

A Brief History of WFP's Thirty Years in Bangladesh: Revisiting the Past



LESSONS FROM

30

YEARS

A Brief History of WFP in Bangladesh



World Food Programme  
BANGLADESH

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# LESSONS FROM THIRTY YEARS

## A Brief History of WFP in Bangladesh

Strategic Planning, Policy  
and Advocacy Section 2006



World Food Programme  
BANGLADESH

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



World Food Programme assistance to Bangladesh started in 1974 as a welfare relief operation focused on center-based feeding. Over the next decades it gradually evolved as a development intervention. The transition from relief to rehabilitation and then to development happened in accordance with the evolving socio-

economic scenario of Bangladesh. While food still remains a central component of intervention, the objectives have changed from life saving to development and livelihoods promotion. Since its start in 1974, the level of WFP assistance has continuously increased so that today, in monetary value, WFP directs about 50% of the total UN assistance to Bangladesh.

The core rationale for the continuation and expansion of WFP's presence is the central tenet that purchasing of food can consume more than 70% of the income of indigent people. Food is one of the most important assets. Food has been effectively used as an incentive and as a trade-off for the opportunity cost for enticing poor Bangladeshis to participate in training, as well as an income transfer mechanism for the work done in various asset-creating projects. There are other rationales for the use of the food as an instrument of development. Chief among them are the greater nutritional impact of food, the greater control of women on food than on cash, and the self-selecting nature of certain types of food and lesser fungibility of food at the household level.

As an accompaniment to food aid, the 'development package' has evolved to include legal and social awareness, training on income-generating activities (IGA) and skills and access to micro-finance

(savings and credit). The underlying hypothesis to the 'food plus development approach' is faith in the individual to better his/her status when given a chance. WFP presents this opportunity in the form of skills in IGA, awareness about one's rights and duties and through access to the initial start-up finance.

While the food and cash debate continues on a global scale, WFP Bangladesh has been one of the first to combine the comparative advantages of both. With improved market integration and efficiency in rural Bangladesh, an increasing amount of cash has been used successfully in various activities. In 1997/98, a combination of food and cash wages was introduced under a Food for Work (FFW) intervention at a ratio of 70:30, which gradually increased to 50:50. A similar "cash plus food" (50:50) approach was introduced under the Food Security for Vulnerable Group Development Programme (FSVGD) in 2003/4. The combination of cash with food enabled the participants to acquire complementary food items, meet essential non-food needs, and to invest in family assets. Also, the approach has helped to significantly reduce the sale of partial wheat rations.

Today's programme is the product of constant trial and upgrade, implemented and experimented in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The evolution involved an increased sharing of design and implementation responsibilities with partners: GoB, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBO) and with the beneficiaries themselves. The participation of the programme beneficiaries has been increasing and they are more involved in the design and planning than in the 1970s.

Over time, major realignments of partners have occurred resulting in the realization of the most effective arrangements for implementation. Agencies have been partnered for their core competence and relevance of their core mandate to WFP's programme priorities. Considerable investment has gone into developing the capabilities of the partners. The NGO partners have emerged at the centre of the developmental dimension of WFP's programme as they deliver training, social awareness and skills, and micro-finance.

The leading strengths of WFP are its capacity to map vulnerability, its expertise and experience in fortification of food, and its capacity to respond and coordinate emergency response. The targeting of project resources has been sharpened through the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM). VAM has emerged as one of the most valuable resources that WFP Bangladesh shares with its partners. Both the high levels of malnutrition in Bangladesh and the increasing confidence and expertise of WFP in some of these innovations like fortification of atta and biscuits have mandated an increased nutrition focus within the programme. The Country Office has also enhanced national emergency preparedness and response through measures like coordinating the DER (Disasters and Emergency Response Sub-Group within the Local Consultative Group), the appointment of the district information focal points, and finalising a roster of pre-qualified NGOs to support response efforts. The emerging areas of strength are policy advocacy and analysis through research and improved knowledge base/management.

### **Key Lessons and Concerns:**

WFP assisted interventions have demonstrated the effectiveness of promoting human development through the use of food as the key input. Many of these best practices and lessons have emerged and are supported by WFP experience in other countries' programmes. However, some interventions remain unique to Bangladesh. There are several challenges ahead to maintain effectiveness and relevance toward helping Bangladesh achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets.



- The success of WFP projects in Bangladesh has been based on a wide range of support and effective partnership with the government, bilateral donors, UN agencies, an array of NGOs, Community Based Organisations, community and project participants/beneficiaries.
- Scientific targeting helps to minimise political influence and interference while optimizing the use of resources for reaching the most needy and vulnerable first.

- Investing in human capital brings sustainable improvements to beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods.
- Fortification of wheat flour and biscuits with vitamins and minerals has proven to be a cost-effective measure in tackling under-nutrition.
- School feeding programme has contributed in enhanced enrolment and attendance, reduced drop out and improved academic performance in a very cost effective manner.
- Putting resources in the hands of women supports their empowerment and results in better nutritional outcomes for the family.
- Inclusion of HIV/AIDS training in the regular training programme has proven an excellent and cost effective way of reaching out to nearly one million participants.
- There is a need to invest more in the strengthening capacity of the national partners, particularly of government line agencies, to manage food assistance programmes and reduce leakage.
- We must revisit the sustainability issues of project benefits with a particular focus on the graduation of participants into mainstream NGO development programmes and continued access to micro-credit.
- The programme should aim to involve male family members in the relevant awareness building sessions to make the gender mainstreaming more effective and sustainable.
- WFP should work with the GoB to strengthen the participation of NGOs and the community in the programme to minimise political interference and misallocation or sale of entitlements.
- WFP's monitoring and evaluation system should be able to track qualitative changes over time; and
- WFP must continue to promote the active participation of partners in monitoring.





## THE BEGINNING OF WFP ASSISTANCE IN BANGLADESH

### *Key points:*

- Started as an UN inter-agency effort;
- Partnership with non-government international and national aid agencies;
- Operations management supported by voluntary organisation, CARE;
- Relief to rehabilitation: Combination of feeding with employment and rehabilitation of infrastructures (roads, embankments, irrigation canals);
- Mother and child health care and family planning integral to all activities.



The World Food Programme has been active in Bangladesh for as long as the country has existed. In 1971, the War of Liberation resulted in a massive displacement of the population and a breakdown of traditional support systems and coping strategies. The severe floods and the attendant famine of 1975, further aggravated the

widespread hardship. WFP assistance first began under the aegis of the United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh (UNROB). This was a joint effort of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WFP in association with a number of non-governmental agencies and the Government of Bangladesh. A major part of the operation was the establishment of a series of emergency centre-based (in-site) feeding centres for war, famine and flood ravaged victims. This relief mainly focused on mothers and children.

At a cost of US \$ 120.7 million, this operation lasted for five years. It consisted of two separate projects (1) Project 2226: **Vulnerable Group Feeding in Distressed Areas**, and (2) Project 2197: **National Relief Works Programme for Land and Water Development**.

