Over the years, Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing poverty and improving life expectancy, per capita food production and literacy rates. Rapid growth has enabled Bangladesh to achieve the ‘lower middle-income country’ status in 2015, as per the World Bank’s classification.

However, despite rigorous development efforts, 22 million of its 165 million population continue to live below the poverty line. The country still suffers from the burden of malnutrition, with 36% of children under five years being stunted, 33% being underweight and an alarming 14% being wasted. Almost half of the pregnant women population suffer from anaemia and 19% of the adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are malnourished.

Nutrition International has been working in Bangladesh since 1995 as a trusted partner of the Government in addressing this burden of malnutrition. Nutrition International supports the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in various nutrition related programs including:

- Vitamin A supplementation program by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorder project by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, under the Ministry of Industries
- The integration of fortified rice into the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program and Food Friendly Program (FFP) by the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs and Ministry of Food
- Program to improve the frequency and quality of antenatal care, including iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation for pregnant women in government health facilities
- Provision and promotion of Zinc-ORS for diarrhoea management
- Technical assistance to the Ministry of Health and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council
- Promotion of nutritional practices and micronutrient consumptions among readymade garment workers of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing Exporters’ Association (BKMEA)

In addition to closely working with governments at every level, Nutrition International also works with local and international partners to deliver high-quality interventions and programs that can create lasting impact and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal targets.
Nutrition International aims to achieve five key and complementary strategic objectives between 2019 and 2024 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 well-being of adolescent girls and women 20-49 years of age
- Improve the nutrition, health, development and productivity of the general population
- Strengthen nutrition governance and increase resourcing for nutrition

**National Programs Supported by NI:**
- Vitamin A supplementation and capsules (Hard-to-Reach areas indicated)
- Iodization of salt (salt producing areas indicated)

**Sub-National Programs Supported by NI:**
- Iron and folic acid supplementation
- Zinc and ORS
- Bangladesh Capital: Dhaka

*Stripes indicate multiple NI-supported programs defined by colors noted above.*
Nutrition International’s Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) project is supported by UK aid from the UK government and seeks to improve the capacity of 20 countries that have signed up to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement to design, plan, manage and monitor the delivery of multi-sectoral national nutrition plans, and to generate, learn from and adopt knowledge that works. TAN also provides technical assistance to the SUN Movement Secretariat.

In Bangladesh, TAN supported the SUN Focal Point, Bangladesh for advancing the SUN Agenda in the country through multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms. It also supported the revitalization and restructuring of the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) to Steer National Level Nutrition Actions in the Country.

Currently, TAN is providing technical assistance to support operationalization of National Plan of Action for Nutrition-2 (NPAN2), strengthening multi-sectoral nutrition monitoring, evaluation and reporting in Bangladesh and assessment of human resource need for nutrition in different sectors including ministries, agencies, etc. TAN also formulates the advocacy plan for nutrition aligned with the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy of Bangladesh.

In the future, TAN hopes to build external communication capacity of BNNC and the capacity of multiple ministries involved in implementing BNNC. TAN will also explore establishing a Nutrition Cell in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
CURRENT PROJECTS

Improving the health, nutrition and survival of children under five

VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION

Nutrition International helps sustain high vitamin A supplementation coverage by working with the Government for the National Vitamin A Campaign (NVAC) to ensure that all children aged 6-59 months receive bi-annual doses of vitamin A that strengthen immunity and help protect them against infections. Nutrition International provides targeted interventions in 46 hard to reach upazillas, supports planning and coordination for vitamin A supplementation in over 60 districts and, based on the need, supplies vitamin A capsules to the government. Nutrition International also supports in reviewing, monitoring and advocacy for the NVAC in the country and provides technical assistance for improvement of Nutrition Information System. In 2016-17, 20.5 million children aged 6-59 months (99% of the child population) were successfully administered two doses of vitamin A.

