

∴∴∴ Bangladesh programs





:: Nutrition International in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made significant strides in reducing poverty and improving key socioeconomic indicators. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the national poverty rate declined to 18.7% in 2022, with 5.6% of the population (approximately 31.8M people) living in extreme poverty.¹ Based on the 2022 population estimate of approximately 169.8M, this translates to about 31.8M people living below the poverty line.

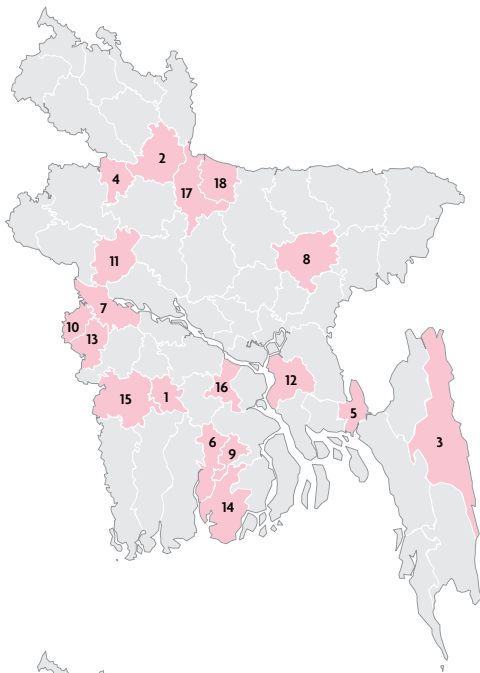
Undernutrition remains a critical challenge in Bangladesh, costing the country an estimated USD \$13B each year, equivalent to 2.8% of its gross national income.² The impact is stark: 26.4% of children under five are affected by stunting, which impairs both cognitive and physical development. Low birthweight remains prevalent, impacting 23% of newborns and heightening their risk of health complications.

Anaemia is also widespread in Bangladesh, affecting 43.1% of children aged six–59 months and 36.7% of adolescent girls and women aged 15–49, undermining their overall health and productivity. These alarming figures highlight the urgent need for comprehensive nutrition interventions to break the cycle of malnutrition and drive sustainable developments.

Since 1995, Nutrition International in Bangladesh has been working with the government and other development partners to reduce the country's burden of malnutrition and improve health outcomes among the population.

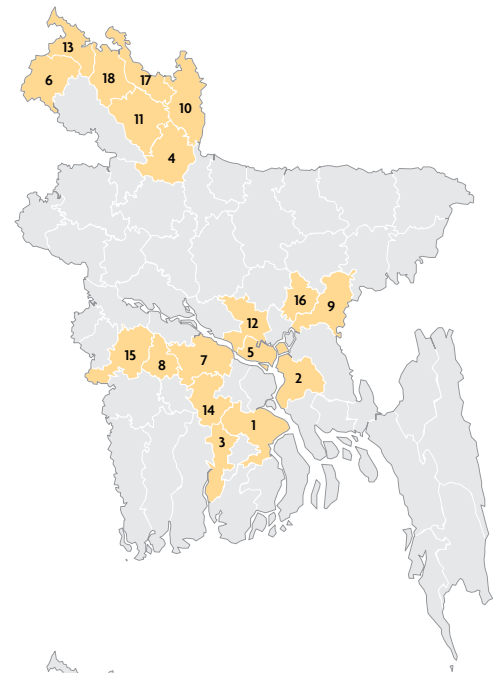
MNHN

1. Narail
2. Gaibandha
3. Rangamati
4. Joypurhat
5. Feni
6. Pirojpur
7. Kushtia
8. Kishoreganj
9. Jhalakathi
10. Meherpur
11. Natore
12. Chandpur
13. Chuadanga
14. Barguna
15. Jashore
16. Madaripur
17. Jamalpur
18. Sherpur



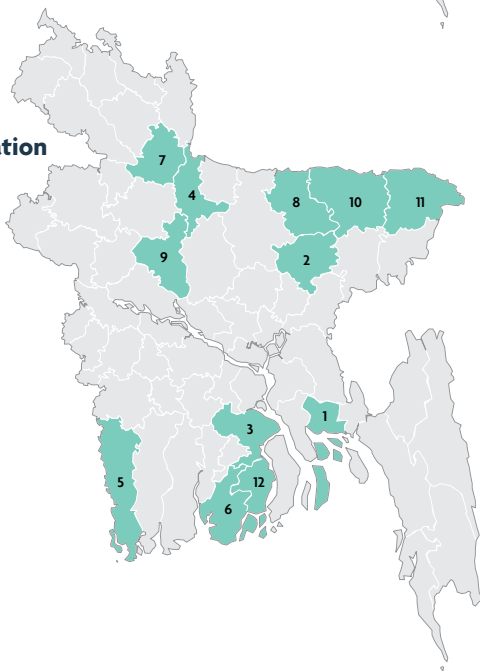
Zinc & LO-ORS

1. Barishal
2. Chandpur
3. Pirojpur
4. Gaibandha
5. Munshiganj
6. Thakurgaon
7. Faridpur
8. Magura
9. Brahmanbaria
10. Kurigram
11. Rangpur
12. Dhaka
13. Panchagarh
14. Gopalganj
15. Jhenaidah
16. Narsingdi
17. Lalmonirhat
18. Nilphamari