The first project, Project 2226 (1975 -1977): **Vulnerable Group Feeding in Distressed Areas**, covered approximately half a million beneficiaries (135,000 mothers and 366,000 children) from severely impoverished families. It consisted of six different components/schemes:

*Nutrition support to hardcore poor in distressed areas:* This was the largest component, which covered about 383,000 mothers and children at its peak. This component established some 2,000 food relief distribution points in 34 sub-divisions (now converted to districts). Beneficiaries received wholesome food rations of wheat, dried skim milk and fish protein.

*Programmes assisted by non-governmental aid agencies:* A total of 62,000 beneficiaries (mothers and children) were assisted through 51 NGOs (34 national and 17 international) in 164 distribution points under this scheme.

*Scheme for destitute mothers and children:* This component helped the destitute women and their children who were deserted due to the War of Liberation. The scheme included a combination of food for work and day care centre facilities initiated by UNICEF and covered about 55,000 women and 165,000 children.

*Centres for displaced children (Sinnamukuls):* About 30,000 children were assisted by local and foreign voluntary agencies under this scheme.

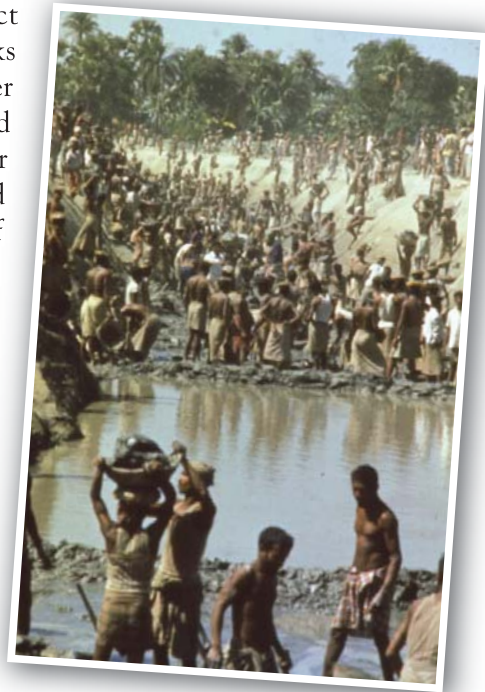
*Resettlement of slum dwellers:* About 130,000 slum dwelling people including approximately 60,000 mother and children were assisted at five sites in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna cities through the government statutory rationing system.

Programme for maternal and child health and family planning: This scheme was intended to facilitate nutrition education and support to pregnant and lactating mothers and their pre-school aged children in the rural health centres under a joint UNFPA and WHO MCH initiative. It covered about 10,000 mothers and 30,000 children in 55 centres.



It is notable that all of the schemes included health and family planning interventions and were coordinated by the then Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation with support from CARE. The ministry assumed the full implementation responsibility from 1 July 1977.

The second project, Project 2197: National Relief Works Programme for Land and Water Development, started as a rapid relief operation with food for work activities. It had a planned outlay of US \$ 8.1 million of which US \$ 6.9 million was in food costs. The poorest people were provided with food rations in return for their labour in mainly earth work in land (primarily roads) and water development (embankments, canals, irrigation channels etc.)





Project  
**"Atta"**  
GRAMME  
kg  
100gm container  
Vitamin A - 1029 IU  
Zinc - 4.8 mg

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME  
Pushhi Atta Enriched with  
Iron - 18.1 mg  
Zinc - 4.8 mg  
Calcium - 48 mg

Atta Fortification Project  
**"Pushhi Atta"**  
Gift of USA  
  
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME  
Net weight: 25kg  
Pushhi Atta Enriched with (Each 100gm contains)  
Iron - 18.1 mg  
Zinc - 4.8 mg  
Vitamin A - 1029 IU

## SHIFTS AND EVOLUTION OF WFP INTERVENTIONS

### *Key Programmatic Changes:*

Food came to be used as an income transfer to cover participants' opportunity cost of attending training and group activities.

Development of package services (i.e. awareness building on social, legal and health issues, training on income generating skills, and access to micro-finance including savings and credit) combined with food aid to help participants to expand their capacity and increase assets to better cope with shocks and crises after the termination of food assistance.

Introduction of "food plus cash wage" to enable the participants to buy complementary food items and essentials, and to reduce the sale of food.



The level of WFP assistance in Bangladesh with the support of various donors has continued to increase and diversify. The programme has undergone several changes, mutations and permutations. Almost, without exception, large-scale changes have been introduced only after having been tested and tried through pilot projects.

The main thrust of the changes has been to transform the interventions from relief to rehabilitation and development, and to help arrive at a more sustainable and cost effective solution to the problem of chronic hunger and poverty.

The best description of the evolution of WFP's programme in Bangladesh is "continuity within change." In many ways the essential elements of the WFP's first two projects Vulnerable Group feeding and the National Relief Works Programme for Land and Water Development can be found in subsequent activities, including those of the present Country Programme. Between 1975 and 2000, Vulnerable Group Feeding in Distressed Areas, was renewed and expanded 7 times to include an ever expanding and diverse population in each new cycle. The National Relief Works Programme for Land and Water Development was renewed and expanded 10 times.



The "Vulnerable Group Feeding in Distressed Areas" underwent many christenings and reincarnations. It was called "Feeding of Vulnerable Groups," then "Feeding and Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups," "Vulnerable Group Development," and finally "Development of Asset-less Women

and Vulnerable Groups." Later, it was integrated into WFP's Country Programme as "Vulnerable Group Development" (VGD). In the end, VGD was a development activity rather than just a feeding activity. The poor, hapless woman, who typified the VGD programme participant, was at the centre of this massive development effort. Our partners, mainly BRAC, were constant companions in this innovation and experimentation.

Project 2197 began as "National Relief Works Programme for Land and Water Development" and gradually changed to "National Food Assisted Works Programme for Land and Water Development," "Food for Work" and "Rural Development" until its final incorporation into the Country Programme as the Integrated Food Security Programme (IFS).

Though the two primary areas of WFP assistance have been maintained in general, the activities and components have been changed and adjusted in each of their incarnations. The objectives have been revised as reflected in the new names. The alterations were based on the changes



in the local situation and demands, as well as in line with WFP's global policies and strategies including Strengthening of Institution for Food Aided Development (SIFAD) and Enabling Development Policy and Food Aid Assisted Development (FAAD) priorities

Strengthening of Institutions for Food Aided Development (SIFAD) was an outcome of the GoB-WFP Seminar on Food Aid for Human and Infrastructure Development in Bangladesh in January 1988. A joint GoB-donors Task Force under the SIFAD Ministerial Steering Committee has been working since January 1988 with the objectives to:

- bring food aid into the mainstream of development planning and administration;
- rationalize the flow of resources and institutional responsibilities;
- make adjustments to the institutional framework for human and infrastructure development; and
- prepare and implement action plans to achieve the objectives.

A total of six Action Plans were implemented as of June 2002 including extensive capacity building of implementing partners and shifting of responsibilities to institutions with the right mandate.

The WFP Executive Board adapted the Enabling Development Policy (EDP) in May 1999. The EDP set the following five priorities, known as the Food Aid Assisted Development (FAAD) priorities, for global food-assisted development.

1. Enable young children and pregnant and lactating women to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related needs;
2. Enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training;
3. Make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets;
4. Mitigate the effects of recurring natural disasters in vulnerable areas; and
5. Helping households that depend on degraded natural resources to shift to more sustainable livelihoods.

