



# BANGLADESH PROGRAMS

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## NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL IN BANGLADESH



Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing poverty and improving life expectancy, per capita food production and literacy rates. Rapid growth enabled Bangladesh to be classified a 'lower middle-income country' by the World Bank in 2015.

Despite rigorous development efforts, 20.5 million of its 171.68 million population continue to live below the poverty line. The country still suffers from the burden of malnutrition, with 28% of children under five years being stunted, 22% being underweight and an alarming 9.8% being wasted (Asian Development Bank 2022). Almost half of pregnant women and 28.9% non-pregnant-non-lactating women (15-49 years old) suffer from anaemia, while 19% of adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are malnourished.

Since 1995, Nutrition International has been working in Bangladesh to address the burden of malnutrition. As a trusted partner, Nutrition International supports the Government of Bangladesh to deliver various nutrition-related programs, including:

- Vitamin A supplementation for children under 5 years
- Universal salt iodization
- The integration of fortified rice into social security programs like the Food Friendly Program and Vulnerable Women Benefit Program
- Improving 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 and oral rehydration salts (ORS) for diarrhoea management
- Technical assistance to the Ministry of Health and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council
- Promotion of nutritional practices and micronutrient consumption among readymade garment workers of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing Exporters' Association
- School-based promotion of weekly iron and folic acid supplementation and nutrition education for adolescents

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 Goals.

## 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

### Nutrition International's work in Bangladesh

#### National programs

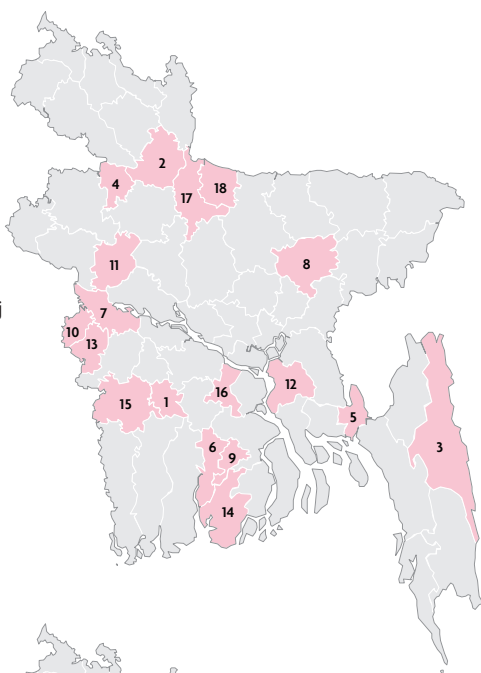
- Universal salt iodization
- Rice fortification

#### Sub-national programs

- MNHN
- VAS-C-t-C
- AMAN (Cox's Bazar only)
- Zinc & ORS
- School-based Adolescent Health and Nutrition