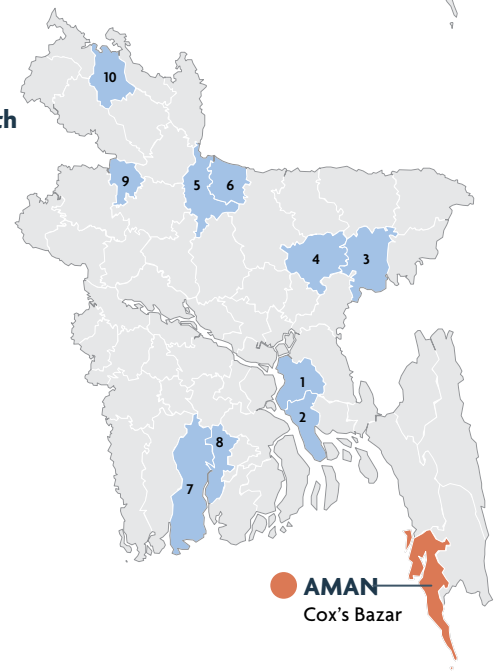
Vitamin A supplementation

1. Noakhali
2. Kishoreganj
3. Barishal
4. Jamalpur
5. Shatkhira
6. Barguna
7. Gaibandha
8. Netrokona
9. Sirajganj
10. Sunamganj
11. Sylhet
12. Patuakhali



Adolescent health and nutrition

1. Chandpur
2. Lakshmipur
3. Hobiganj
4. Kishoreganj
5. Jamalpur
6. Sherpur
7. Bagerhat
8. Pirojpur
9. Joypurhat
10. Nilphamari



Priority programs and geographic coverage

Nutrition International aims to achieve six key and complementary strategic objectives in Bangladesh:

- Improve the nutrition, health and survival of pregnant women and newborns
- Improve the nutrition, survival, health and development of children under five
- Improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of adolescent boys and girls
- Improve the nutrition, health and productivity of women and girls
- Improve the nutrition, health, development and productivity of the general population
- Strengthen nutrition governance and increase resourcing for nutrition

Programs supported by Nutrition International

As a key ally and partner of the Government of Bangladesh, Nutrition International supports the delivery of various nutrition-related programs, including:

NATIONAL PROGRAMS:

- Universal salt iodization
- Rice fortification

SUB-NATIONAL PROGRAMS:

- Maternal and newborn health (MNHN)
- Diarrhoea management with zinc and LO-ORS
- Vitamin A supplementation (VAS)
- Adolescent health and nutrition



:: Child survival



Vitamin A supplementation

Nutrition International supports the Government of Bangladesh in maintaining high coverage of vitamin A supplementation (VAS) through the National Vitamin A Plus Campaign (NVAC+), ensuring that all children aged six–59 months receive biannual doses of vitamin A to strengthen immunity and protect against infections. This includes providing technical assistance for planning, coordination, monitoring, advocacy and strengthening the national nutrition information system.

To address supply gaps, vitamin A capsules (VAC) are provided to the government as needed through the in-kind donation program, implemented by Nutrition International and UNICEF, with support from the Government of Canada. Since 2023, targeted interventions have also been implemented in 58 hard-to-reach subdistricts across 12 districts.

To further enhance NVAC+ effectiveness, Nutrition International supported the development and dissemination of standard campaign management guidelines and launched the NVAC eLearning app in 2023–24. The app serves district and subdistrict managers, frontline workers, volunteers, development partners and other stakeholders.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 24.4M vitamin A capsules provided to the Institute of Public Health and Nutrition
- 21.9M children under five received two doses of vitamin A
- 134,688 children under five in designated hard-to-reach areas reached with VAS through the child-to-child post campaign searching strategy
- 7,042 health personnel received orientation training on the NVAC+ eLearning app



Childhood diarrhoea management

Nutrition International is supporting the government to scale up the use of zinc and low osmolarity oral rehydration salts (LO-ORS) for the effective treatment of diarrhoea in children under five. Operating in 18 districts, the program is strengthening the capacity of over 15,000 frontline workers and nearly 3,500 small drug vendors to deliver better diarrhoea management services. To further enhance impact, Nutrition International is helping to establish an app-based monitoring system, improve the supply chain for zinc supplements, lead behaviour change interventions and advocate with the government for the procurement of essential zinc supplies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 625,211 children under five were treated with zinc and LO-ORS
- 3,671 frontline workers received on-the-job training on the use of zinc and LO-ORS
- 1,610 health facilities received a replenishment supply of job aids and behaviour change intervention materials with information on zinc and LO-ORS treatment, preparation and dosage
- 893 government officials attended district review meetings to review the zinc program