The two previously detailed projects (2226 and 2197) continued to have a largely a relief cum rehabilitation focus until 1983 when new development elements started to be slowly incorporated. The various developmental components of WFP projects implemented between 1983 and the start of the current Country Programme in 2001 are outlined below:



Union Parishad VGD (UPVGD): UPVGD was the main component under Project 2226 utilising more than 90 percent of project resources. Vulnerable households in all rural unions of the country received WFP food assistance under this

component. The food rations were issued only in the name of women selected using criteria based on socio-economic vulnerability. Women headed households were the priority. The ration amount had been 31.25 kg of wheat during the initial relief phase, which was rounded into 30 kg in the developmental food assistance activity. Initially, this component

did not follow any fixed start and end dates. Women could enter in the component at any time and receive assistance for about two years. Later, specific start and end dates were fixed in order to ensure the smoother implementation of activities.

Development services were progressively incorporated in this component after several trials and pilots. One of first development, non-food inputs, to be introduced was mandatory savings. Participating women were encouraged each month to save about



Taka 25 in a group account toward forming seed capital with the goal of starting a small income earning activity at the end of the programme. However, several changes have been made in the savings scheme over time to facilitate better management of the saved money to include management of the money by UP officials, then by banks and post office, and finally by partner NGOs. Similarly, the savings amount has been fixed at the minimum of Taka 25 per month and put into individual accounts instead of group accounts.

The major development in the UPVGD was the introduction of social awareness and marketable skill training. The initial experiment was done through the involvement of government departments, such as the Livestock, Agriculture, and Health and Family Planning. However, the government departments and line agencies did not achieve the desired amount of collaboration. As a result, WFP sought help from various NGO partners for providing the development and training packages to programme participants. A revolving fund was created through monetization of food to meet the cost of delivering the training.

Monetization is the sale of food aid to generate cash for covering various activities related to effective and efficient delivery of food aid. These costs could be those related to transport personnel/ administration and monitoring.



One of the main constraints to sustainable improvements in the food security and livelihoods status of the VGD participants was arranging for the start-up capital for small enterprises. The amount of money saved by the women was not sufficient to form a reasonable seed capital. Also, women used the savings money to meet other emergency family needs.

Though many NGOs started micro-credit for the poor, they were not willing to expand their services to the VGD women, who came from the lowest economic strata and were seen as a "risky investment."

A pilot was launched with BRAC in 1987 in one upazila to test the viability of granting micro-credit to the VGD women. This experiment was an unqualified success. The pilot was expanded into a joint collaborative intervention between GoB and BRAC named "Income Generation for VGD" (IGVGD) in 1988/89. IGVGD is still operational in many parts of the country.

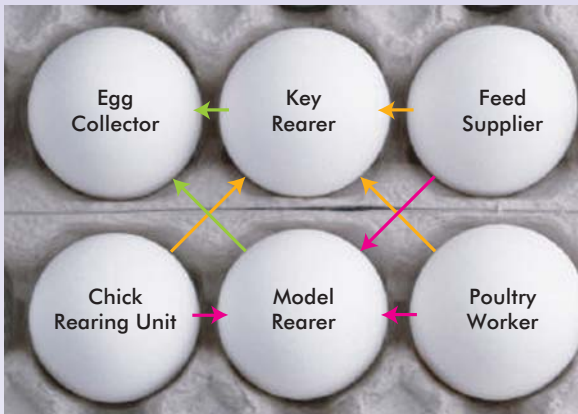
Since then, UPVGD came to have two versions: 1) UPVGD with only food and savings activities, and 2) IGVGD, mainly in collaboration with NGOs, to provide development package services including awareness on social, legal, and health issues; skill training on locally marketable income-generation activities; and micro-finance services (savings and credit).



Poultry emerged as one of the most successful income generating activities for the ultra-poor women resulting in the Department of Livestock becoming a key partner in IGVGD.

In 1996-97 a third version was included in this component under the Integrated Food Assisted Development (IFADEP)-1, a sub-project with financing from the European Union in 1995-96. Activities of the IFADEP-1 remained similar to the IGVGD, but featured a closer

## IGVGD Poultry Chain Introduced In Nineties



### **Chick Rearing Unit:**

Unit rearing 50 to 300 one day-old chicks, managed by VGD women

### **Key Rearer:**

VGD women rearing 10 -25 poultry supplied from Chick Rearing Unit

### **Model Rearer:**

VGD women rearing above 25 poultry

### **Poultry Worker:**

VGD women trained by the partner NGO and the Department of Livestock Services to provide vaccination and primary treatment to poultry

### **Feed Supplier:**

VGD women trained to prepare and supply poultry feed to the Chick Rearing Units, Key Rearers and Model Rearers

**Egg Collector:** VGD women trained to collect eggs from the Key Rearers and Model Rearers and sell in the marketing outlets

*The Department of Livestock Services (DLS) supplied vaccine, medicines and one day-old chick. Partner NGOs (mainly BRAC) provided the necessary training along with DLS and arrange for chick & feed supply and micro-credit for the initial capital.*

*DLS with support from partner NGOs supplied vaccines and medicines to Poultry Workers at the Union Parishad centres. The Poultry Workers provided vaccination and primary treatment at the household level in exchange of a minimal fee.*

*IGVGD poultry chain made significant contribution in the expansion of the poultry production in Bangladesh.*

monitoring system and experimentation with different income-generating activities. This IFADEP evolved into the current Food Security for VGD (FSVGD) under the current VGD Programme.

VGD participants under the FSVGD component are provided with 50% of their entitlements in food and 50% in cash. The cash support enables the participants to buy complementary food items and to meet other family needs. The cash support also helps them to acquire family assets.



**Women Training Centres (WTC):** The WTC component supported vulnerable women through centre based training services. These training centres were run by the GoB (Department of Women Affairs), NGOs, and Community Based Organisations (CBO). Trainees received a monthly wheat ration of 31.25 kg (30 kg since Expansion 7) for a period of twelve months. Food assistance was combined with awareness building on social, legal and health issues, and skill development training on different income generation activities. These women also participated in a monthly savings scheme. Some of them received micro-credit support from the government and NGO sources. This sub-component was phased out in 2005.

**Institutional Feeding:** WFP provided food assistance to vulnerable children in orphanages, day care centres, mother and child healthcare centres sponsored by the government (mainly Department of Social Services) and non-governmental agencies and institutions. Each child received a daily ration containing wheat, pulses and vegetable oil. This activity was closed in 1998.

## Group Leader Extension Workers (GLEW):

This component was introduced as a pilot project during the 1994-95 VGD cycle to provide complementary support to the VGD women in areas where a partner NGO was not available to provide development package services.

The trained GLEWs were employed to organise the VGD women into a group, provide them with development messages and extension services by linking the VGD women with different government and non-governmental service providers. GLEW



received their monthly wage equivalent to 100 kg of wheat, 50% in kind and 50% in cash. The Department of Women Affairs managed this component until it was phased out in 2002.

WFP assisted Food for Work (FFW) activities constituted 35 percent of the total FFW activities of the country.

**Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB):** The BWDB component was the largest component under Project 2227 and utilized about 66 percent of the total project resources. The core activities were flood control, drainage and irrigation, and coastal embankment. The main objectives were to create seasonal employment opportunities for the poorest citizens as well as to develop effective flood/tidal surge control and an irrigation system. The BWDB schemes also contributed to the improvement of the fisheries sector. Scheme participants were provided with additional services including skills training, functional education, and micro-finance. Women constituted 13 to 15 percent of the total labour force. This component was terminated in 2002.

**Local Initiative (LI) Schemes:** These schemes included constructing local roads at the upazila/union and village levels, pond excavation/re-excavation, and raising of land of the community institutions (schools/mosques/other community institutions). The main

objectives of the LI scheme were to create employment opportunities for the ultra-poor during lean and dry seasons as well as to build community and local infrastructures for better communications in order to facilitate socio-economic activities and to



increase access to education, healthcare and other services. The Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation was the main implementing agency for these schemes through local level project implementation committees. This component was terminated during Expansion 6 of Project 2227.

### **Growth Centre Connecting Roads (GCCR):**

GCCR component of Project 2197 started in 1984-85 on a pilot basis and expanded subsequently. The primary objective was to develop road connections between the growth centres identified by the Planning Commission in 1982. The implementing agency for this component was the Local Government Engineering Bureau (LGEB), later renamed the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). Apart from the construction and upgrading of the GCCR, it created employment opportunities for the ultra-poor and made significant improvement in the socio-economic status of the country. An important aside is that in addition to the earth work, WFP through bilateral donors' funding contributed to the construction of the necessary cross drainage structures. Participants of the component were paid in cash and food and provided with additional services including skills training, functional education, and micro-finance to enhance the impact of their temporary employment. The component was terminated in 2000.

### **Post Monsoon Rehabilitation (PMR)/Routine Maintenance Programme (RMP):**

This component started as a maintenance and repair scheme for roads and embankments built under the aforementioned components. Initially started as PMR to maintain/repair the roads and embankment immediately following the monsoon, the component evolved into a year round scheme and was



renamed as "RMP." The component contributed to keeping the roads continuously functional as well as providing employment to the poorest women. The working women received development package services provided to by partner NGOs. Women were paid in cash and food for their work. The component was terminated gradually in

conjunction with LI at the end of the Expansion 6, WDB in 2002 and LGED in 2003/2004.

**Combination of Food and Cash Wages:** In order to enable the participants of the Food for Work under the above components to meet the need for additional food items and essentials, and to reduce partial sale of wheat wage, the GoB agreed to pay partial wages in cash in 1997/98. Initially 30% of the wage was paid in cash, which was increased gradually to 50%. The combination of a cash wage with food helped the participants to buy complementary food items, meet other family needs, and acquire family assets.



**Forestry:** The forestry component was started as a pilot in 1988/89 and became a regular component of the Project 2197. The activities undertaken under this component included road and canal side plantation and block plantation. For food and cash wages, the poorest women participants planted and cared for saplings. A unique aspect of this component was the participants' share in the ownership of the grown trees through long-term agreement with the relevant authorities. Additionally, participants received the full package of development services provided by the partner NGOS.

The activities were mainly implemented by NGOs and the Department of Forestry until the scheme was terminated in 2000.

**Fisheries:** The component's activities included re-excavation of fishponds, lakes, and borrow-pits, and de-weeding of enclosed rivers within flood control, drainage and irrigation projects. Ultra-poor men and women were employed to undertake



the activities for food wages. Participants continued group fish cultivation in the re-excavated water bodies through long-term lease agreement with the relevant owners. They were provided with the development package services for sustainability of the improvements in their livelihoods. The component was implemented by the Department of Fisheries and partner NGOs and discontinued in 1999/2000.

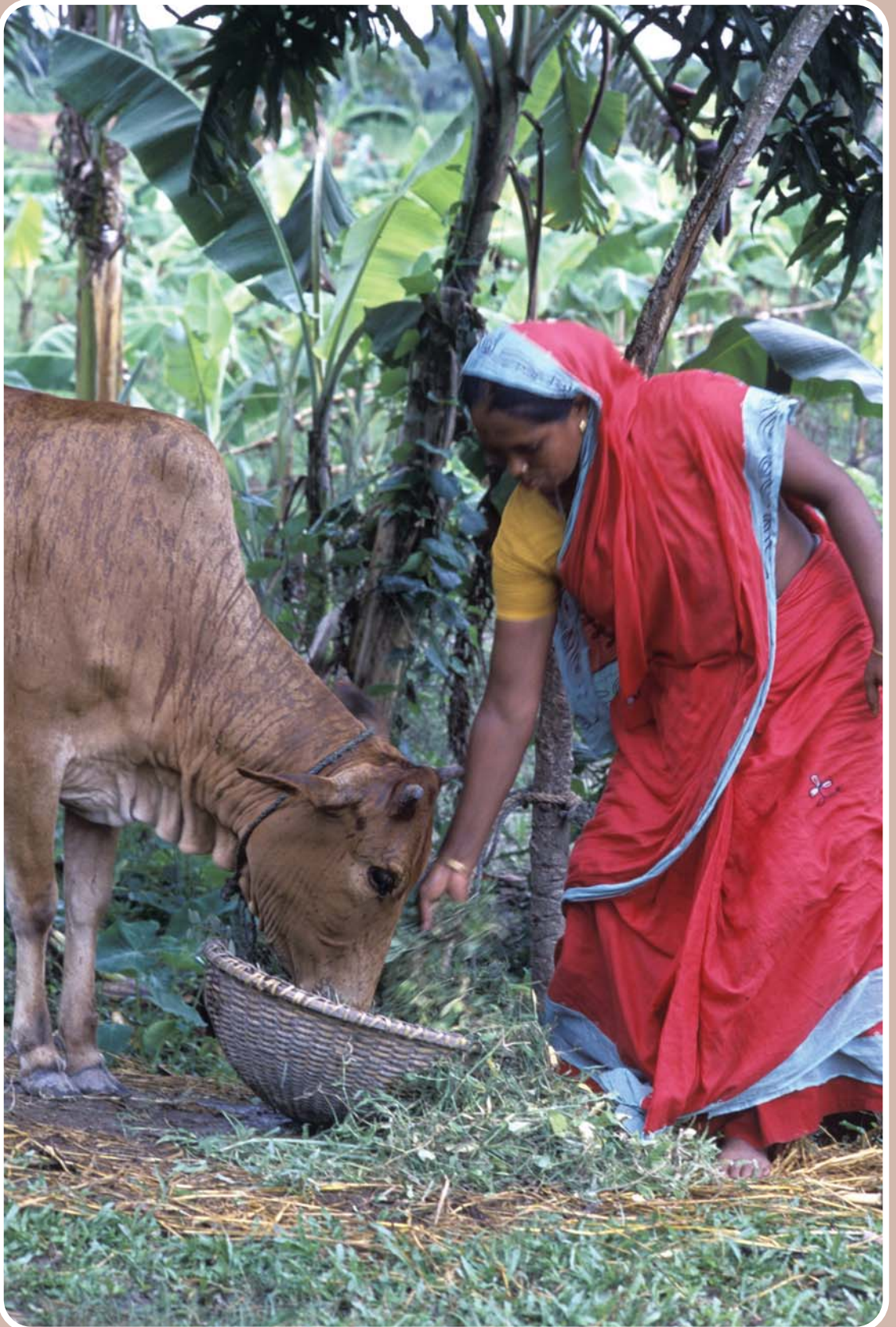
### Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS

As per the official records, Bangladesh still holds a relatively strong record in regard to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, in consideration of the growing risks and threats, WFP has already initiated awareness-building efforts for the participants of the WFP projects. A detailed and specific chapter has already been incorporated into the training curriculum for participants. Trained trainers of the partner NGOs impart the material. WFP maintains coordination and cooperation with other UN agencies, donors, NGOs and other humanitarian agencies on HIV/AIDS. If warranted, assistance would be provided to the AIDS victims with food and nutrition support. The activities that are currently pursued along with other UN agencies include:

Preparation of a new module on HIV/AIDS for training of trainers; and

An initiative to help AIDS victims through greater involvement;





## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### *Key points:*

- Monitoring based on project logic and results, both process (activities and output) and outcome levels;
- Statistically significant sample size;
- Outcome survey at baseline, midterm and post project period;
- Scientific analysis and reporting;
- Significant joint monitoring by partners; and
- Continuous improvement and innovation.