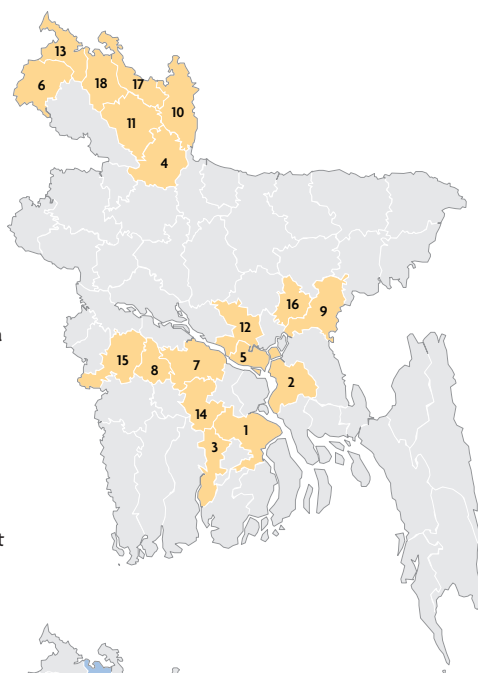
#### MNHN

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



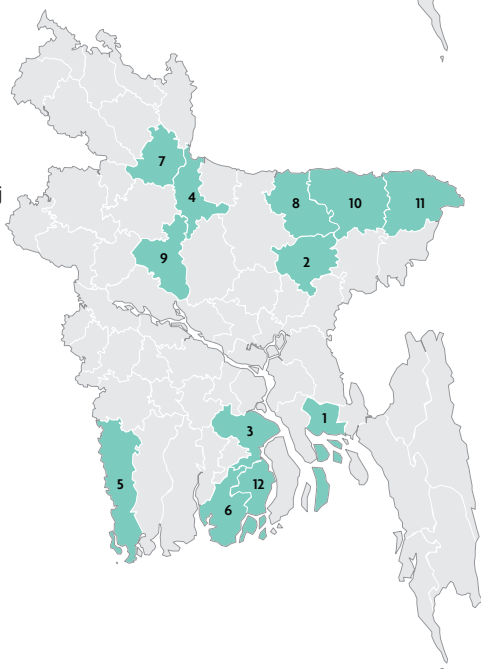
#### Zinc & ORS

1. Barishal
2. Chandpur
3. Pirujpur
4. Gaibanda
5. Munshiganj
6. Thakurgaon
7. Faridpur
8. Magura
9. Bramanbaria
10. Kurigram
11. Rangpur
12. Dhaka
13. Panchagarh
14. Gopalganj
15. Jhenaidah
16. Norshindi
17. Lanmonirhat
18. Nilphamari



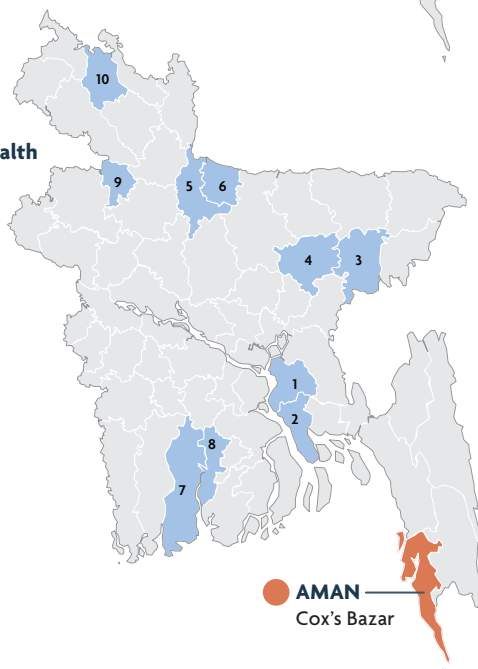
#### VAS-C-t-C

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



#### School-based Adolescent Health and Nutrition

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



● AMAN  
Cox's Bazar





## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR NUTRITION GOVERNANCE



Since 2016, Nutrition International has been providing technical assistance to the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen nutrition governance. With support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Nutrition International implemented the Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) project from 2016 to 2021. One of the key achievements of this project was the revitalization and restructuring of the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) to steer national-level nutrition actions. It also supported the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Focal Point, Bangladesh to advance the SUN agenda in the country through multistakeholder and multisectoral platforms. Through the TAN project, Nutrition International provided technical assistance for the operationalization of the second National Plan of Action for Nutrition, strengthening multisectoral nutrition monitoring, evaluation and reporting in Bangladesh and assessment of human resource needs for nutrition in different sectors, including ministries. It also helped to formulate the advocacy plan for nutrition aligned with the social and behaviour change communication strategy of Bangladesh. Additionally, Nutrition International provided technical assistance for the nutrition response during the COVID-19 pandemic and supported the assessment of existing public health nutrition programs and social safety net programs to identify bottlenecks and provide recommendations to scale-up coverage and make them more nutrition-sensitive.

Nutrition International is also committed to supporting the BNNC in addressing key challenges in the areas of governance, financing, and data related to nutrition. Currently, the focus is on the development of the Multisectoral Urban Nutrition Strategy and the operationalization of commitments made by the Government of Bangladesh at the Nutrition for Growth Summit

## OUR IMPACT

INTERVENTION	REACH*
Additional people reached with adequately iodized salt	74 million
Additional people who gained access to fortified rice	7 million
Pregnant women receiving IFA supplements	586,212
Children under five who received two doses of vitamin A	5.6 million
Children under five suffering from diarrhoea who were treated with zinc and ORS	78,966
Adolescent girls reached with full WIFAS scheme	260,000

\* 2021–2022

## 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 plus campaign (NVAC+) to ensure that all children aged 6-59 months receive biannual doses of vitamin A that strengthen immunity and help to protect them against infections. Nutrition International supports the planning, coordination, monitoring and advocacy for vitamin A supplementation across the country and provides technical assistance for the improvement of the nutrition information system.

