



COUNTRY PROFILE ON NUTRITION 01/2021

BANGLADESH

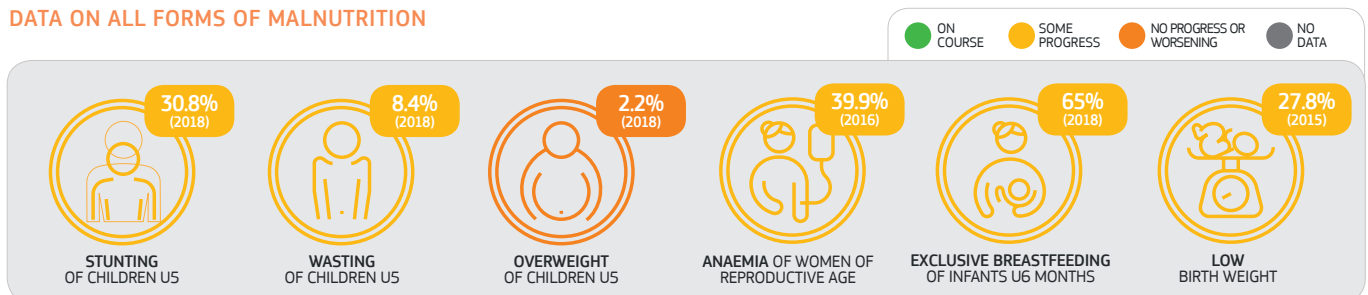
Nutrition situation in Bangladesh

AT A GLANCE

The population of Bangladesh is currently estimated at around 164.7 million¹, with around 40% located in urban areas. Gender equality has improved in Bangladesh but inequalities persist e.g. in education and employment. The country has made some progress to meet several global nutrition targets, although prevalence of low birth weight, stunting in children under 5 and anaemia in women of reproductive age remain high. One in 12 of the children suffer from wasting, a form of undernutrition associated with weakened immunity and increased risk of death. Undernutrition disproportionately affects the poor, due

to socio-economic inequalities and a generally low-quality diet. It undermines a child's physical and cognitive development and so has lifelong consequences including a greater risk of chronic diseases later in life. While 40% of adult women are anaemic, the national prevalence of overweight and obesity continues to rise. The economic cost of undernutrition alone is estimated to exceed USD 1 billion per year in Bangladesh. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this situation. Bangladesh has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.537 and is ranked at 133 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index.

DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



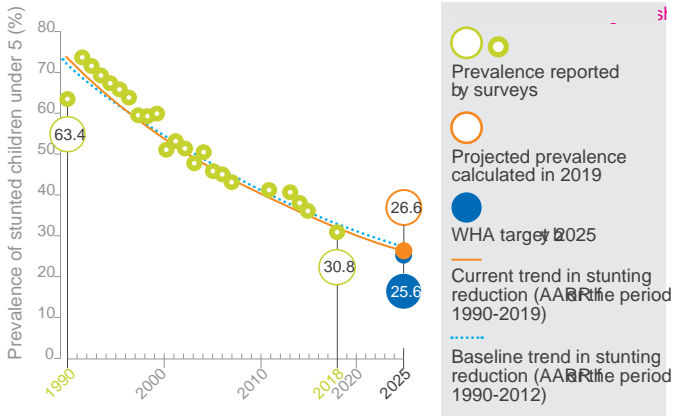
NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Bangladesh joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in 2012.
- The government's second national plan of action for nutrition (NPAN2 2016-2025) outlines the framework for its 2015 national nutrition policy. With priority interventions costed at USD 1.6 billion, NPAN2 has been endorsed by the Executive Committee of the revitalised Bangladesh national nutrition council (chaired by the Prime Minister). Nutrition focal points have been identified in 22 nutrition relevant ministries and government agencies. NPAN2 provides a dedicated common results framework for monitoring and evaluation led by an interagency platform within the nutrition council secretariat.
- Annual sectoral workplans with activities and a budget for 22 ministries are in place and the nutrition council is establishing a central mechanism to track the budgets for each line ministry against their workplan. The establishment of decentralised multisectoral nutrition committees (Upazila nutrition coordination committees and district nutrition coordination councils) is contributing towards progress on sub-national coordination.
- In 2013, the government mandated the fortification of edible oil with vitamin A.
- Since 2017, the government has provided fortified rice to 81 sub-districts to address micronutrient deficiencies, through various social safety net mechanisms and plans to scale up to 100 sub-districts by the end of 2020.