WFP's monitoring system has developed through planning consultations with the partners. Though WFP plays a major role in the monitoring of its activities, the GoB and NGOs partners have a significant involvement.

**WFP field monitors visit 1,600 statistically valid sampled project sites and interview 3,000 project participants in a year. This represents about 16% of the total project sites.**

Additional visits are also made to about 400 non-sampled project sites covering another 700 participants. In one project site visit all the project partners including GoB and NGOs are interviewed about the project's performance.

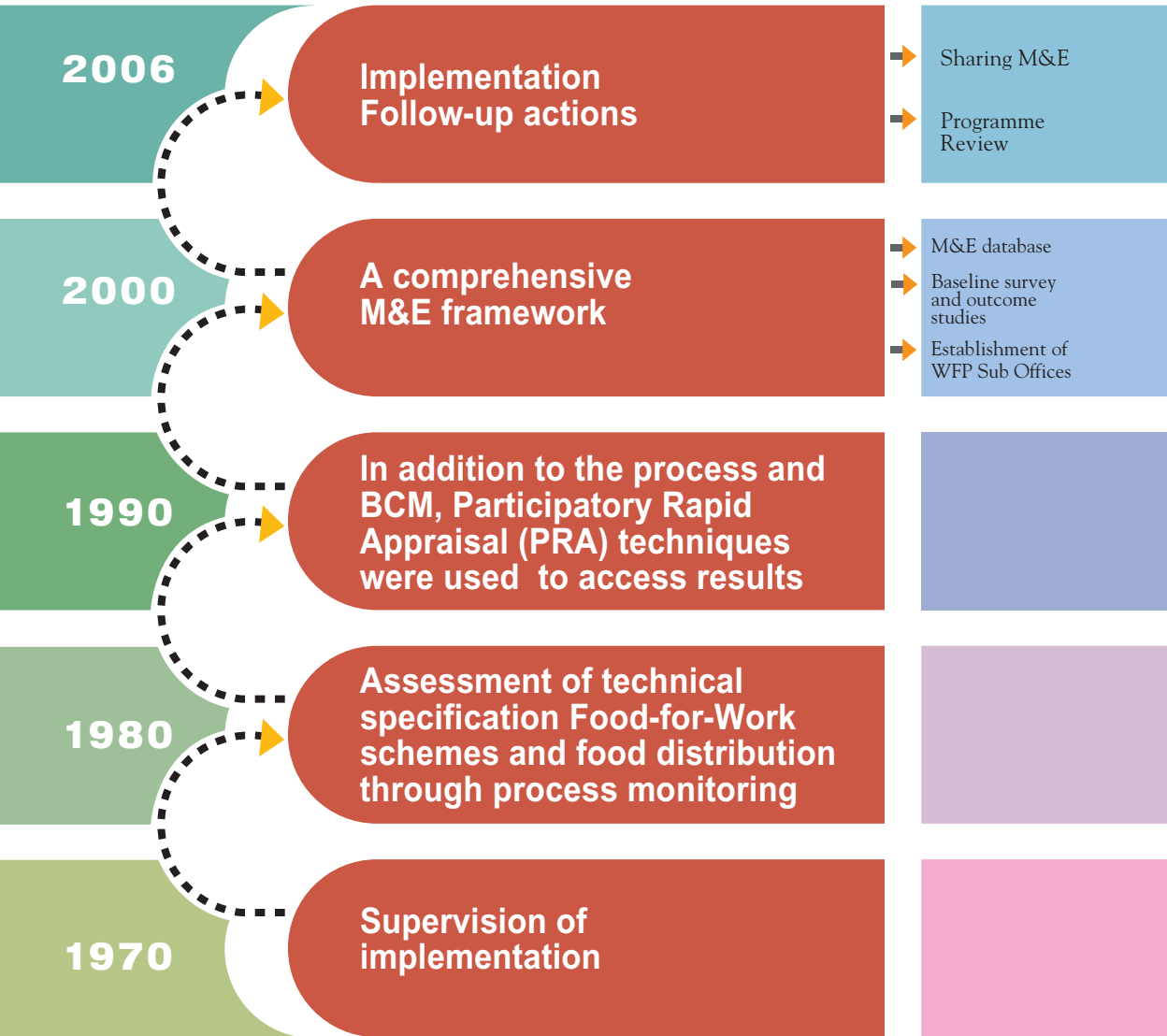
At the initial stage of the WFP projects, an inter-agency working group carried out this monitoring function. This committee comprised agencies like UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and the voluntary agency CARE and was chaired by the UNDP Resident Representative. It was responsible for regular supervision and execution of WFP projects. It acted as a forum for joint consultation, planning, and evaluation of the project. Within the inter-agency working group, WFP was responsible for tracking the movement and utilization of project resources (commodities) and reporting on the project performances.

Initially, the government utilized the services and distribution networks of cooperating non-governmental agencies and UNICEF to distribute WFP food. Relevant government agencies were responsible for ensuring proper distribution and monitoring. CARE was contracted to advise and assist the government agencies, on behalf of WFP, on food management, logistics, reporting and accounting of the WFP food. This service was discontinued after a shift of the full management responsibility to the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation in 1977. WFP provided the necessary logistical support to the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation along with orientation and training. The Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation established a separate wing to manage the activities, and two senior WFP officials were out-posted to this wing to help the ministry to manage the programmes.

