



**World Food Programme**

## IMPROVING MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION

### A Critical Window of Opportunity

Despite great improvement in recent decades, undernutrition remains a major challenge with significant consequences for individuals, the economy and health systems, costing Bangladesh US\$1 billion in lost productivity annually. About 36 percent of children under five are chronically undernourished and 1 in 6 suffer from acute undernutrition.

By taking action during the first 1,000 days of a child's life, from conception to two years of age, WFP is helping to prevent that lack of nutrients has a long-term impact on mental and physical development, growth, learning ability as well as future productivity and income.

### Towards a Better Future

WFP's interventions target moderate acute malnutrition among pregnant and nursing women and children aged 6-59 months in particularly food-insecure areas where poverty is compounded by endemic undernutrition. In 2016, that includes urban slums of Dhaka, flood-prone areas of Kurigram in the north, and parts of waterlogged Satkhira.

The malnourished children and women receive food supplements enriched with vitamins and minerals. For women this is coupled with behaviour change communication activities on nutrition, hygiene and feeding practices, thus combining treatment and prevention measures.

Changes in feeding behaviour, such as giving children smaller portions throughout the day rather than two big meals, can significantly improve their health and nutritional status.

### Involving Communities and National Systems

WFP's activities are carried out either by NGO staff or through public health clinics in a so-called community-based approach, in which a patient is screened for acute malnutrition during regular health check-ups. The condition can thus be detected and addressed before the child or woman becomes seriously ill.

To ensure ownership and sustainability, WFP is working with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to further integrate the programme into existing public health structures and connect it with the national system for nutrition service delivery, or NNS for short.



### Alarming Undernutrition in Refugee Camps

Moreover, WFP provides food and nutrition support to 34,000 registered refugees in two official camps of Cox's Bazar, including take-home rations of specialised

nutritious food to all pregnant and nursing women and children aged 6-23 months. Moderately malnourished children below five also receive supplements.

Similarly, WFP is helping almost 7,000 unregistered refugee women and children under five in Kutupalong makeshift settlement, where undernutrition rates are particularly alarming. The emergency intervention is carried out together with Action Contre la Faim in coordination with IOM.

### AT A GLANCE

- WFP provides **supplementary food** to children and pregnant and nursing women in the poorest and most food insecure parts of Bangladesh...
- ...along with advice on how to change **nutrition and health behaviour**, to help break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition.
- Intervention areas include **Dhaka** slums, flood-prone **Kurigram**, waterlogged **Satkhira** and **Cox's Bazar**.
- Among children below five, almost **4 in 10** are stunted and about **15 percent** acutely undernourished.

Supplementary feeding, nutrition training, and acute malnutrition screening.