ZINC SUPPLEMENTATION FOR TREATING DIARRHOEA

Nutrition International supports the government’s efforts to scale up the use of zinc supplementation for the treatment of diarrhoea. In 2016, nearly 185,000 children (6-59 months) across 17 districts were treated with zinc and oral rehydration salts in the public sector. Nutrition International helps to build the capacity of field functionaries and gram doctors, strengthen the supply chain and, based on the need, supplies zinc supplements. In addition to leading behaviour change interventions in Bangladesh, Nutrition International also advocates with the government for the procurement of more zinc supplements.
CURRENT PROJECTS

Improving the nutrition, health and survival of pregnant women and newborns

IFA SUPPLEMENTATION AND ANTENATAL CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Nutrition International works with the GoB to reduce anaemia and improve antenatal care for pregnant women. In 2016, nearly 85,000 pregnant women received IFA supplements in 10 districts. Nutrition International helps to build capacity of health workers and train them for counselling pregnant women to take the full course of IFA supplementation, and also supports the government in strengthening the supply chain of IFA supplements, advocates for procuring more supplements and supplies IFA tablets on a need basis. Nutrition International also contributes to the strengthening of the Health Monitoring Information System and to improving behaviour change communication for reducing anaemia among pregnant women. Additionally, Nutrition International has initiated a pilot for IFA supplementation in an urban setting.
CURRENT PROJECTS

Improving the nutrition, health, development and productivity of the general population

UNIVERSAL SALT IODIZATION

Nutrition International supports the Ministry of Industries’ Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders project, under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), to increase household coverage of adequately iodized salt. In 2016, 92 million additional people received adequately iodized salt; 23 million being women of reproductive age. Nutrition International provides technical and operational assistance to the government for strengthening external quality control and monitoring system, facilitating new technology uptake and building policy advocacy for effective monitoring and law enforcement. Additionally, Nutrition International also supports the government with relevant studies and assessment for formulating salt iodisation standards and strategy.

RICE FORTIFICATION

Nutrition International supports the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs and Ministry of Food in the integration of fortified rice into the VGD program and FFP. Nutrition International’s work in rice fortification ranges from training the fortified rice producing millers and relevant government staffs and providing them on ground support, leading advocacy at the district and national level and developing a behaviour change intervention (BCI) strategy to create awareness of the benefits of fortified rice. Thanks to the efforts of Nutrition International, more than 50,000 women living below the poverty line received fortified rice in 2016.
CURRENT PROJECTS

ENHANCING NUTRITION SERVICES TO IMPROVE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (ENRICH)

With the support of World Vision, Nutrition International is implementing the ENRICH project in Bangladesh to help reduce maternal and newborn mortality, stunting and wasting in children, and help families break out of the cycle of poverty. As part of the project, Nutrition International provides support to strengthen the health system, mainly nutrition-specific interventions, supply chain management and Health Management Information Systems. As part of social behaviour change communication in the region, Nutrition International has undertaken a formative research study to develop a strong BCI strategy. Nutrition International is also responsible for initiating micronutrient powders for home fortification of food consumed by children aged 6-23 months. Additionally, Nutrition International is engaging in policy advocacy for developing guidelines, standards and curriculum for improving maternal and child health.

IMPROVING THE NUTRITION, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND WOMEN 20-49 YEARS OF AGE

With an objective to improve the nutritional status, specifically the iron levels, of women, Nutrition International works with the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing Exporters’ Association (BKMEA) to promote nutritional practices and micronutrient consumptions among readymade garment workers and sensitizes them about IFA supplementation, dietary diversity and WASH. Nutrition International is working closely with BKMEA in designing a sustainable Nutrition in the workplace programme. Based on the project’s learning, Nutrition International will advocate for the scale-up of the program by the private sector and the government by 2020. The program will enable 240 member factories of BKMEA to promote nutritional practices which will benefit approximately 240,000 workers including 180,000 women who will receive weekly IFA supplementation.