:: Large-scale food fortification

Rice fortification

Nutrition International supports the Ministry of Food and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in integrating fortified rice into key social safety net programs, including the Food Friendly Program (FFP) and the Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) initiative. Its work spans the entire rice fortification value chain — from training fortified rice-producing millers and relevant government staff, to providing hands-on support in implementation. Nutrition International also leads advocacy efforts at both district and national levels and offers technical support to government and private sector partners to enhance the production and distribution of fortified rice within these programs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 10.3M additional people gained access to fortified rice
- 257,157 metric tonnes of adequately fortified rice were produced and provided to the FFP and VWB programs
- 743 personnel including enforcement officials, producers and millers were trained with Nutrition International's support

Universal salt iodization

Nutrition International supports the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, under the Ministry of Industries, to expand household coverage of adequately iodized salt. It provides technical and operational assistance to strengthen external quality control and monitoring systems, promote the adoption of new technologies and advance policy advocacy for effective oversight, and enforcement. Nutrition International also supports the government in conducting studies and assessments to inform the development of national salt iodization standards and strategies. In addition, it offers technical support to both government partners and salt millers to increase the production, availability and quality of iodized salt — ultimately working to improve iodine nutrition across the country.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 73M additional people reached with adequately iodized salt
- 1.28M newborns protected from iodine deficiency disorders by ensuring the adequate iodine status of their mothers
- 294,239 metric tonnes of adequately iodized salt were produced



:: Maternal and newborn health and nutrition

Nutrition International collaborates with the government to reduce anaemia and strengthen antenatal care (ANC) for pregnant women. Its technical assistance focuses on building the capacity of frontline workers through targeted training and enhanced counselling skills, while also supporting health system strengthening with an emphasis on nutrition-specific interventions. The organization works to improve the supply chain for iron and folic acid supplements (IFAS) and advocates for the procurement of sufficient supplies to meet demand. In addition, Nutrition International contributes to strengthening the health management information system and enhancing behaviour change communication strategies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 328,411 flash cards were printed for healthcare providers to use with pregnant women for increased knowledge on maternal and newborn health
- 273,062 pregnant women received IFAS
- 89,440 pregnant women completed four ANC visits in public health facilities
- 59,652 pregnant women received nutrition education at least once during the year



:: Adolescents and women's health and nutrition

Nutrition International is providing technical support to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to implement a school-based adolescent health and nutrition program in 11 districts. Designed to prevent iron-deficiency anaemia among adolescent girls, the program also aims to strengthen nutrition knowledge and promote healthy behaviours among both girls and boys. Implemented through a multisector approach, the initiative is delivered in collaboration with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and National Nutrition Services to comprehensively address adolescent malnutrition. As part of this effort, more than 800,000 adolescent girls in 2,200 secondary schools will receive weekly iron and folic acid supplementation (WIFAS).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 410,114 adolescent girls who received the recommended scheme of WIFAS
- 80,404 adolescents aged 10–19 received nutrition education
- 2,080 head teachers were trained on delivery and management of the adolescent nutrition program



:: Adopting a Multisectoral Approach to Nutrition (AMAN)

From 2022 to 2025, the AMAN project supported the Government of Bangladesh in improving the health and wellbeing of communities in Cox’s Bazar. Funded by the Government of Canada, the project focused on strengthening the capacity of health workers, building their knowledge and skills to deliver quality nutrition services. It also supported eight key ministries in Cox’s Bazar to implement the gender-responsive Multisectoral Minimum Nutrition Package and contributed to strengthening two major social safety net programs, namely the Food for Peace and the Vulnerable Women Benefit programs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1.8M adolescents, women, men and children supported by the AMAN project in Cox’s Bazar
- 1,898 health workers received technical support from AMAN
- 461 government staff received technical support from AMAN

:: Nutrition governance

Since 2016, Nutrition International has been providing technical assistance to the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen nutrition governance. As the chair of the Civil Society Alliance for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in Bangladesh, we actively advance the SUN agenda through multistakeholder and multisector engagement. Nutrition International also supports the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) in key areas, including the development of a multisectoral urban nutrition strategy and the review of social security programs to integrate nutrition and gender-sensitive approaches. We remain committed to helping the BNNC address critical challenges related to nutrition governance, financing and data. Additionally, Nutrition International supported seven government ministries in formulating nine national commitments for the 2025 Nutrition for Growth summit in Paris.

:: Contact

Nutrition International Bangladesh
RAOWA Complex (Level 9)
VIP Road, Mohakhali
Dhaka – 1106, Bangladesh

T: +880 2 48811546

E: Bangladesh@NutritionIntl.org

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- 2 Nutrition International (2023). *The Cost of Inaction Tool*. <https://www.nutritionintl.org/learning-resource/cost-inaction-tool/>.

