

CONTEXT

- Due to its geography, Bangladesh is acutely vulnerable to cyclones, floods, monsoon rains, storm surges, and other climatic shocks. Between 30 and 50 percent of the population experiences climatic shocks each year, leading to damaged crops and infrastructure, population displacement, and loss of livelihoods, the UN reports. In addition, the UN projects that climate change will lead to stronger and more frequent climatic shocks affecting Bangladesh, generating even greater humanitarian impacts in the coming years.
- Movement restrictions and other measures intended to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have significantly reduced livelihood opportunities across Bangladesh, especially among poor households.
- Bangladesh hosts nearly 1 million Burmese refugees, the majority of whom belong to the Rohingya ethnic minority group and fled Burma's Rakhine State following the launch of Government of Burma military operations in August 2017. As of October 2021, nearly 908,000 of these refugees were living in 34 crowded camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District, according to the UNHCR. The presence of refugees—the vast majority of whom require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs—has strained the already limited resources of host communities, who face persistent food insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities.



ASSISTANCE

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) provided large scale emergency food and nutrition assistance reaching an estimated 1.3 million refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar through the UN World Food Program (WFP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- To respond to exacerbated humanitarian needs linked to the COVID-19 pandemic in vulnerable host communities already hosting large refugee populations, USAID/BHA supports partners—including the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children Federation—to bolster health, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene activities in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts. USAID/BHA also supports emergency food assistance in Bangladesh's capital city of Dhaka through WFP to respond to critical needs among the most vulnerable urban households who have lost livelihood opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This emergency assistance is paired with disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts designed to help vulnerable host communities in the area increase preparedness for natural disasters. For example, with nearly \$5.4 million in USAID/BHA DRR funding since FY 2019, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is coordinating with community members

and local government officials in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban to develop climate adaptation and disaster risk management plans, strengthening host communities’ resilience to cyclones, flash floods, and other hazards. CRS also incorporates hygiene promotion activities into its programming to reduce the risk of waterborne illness transmission among host community members following sudden-onset emergencies.

- In addition to DRR efforts in Cox’s Bazar and surrounding areas, USAID/BHA supports a variety of early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities throughout Bangladesh to improve disaster preparedness, economic resilience, and food security. This includes three major Resilience Food Security Activity programs designed to address chronic vulnerabilities and help communities work toward sustained improvements in food security and nutrition status among the most vulnerable population.
- Since FY 2015, USAID/BHA has provided funding to World Vision to improve food security, nutrition, and resilience in southwestern Bangladesh. The NGO has distributed cash assistance to pregnant and lactating women and nutrition supplements to children ages 6–23 months; provided technical assistance to smallholder farmers to expand crop yields and enhance local livelihoods; and supported public awareness campaigns to reduce instances of adolescent pregnancy and early or forced marriage. In FY 2020, USAID/BHA also provided funding to World Vision to support DRR activities in the same communities.
- In addition, since FY 2015, USAID/BHA has supported Helen Keller International’s programming to maintain food production, maternal and child health, and nutrition activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a remote, underserved region in southeastern Bangladesh bordering Burma and India.
- USAID/BHA also continues to support programming that CARE has implemented in northern and northeastern Bangladesh since FY 2015. CARE is targeting approximately 28,000 households for livelihood support through programming in northern and northeastern Bangladesh in FY 2021. Furthermore, as of August 2021, CARE aims to reach nearly 6,900 people through interventions over 15 months by improving flood-resilient housing and community structures, as well as building the capacity of community volunteers in disaster preparedness.



With support from USAID, WFP has scaled up assistance in Bangladesh, particularly for urban communities affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo Credit: USAID/BHA

USAID/BHA Funding in Bangladesh ¹			
	Emergency ²	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2020	\$139,925,310	\$19,994,628	\$159,919,938
FY 2021	\$129,999,120	\$7,450,000	\$137,449,120

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September, 30, 2021. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

² Includes funding for programs that integrate ER4 activities with emergency response.