Based on need, Nutrition International supplies vitamin A capsules to the government. In 2019-20, 20.5 million capsules were donated to cover 99% of children who received vitamin A and, to bridge the supply gap in 2023-24, Nutrition International is planning to donate vitamin A capsules for the first round of NVAC+. Nutrition International also provides targeted interventions in 58 hard-to-reach upazilas of 12 districts. Nutrition International supported the development of standard NVAC+ management guidelines for district and sub-district level managers, frontline workers, volunteers, development partners and other stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the program.

#### Zinc and ORS for diarrhoea management

Nutrition International supports the government's efforts to scale up the use of zinc and ORS for the treatment of diarrhoea. It is currently working in 18 districts, reaching more than 15,000 field functionaries and nearly 3,000 small drug vendors to build their capacity to deliver improved services for diarrhoea management. Nutrition International is also helping to establish an app-based monitoring system, strengthen the supply chain of zinc supplements, lead behaviour change interventions and advocate with the government for the procurement of necessary zinc supplements.

### IMPROVING THE HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND SURVIVAL OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEWBORNS

#### Maternal health and nutrition

Nutrition International works with the government to reduce anaemia and improve antenatal care for pregnant women. The technical assistance provided includes building the counselling skills of health workers, strengthening the health system with a focus on nutrition-specific interventions, supporting the government to improve the supply chain of IFA supplements, and advocating for the procurement of enough supplements to meet the need. Between 2021 and 2022, Nutrition International supported the government to procure and distribute 160 million IFA supplements across the country. It also contributes to strengthening the Health Monitoring Information System and improving behaviour change communications.

In 2021-2022, Nutrition International supported an emergency response project to combat malnutrition among vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nutrition Response for Pregnant Women and Children in Bangladesh project, implemented in the districts of Jamalpur and Sherpur, aimed to improve coordination between health and family planning departments for better implementation of maternal health and nutrition programming at the grassroots level. The project helped to ensure a regular supply of IFA supplements at health facilities, improve the knowledge and skills of frontline workers for counselling pregnant women to consume IFA supplements, and increase the number of pregnant women who received at least four antenatal care services.











## CURRENT PROJECTS

## IMPROVING THE NUTRITION, HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE GENERAL POPULATION



### Universal salt iodization

Nutrition International supports the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation under the Ministry of Industries to increase household coverage of adequately iodized salt. It provides technical and operational assistance to the government to help strengthen external quality control and monitoring systems, facilitate new technology uptake, and build policy advocacy for effective monitoring and law enforcement. Nutrition International also supports the government with relevant studies and assessments for formulating salt iodization standards and strategy.

### Rice fortification

Nutrition International supports the Ministry of Food and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in the integration of fortified rice into the Food Friendly Program and the Vulnerable Women Benefit social safety net programs. Nutrition International's work in rice fortification ranges from training fortified rice-producing millers and relevant government staff and providing them with on-ground support, leading advocacy at the district and national levels, and providing technical support to the government and private sector on production and distribution of fortified rice in the social safety net programs.



### Adopting a Multisector Approach for Nutrition

Adopting a Multisectoral Approach for Nutrition (AMAN) will support the Government of Bangladesh to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and hard-to-reach people in Cox's Bazar, one of the poorest districts in the country, by increasing and strengthening nutrition services delivered through the public health system, social safety net programs, and multisectoral nutrition actions.

AMAN will directly improve the health and wellbeing of more than 1.5 million vulnerable and hard-to-reach people living in Cox's Bazar, especially women, newborns, children and adolescent girls, while an additional half a million people will benefit indirectly from the project. In total, AMAN will reach 2,026,619 adolescent girls and boys, men, women, and children.







## IMPROVING THE NUTRITION, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND WOMEN

### School-based adolescent health and nutrition

Nutrition International is providing technical support to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 10 districts to implement the school-based adolescent health and nutrition program, which aims to prevent iron-deficiency anaemia among adolescent girls and improve nutrition knowledge and behaviors of adolescent boys and girls. This intervention is being implemented through a multisectoral approach to address adolescent malnutrition in collaboration with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and Bangladesh National Nutrition Services. Through this project, more than 800,000 adolescent girls and boys from around 2,200 secondary schools will be reached with nutrition education and WIFAS (for girls only).

### Nutrition of Working Women

From 2019 to 2021, Nutrition International worked with the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing Exporters' Association (BKMEA) to implement the Nutrition of Working Women (NoWW) project, which aimed to promote nutritional practices and micronutrient consumption among readymade garment workers and sensitize them about IFA supplementation, dietary diversity, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Nutrition International is currently working closely with BKMEA to design a sustainable program for integrating nutrition in the workplace.