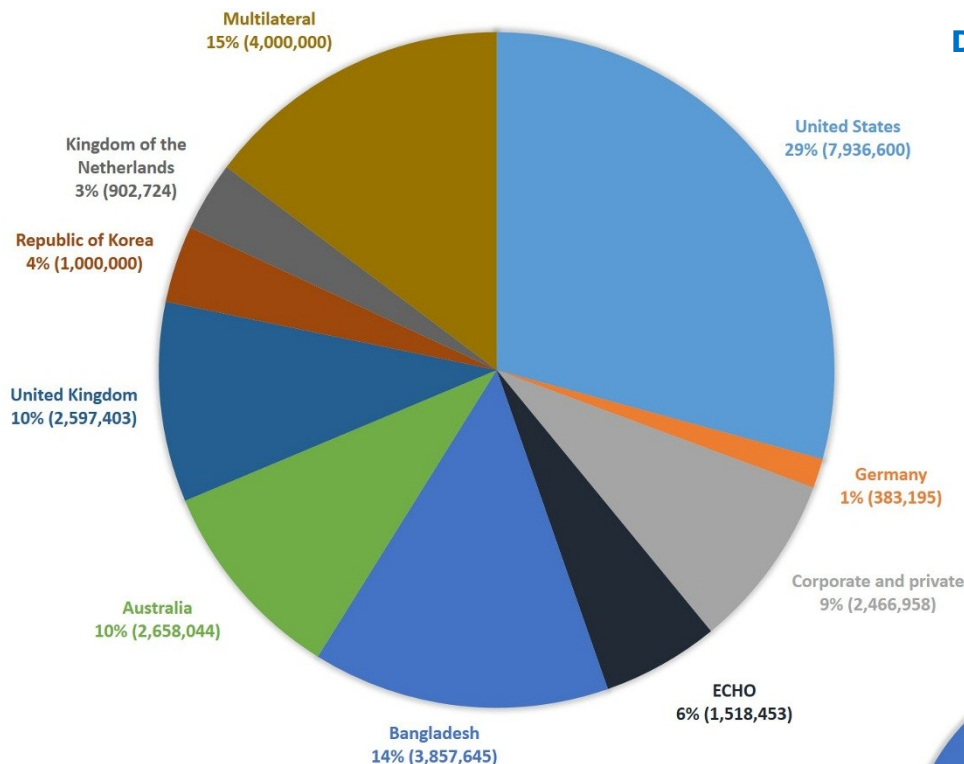
What has been your most rewarding experience at work?

Ensuring that food assistance is reaching the right people at the right time. 70,000 schoolchildren receive micronutrient fortified biscuits in school every day in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I closely monitor that they are receiving biscuits on time and carry out necessary coordination. I am playing a major role in it. This makes me proud and happy.

What barriers did you have to overcome as a female professional in a leadership position?

Working in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is not the same as working elsewhere in Bangladesh. Beneficiaries live so far from each other. Initially, it was difficult to walk alone. One of my biggest challenges has been to overcome my fear and develop self-confidence to go to places by myself. Another challenge was ensuring women's participation in decision making at grassroots level. Before, women were hesitant to speak in public; they would remain quiet in meetings. Now they regularly participate in school management meetings and play a key role in sending their children to school regularly. Women have become more confident and express their opinions accordingly.

Donors and Funding in 2014



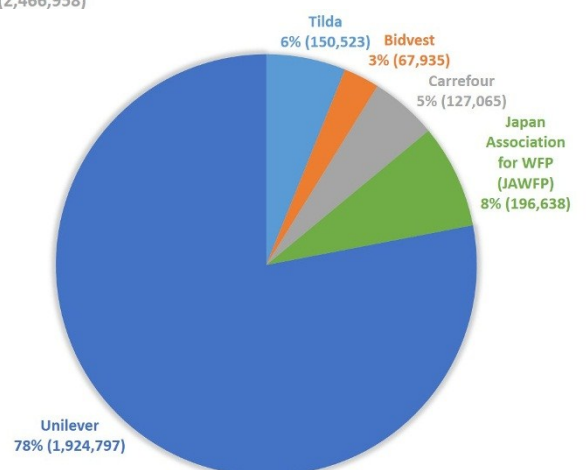
Donor Contributions to the Country Programme in Bangladesh (CP200243)

Directed contributions:
USD 23.32 million
Multilateral contributions:
USD 4 million

**Total contributions:
USD 27.32 million**

Overview Corporate and Private Contributions

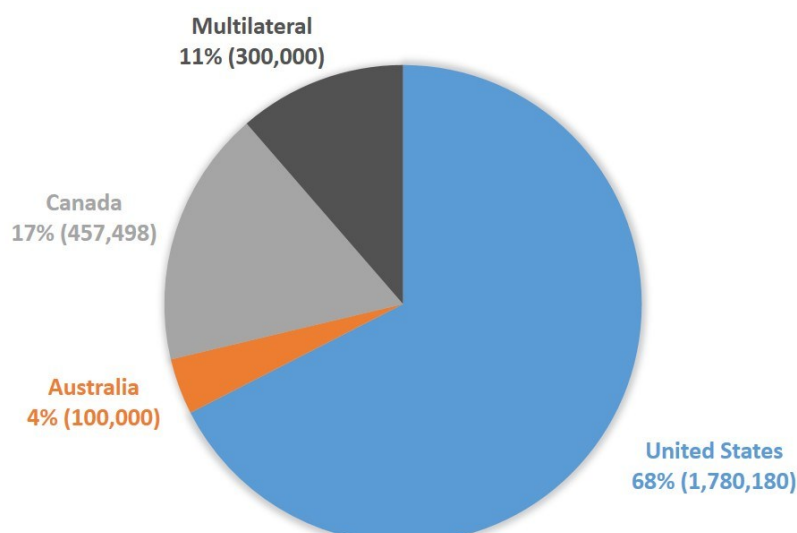
Total: USD 2.47 million



Donor Contributions to the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations Assisting Refugees from Myanmar (PRRO200142 and PRRO200673)

Directed contributions: USD 2.34 million
Multilateral contributions: USD 0.3 million

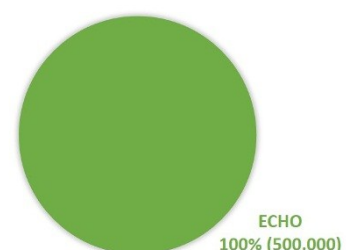
Total contributions: USD 2.64 million*



* In 2014, USD 475,288 has been transferred from the previous to the new PRRO.

Donor Contributions to the Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP)

Total contributions: USD 0.5 million



Thank you to all our donors on behalf of the 1.6 million children, women and men assisted in 2014!



For more information contact:

World Food Programme
IDB Bhaban, E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
1207 Dhaka, Bangladesh
Tel.: (+880) 2 9183022-33 — Fax: (+880) 9183020
www.wfp.org/bangladesh
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