Example of EU support

Suchana is a EUR 53.8 million programme (of which 25% is for nutrition) whose aim is to significantly reduce the incidence of stunting in children under two in two districts of Sylhet Division (which has the highest stunting and wasting prevalence in Bangladesh). Jointly supported by the EU and UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and implemented by a consortium of NGOs led by Save the Children, the programme focuses on tackling undernutrition within the critical first 1,000 days of life. It takes a multisectoral approach and works closely with seven ministries to strengthen delivery systems and improve people's access to key nutrition-related services. Adults are supported with income-generating activities, homestead gardening and health and nutrition awareness. To enable people to cope with climatic, health and economic shocks, one of the programme's key components focuses on increasing access to social protection schemes, including maternity allowance². Suchana is also harnessing evidence to catalyse support for a multisectoral approach to improve nutrition governance across the country.

Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



The Government of Bangladesh has committed, through the national plan of action for nutrition, to reduce stunting to 25% by 2025. Bangladesh has experienced a steady decline in the prevalence of stunting since the 1990s and the number of stunted children has halved. The country is currently projected to come close to meeting both the government's own target and the World Health Assembly's (WHA) target by 2025. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted accelerated K ? P E G L ? J J W D P M K ä G L R M ä C is maintained in 2025, then 3.67 million children are expected to be stunted in 2025. This is slightly over the WHA target of 3.53 million.

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EU nutrition commitments from 2014 to 2019 include the provision of EUR 23.3 million in humanitarian assistance for nutrition. The Food and Nutrition Security Programme for Bangladesh (2015 and PCNPCQCLRQ RFC J ? P E C Q R Q G L E J C L S million. This programme has three components: MUCH, a national policy framework initiative; Suchana, a multi-sectoral project to reduce stunting in two districts of Sylhet Division (described above); and a programme of 5 projects to strengthen nutrition governance ? R J M A ? J J C T C J G K N J C K L R C B @ W , % - J C allocated EUR 130 million to support the government's national social security strategy with a focus on systemic improvements ? L B A F G J B @ C L C R A M K N M L C L R Q C Q R G K ? for nutrition). The programme is being reoriented in the short term to address the COVID-19 pandemic's socio-economic impact on garment workers in the ready-made industry.

Opportunities ahead

Bangladesh is uniquely vulnerable to climate change, with two position of small farmers in value chains and leveraging private RFGPBQ MD RFC AMSLRPW JCQQ RF ? L s e c t o r p a r t i c i p a t i o n ? @ M T C Q C ? J C T C J 1 K ? P R and resilient agri-food systems are therefore key to tackle both The consolidation of the ongoing budget support programme for environmental challenges and persistent food and nutrition social security and the proposed Team Europe Initiative in the insecurity. The proposed Team Europe Initiative in the area of area of decent work also provide future opportunities regarding EPCCL CLCPEW RP ? L Q G R G M L G L ? L E s o c i a l p r o t e c t i o n ? a s a m o d e l p r o m o t e m u l t i m e n t a l p e r s o n ? a n d to address these, as a component of disaster preparedness address multidimensional inequalities. The provision of regular investment and planning. The framework of the Commission's and predictable social protection to people who are vulnerable Farm to Fork strategy and the proposed Team Europe Initiative in R M K S J R G N J C P G Q I Q G L A J S B G L E R F M Q C ? RFC ? P C ? M D B C A C L R U M P I ? J Q M P C N E P O C C L R C Q E S C a n e m p o w e r w o m e n a n d b u i l d r e s i l i e n t to improve nutrition as a fundamental human right and the while preventing people from falling into poverty and reducing the foundation for wellbeing. These include investment in more L C C B R M P C Q M P R R M A M N G L E Q R P ? R C E G C C equitable and sustainable food systems, harnessing a gender nutrition-sensitive, social protection can accelerate progress transformative approach to promote healthy diets, creation towards ending malnutrition by improving diets, increasing of jobs for young people, improving women's access to skills access to public services such as health and education, improving development and participation in the labour force, improving the care practices and increasing or stabilising household income.

¹ World Population Prospects <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

² The EU also supports the Government of Bangladesh (via budget support) to scale up national coverage of maternity allowance and child bene t.