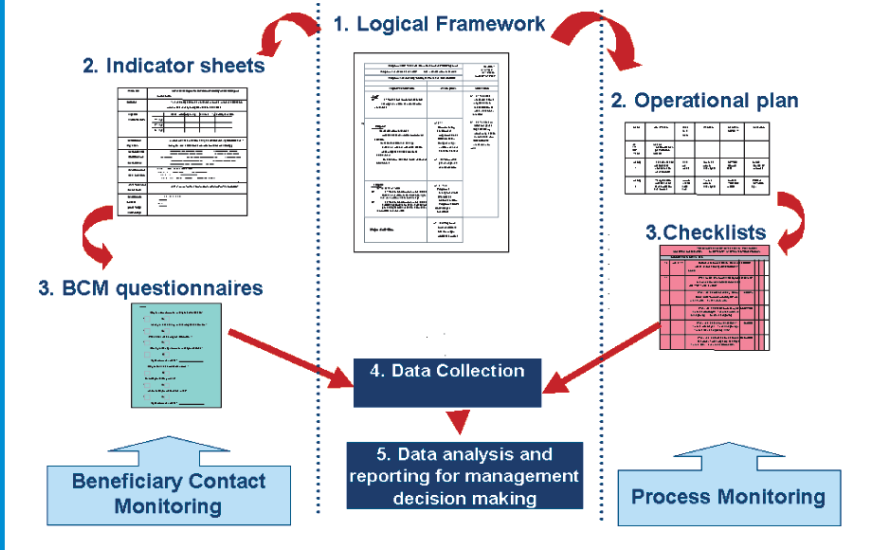
Prior to the introduction of development objectives into WFP projects in 1983, monitoring of the feeding programme was output based. It focused primarily on food logistics and the number of people receiving the entitled allocation. However, with the changes in the objectives, a structured monitoring system was introduced defining the responsibilities of the Ministry of Relief and WFP. While the ministry remained largely responsible for the implementation and reporting of project activities, joint monitoring at the field level by WFP and the government was introduced. The change also introduced project specific monitoring tools. NGOs became responsible for the smooth implementation of their component activities.

A statistical section was established within WFP to process the monitoring findings and compile reports submitted by various implementing partners during the 1980s. This unit used to compile and prepare Quarterly Project Reports (QPR), biannual Project Implementation Reports (PIR) and annual Country Office Reports. The section was renamed "Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation" (MRE) Section and, later, became the "Management Information and Evaluation" (MIE) section.

# Evolution of M&E



## Monitoring & Evaluation Activities Flow Chart



A logical framework (LFA) based monitoring system was introduced in early 1990s separately for the two major projects (2226 and 2197) and, for the first time, beneficiary contact monitoring was implemented.

In the 1980s, field monitoring emphasized the critical review of the technical specifications of large-scale Food-for-Work schemes and food distribution. WFP initiated process monitoring and Beneficiary Contract Monitoring (BCM). Dbase was used to analyze field monitoring data. Component-wise monitoring findings were published. Visitation took place to about six percent of the total distribution sites. At that stage the major focus of monitoring was to ensure technical specifications of the infrastructure development.

In the 1990s, WFP introduced the assessment of programme impact. The monitoring focus shifted to the beneficiaries. In addition to the process monitoring and BCM, WFP employed the new technique of Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA). Strengthening of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit was made possible with funding available from the EC under the Integrated Food-Assisted Development Project (IFADEP). Several studies were undertaken to review the overall outcome of various interventions.

Beneficiary Contact Monitoring is monitoring conducted using checklists to directly interviewing the beneficiaries, primarily at the household level. Among other items, the questionnaire covers issues of amount and quality of entitlement received

WFP field officers engaged in monitoring through division wise set-ups for four major divisions based in Dhaka. The year 1992 saw the establishment of two separate reporting units within the two major programmes (VGD and RD). The evaluation of various component activities was done through external institutes and agencies until 1998/99 when a Programme Effect Monitoring and Evaluation System (PEMES) was introduced under IFADEP. A longitudinal impact evaluation approach initially focused on four sub-projects. Under PEMES a total of 21 evaluation studies on different programme components were undertaken ending in 2002.

In 2000, an international monitoring expert launched a comprehensive revision of the monitoring and evaluation strategy with GTZ assistance.

A scientific and fully indicator (results) based M&E system has been developed which focuses on both output and outcome level monitoring. The current system is able to provide both process and outcome level results through an inbuilt computerized data management system.

In 2005, a review of the M&E system focused on the strengthening of reporting and follow-up actions. The review also included designing a sampling methodology to select sites for monitoring visits. Furthermore, the M&E Database was upgraded to a web based system (Dot net and ORACLE). The revised database has been installed in each WFP Sub Office accompanied by the necessary training of field monitors. As per the revised M&E strategy, initiatives were taken to use the monitoring findings for corrective action.

In 2006, the Country Office prepared its work plan based on RBM principles. Programme reviews are planned to ensure appropriate follow-up action and there are plans to conduct outcome surveys.

Through extensive review and consultations, all WFP partners including the government, NGOs, and programme participants worked together to create the current monitoring system. Several training workshops have been organised for both WFP and partners to build the monitoring

capacity. The intent is to enable the partner agencies to follow a uniform monitoring system and tools.

The establishment of four regional offices in 2000 resulted in the decentralization of monitoring, which is now conducted out of Dhaka, Rangpur, Jessore, Chittagong and two Field Offices in CHT (Rangamati) and Cox's Bazar. Additional monitoring staff has been deployed to regional and field offices for better coverage. The Outcome Survey is undertaken at the beginning of the project cycle to establish a baseline, then the mid-cycle after one year, and again at the post-project cycle stage. Monitoring reports are prepared biannually and the outcome reports are published annually.





WFP Project : CP 10059.0

**HIGH ENERGY BISCUITS**

Fortified with Vitamins & Minerals

**GIFT OF WFP**



**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

NET WEIGHT : 7.5 Kg

MANUFACTURED BY: HANOVER BAKERS  
INDIAN MANUFACTURING CORPORATION PVT. LTD.  
MUMBAI

TOP



WHEAT FLOUR, ENRICHED WITH VITAMINS  
FULL FAT SONA FLS. (100% WHEAT)  
KOSKOSZ SALT LEAVENING AGENT, NO AD

DATE OF MANUFACTURE

BEST BEFORE DATE

BATCH NUMBER

WFP Project : CP 10059.0

**HIGH ENERGY BISCUITS**

Fortified with Vitamins & Minerals

**GIFT OF WFP**



**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

NET WEIGHT : 7.5 Kg

MANUFACTURED BY: HANOVER BAKERS  
INDIAN MANUFACTURING CORPORATION PVT. LTD.  
MUMBAI

TOP





WFP Project : CP 10059.0

**HIGH ENERGY BISCUITS**

Fortified with Vitamins & Minerals

**GIFT OF WFP**



**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

NET WEIGHT : 7.5 Kg

DATE OF MANUFACTURE

BEST BEFORE DATE

BATCH NUMBER

TOP



WHEAT FLOUR  
FULL FAT SOYA PLS.  
IODIZED SALT; LEAVENING

DATE OF MANUFACTURE

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**GIFT OF WFP**



**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

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DATE OF MANUFACTURE

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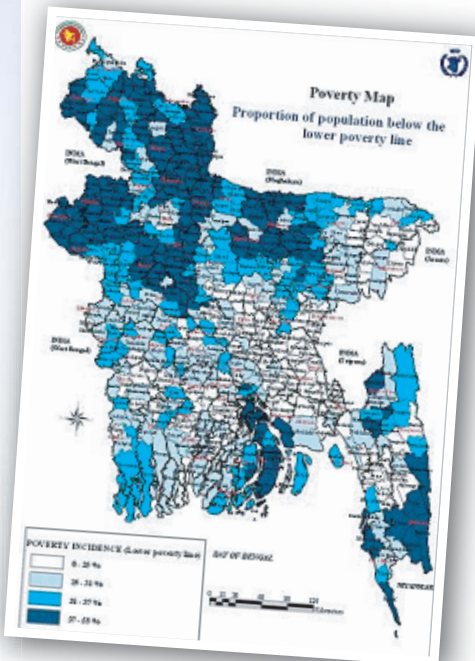
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## VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS AND MAPPING

### Key Features:

- VAM techniques and tools help identify the most food insecure and poor areas.
- VAM allows for prioritization in the use of scarce resources.
- VAM criteria have been developed and formalized in consultation with the partners.
- VAM maps are used by many development facilitators as planning tools.



