

CONTEXT

- Bangladesh is acutely vulnerable to cyclones, floods, monsoon rains, storm surges, and other climatic shocks due to a range of factors including the country's geographic location and low elevation. Such climatic shocks damage crops and infrastructure, displace populations, and hinder livelihoods. Between 30 and 50 percent of Bangladesh's population currently experiences climatic shocks each year, and the UN projects that climate change will generate stronger and more frequent climatic shocks in the country in the coming years.
- 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. More than 943,000 of these refugees were living in 34 crowded camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District as of August 2022, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (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. Since late 2020, the Government of Bangladesh has relocated some Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Noakhali District's Bhasan Char—a silt island in the Bay of Bengal—which housed more than 28,000 refugees as of October 2022, UNHCR reports.



ASSISTANCE

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) reached an estimated 1.2 million refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar with emergency food and nutrition assistance through the UN World Food Program (WFP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- In FYs 2021 and 2022, USAID/BHA responded to heightened humanitarian needs linked to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic by supporting partners—including the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children Federation (SCF)—to bolster health, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts, where host communities were hosting large refugee populations. USAID/BHA also supported emergency food assistance in Bangladesh's capital city of Dhaka through WFP, responding to critical needs among the most vulnerable urban households. Many of these households had lost livelihood opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In addition, USAID/BHA provided a total of \$250,000 to CARE and SCF to reach affected households with emergency cash, shelter repair assistance, and WASH support during the 2022 monsoon season; the annual rainy season lasts from June to October.

- USAID/BHA complements emergency assistance programming with disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts to help host communities in Bangladesh prepare for natural disasters. For example, with USAID/BHA DRR support since FY 2019, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has coordinated with community members and local government officials in eastern Bangladesh’s Chittagong Division 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 supporting DRR efforts in Cox’s Bazar and surrounding areas, USAID/BHA also supports a variety of early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities to improve disaster preparedness, economic resilience, and food security throughout Bangladesh. In FY 2022, USAID/BHA supported three major Resilience Food Security Activity programs designed to address chronic vulnerabilities and help communities work toward sustained improvements in food security and nutrition among vulnerable populations.
- 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 increase crop yields and enhance local livelihoods, and supported public awareness campaigns to reduce instances of adolescent pregnancy and early or forced marriage. From FY 2020 to FY 2022, USAID/BHA also funded World Vision to support DRR activities in the same communities.
- USAID/BHA continues to support livelihood and resilience programming in northern and northeastern Bangladesh through CARE; the USAID/BHA partner has been active since FY 2015. CARE is targeting approximately 23,000 households to improve community volunteers’ capacity to respond to disasters and enhance the resilience of housing and community structures in these areas in FY 2022.



USAID/BHA is supporting WFP's Livelihoods Program in Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts of Cox's Bazar. Photo Credit: WFP

USAID/BHA Funding in Bangladesh ¹			
	Emergency ²	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2021	\$130,373,520	\$7,450,000	\$137,823,520
FY 2022	\$123,433,910	\$9,431,993	\$133,496,514

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of November 22, 2022. 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.