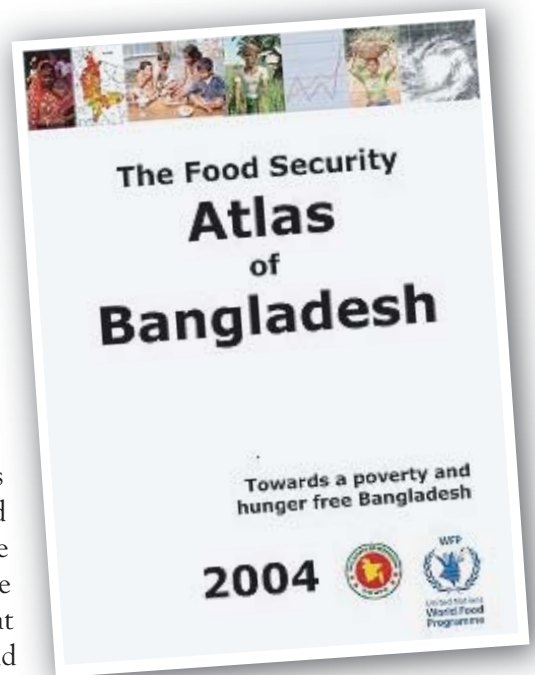
At the initial stage, project resources were allocated to distressed areas containing large concentrations of disaster-struck, destitute people. Thus, visual identification of distressed groups was the basis for all targeting. With the introduction of developmental activities, targeting and selection criteria had to be defined and refined. The consistently ultra-poor and hungry populations were largely invisible compared to disaster affected people. Poverty and hunger were pervasive yet extremely difficult to target and to separate into the more

extreme cases from the moderate or less extreme ones. With finite resource constrictions WFP could only address a piece of the problem and sought to reach out to the neediest groups as its priority. Often, it was the disaster stricken that garnered the most media and, hence, global attention, diverting funds from the ultra-poor who suffered in silence. Additionally, stronger groups who had a need but not a severe need often had the power to attract attention to their needs and divert limited resources from the most indigent and hungry populations.

In 1987-88, WFP first developed a resource-targeting map based on available secondary data. High level GoB officials were involved in finalizing the maps. Extensive consultations set the criteria for mapping the most vulnerable areas.

Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) using the modern tools was officially introduced in 2000. Some of the key tools and techniques are Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, poverty mapping based on the Small Area Estimation (SAE) technique, community food security profiling (CFSP), perception mapping/knowledge based scoring, situation analysis using secondary data, and rapid appraisal. The mapping is done through consultation with the government and NGO partners at the central and local level and uses the most recent data available.

The sources of data range from the GoB to the NGO partners (e.g. HKI) to WFP's own PRA and primary data collection. VAM uses a variety of information and analytical methods. Some of these are satellite images of agro-climatic conditions and secondary data on education, health, and nutritional status, changes in market prices and household coping behaviour, simple face-to-face discussions with members (men, women and children) of food insecure and vulnerable communities.



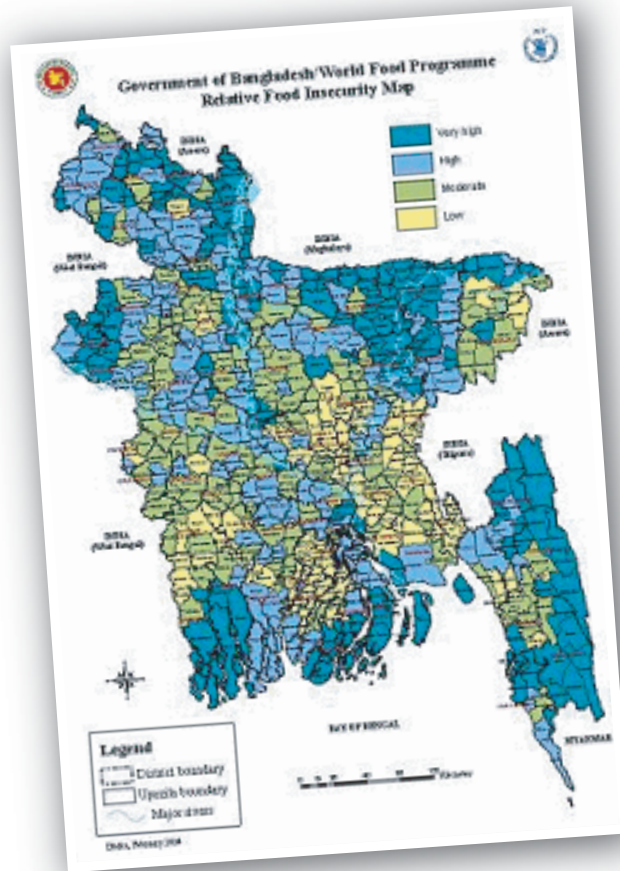
VAM information products are intended to support key WFP programming decisions and include analytical reports, maps, and databases. VAM information products also support the complementary needs of the broader international community, e.g. the Inter-Agency Working Group on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Systems (FIVIMS). UNDAF/CCA and PRSP processes to address more rigorously the problems of food insecurity and vulnerability in Bangladesh. These products are used for better planning and targeting of project interventions as well as for advocacy on poverty and food insecurity in Bangladesh.

VAM's primary functions are: 1) Problem assessment, understanding why and when conditions of food insecurity and vulnerability exist; 2) Beneficiary assessment: identifying who are most likely to face conditions of food insecurity and vulnerability; 3) Geographic targeting: identifying where those hungry, poor and vulnerable populations are located; and 4) Appropriate role of food aid: identifying appropriate interventions of food aid assistance to address the problems of food insecurity and vulnerability.

### Key VAM Outputs

1. Situation analysis on food security assessment in Bangladesh, March 2002;
2. Food security briefs including self-sufficiency and food aid (May 2002), appropriateness of targeted food aid programmes (August 2003), and the food availability and consumption situation in the country (August 2005);
3. Local estimation of poverty and malnutrition in Bangladesh, May 2004;
4. Relative food insecurity map of Bangladesh, February 2004 (funded by USAID);
5. Poverty and malnutrition maps of Bangladesh, February 2004;
6. Profiling of highly food insecure areas, May 2004 (funded by USAID);
7. Union level relative food insecurity map of Chittagong Hill Tracts, September 2004;

8. The Food Security Atlas of Bangladesh, March 2005 (funded by USAID); and
9. Characterizing Food Insecurity in Chittagong Hill Tracts, a report based on the consultation process held in CHT in September 2003 and June 2004, October 2005 (DRAFT).



The key activities planned in the near future under VAM include: characterizing and mapping urban food security and a baseline survey on the household level food security in the highly food insecure areas identified in the VAM map.





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## EFFORTS TO ADDRESS NUTRITION CONCERNS

### *Key features:*

- Diversified food items, education and services to meet specific nutritional requirements of the relevant beneficiaries, women and children in particular.
- Fortified atta and biscuits as the most cost effective inputs to address malnutrition as well as to gain other objectives, particularly arresting leakage and enhancing academic performance.

The focus of WFP's developmental efforts graduated from a mere 'minimum calorie' to the 'quality of the calories' or the nutrition aspects of food security. Bangladesh WFP, over the period, invented and innovated and adapted diversified approaches aimed at improving the nutritional status of women and children with minimum cost and maximum return.

Initially, WFP provided a mixed ration of food items based on the nutrition requirements of women and children. The food basket included cereals, dried skimmed milk, fish protein and oil. In some instances salt, sugar and pulses were included with the food items.

In its move towards development from rehabilitation and relief, nutrition knowledge has become an important area of training for WFP beneficiaries along with health and hygiene.

A formal collaboration with the National Nutrition Programme (NNP) has been instituted based on the success of a pilot collaborative project with the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Programme (BINP) in one upazila in 2000. Currently 185,000 VGD women along with their children are covered under this joint collaboration in 105 upazilas. The

programme provides participants with nutritional knowledge as well as nutritionally enriched food supplements. An important aspect of the intervention is to promote good nutritional behaviour and practice within the participants and the community.

The most significant component of nutrition interventions within the WFP projects is the fortification of food items. The first fortification started with the vitamin and mineral enriched biscuits for children under the School Feeding Programme in 2001. Under a signed agreement, private factories produce these biscuits in adherence to extensive quality control measures.

The program provides each child with a packet of biscuits for each day of school attendance. A packet of biscuits costs only 6 cents but provides the child with 300 kilocalories and a range of micronutrients contributing about 75% of the daily requirement of vitamin A, zinc, folic acid and iron. International studies by IFPRI and the Tufts University confirmed improved academic performance of the children by 15.7% and improved body mass index (BMI) by an average 0.62 points. Enrolment has increased by 14.2%, attendance rates improved by 5% and the dropout rate has been reduced significantly.



Another major intervention that started in 2002 was the fortification of atta (wheat flour) with vitamins and minerals for distribution among the VGD participants. The milling unit for fortification is run by NGO partners and currently covers 250,000 women through 22 mills. Each VGD woman gets a packet of 25 kg fortified atta per month, which contains seven kinds of vitamins and minerals (Vitamins A, B1, and B2, Folic Acid, Iron, Zinc and Niacin). Fortified atta meets 60 to 80% of the recommended dosage of Kcal and fulfils the recommended micronutrient intake at a cost of only 18 cents

per kilogram. An efficacy study through examination of health and blood characteristics of children by MOST (USAID Micronutrient Program) confirmed a diminishing trend in the vitamin and mineral deficiency against the control population. Apart from the nutritional well being of the family members, the packaged fortified atta has contributed to the drastic reduction in the leakage of food.



Additionally, fortified blended food is distributed under the CNI and TNC components under the IFS programme. Supplementary feeding for pregnant and lactating mothers, adolescents and malnourished children under-2 and nutrition education are the two key activities. Woman and children receive blended food at 250 gm/day and 200 gm/day respectively as a dry ration under CNI. Under TNC, onsite feeding of blended food is provided to adolescents at 150 gm/day/person and at 100 gm/day/child. Regular nutrition monitoring confirmed significant improvement in the BMI of mothers, increased birth weight of babies, and improved health and nutrition status of the adolescents and children.

### *My children are no more a disturbing element!!!*

Nargis (35) from Bagdanga village in Kushtia was divorced by her husband four years ago and left with two young sons. Nargis and the children were left without a single penny or any other asset to survive. Even her parents were unable to support her and the children.

Nargis started working as a maid in a neighbour's house on the day of her divorce. However, her earnings were not adequate for feeding the two children. It was impossible to even provide one full meal a day, as her employer paid her primarily with leftover food from his family's table. When her half-fed sons visited her at work, particularly at lunch time, they were ousted by the mistress like animals. Nargis' poor, small children were considered a disturbing element by the employer, the neighbours and the society. When Nargis was selected to work in an earth raising scheme under Food for Asset (FFA-IFS) by Jagorani Chakra during the last cycle in January 2004, her life began to change. In addition to the food and cash wages, she attended training on poultry rearing as well as social and legal awareness sessions. She was given a loan of Taka 5000 under the hardcore credit programme by Jagorani. Her inability to provide a full meal for the children soon ended. Now she earns about Taka 400 per week by selling the eggs from her poultry, about 18 hens in total, and from the sale of vegetables that she has cultivated on a piece of leased land.

"My two sons are attending school regularly, have minimum clothes to wear and three meals a day. They are no more a 'disturbing element' to anybody", said Nargis with the utmost confidence but with tears in her eyes.





## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

### *Key Elements:*

- An interim emergency response provision within the development budget;
- Recovery and rehabilitation dovetailed with relief to completely address beneficiaries' needs;
- Better preparedness through quick information sharing;
- Contingency plans for emergency response in place, including pre-positioning of food stock and agreed partnerships; and
- Coordination with relevant partners through DER

WFP came to Bangladesh with an express and immediate objective: save lives. In 1974, when it set up its office in Dhanmondi, the mandate was clear. There were about 30 million people reeling under the combined impact of war, floods and famine. They needed food to survive. The first series of actions resulted in the opening of two-thousand feeding centres and, for months, the provision of life-saving food to half a million women and children.

This was perhaps one of the last in-situ feeding, large-scale relief activities by WFP. Most of these feeding centres were run by the national and international NGOs. The national government was still finding its bearing, recollecting itself after a protracted war of liberation from Pakistan. Moving forward from this initial disaster, WFP continued to maintain its presence in the country and quickly found more partners for saving lives and promoting livelihoods in the development arena.

WFP's entered into development work as a natural process in fulfilling its humanitarian mandate. Bangladesh presented itself as a nation that was

regularly ravaged by disasters, mainly floods and cyclones, and greater than 70 % of the population lived in an inescapable cycle of poverty, requiring a previously unheard of long term efforts. Any agency committed to producing enduring results and improvements within the country and for its people, had to organize and engage in long-term planning rather than just respond to each crisis as an immediate incident. Such agencies sought to build partnerships and help the country deal with the overwhelming challenges of the nascent nation.

The development projects always had a provision for an emergency response. This was WFP's unique response to the 'development within disaster' situation in the country. This 'window' or account has a committed 7-10% of the development resources and is activated to fund a small-scale emergency relief measure or to carry out relief interim to a larger, full swing operation of an EMOP.

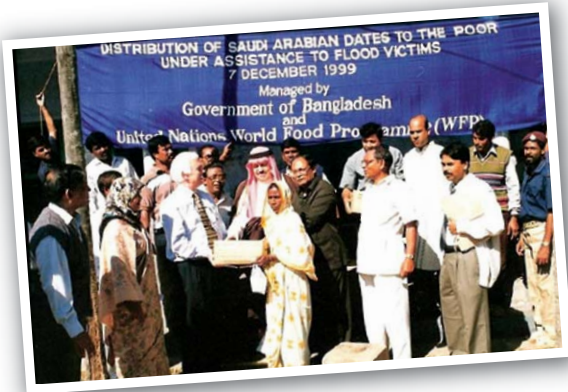
EMOP, short for Emergency Operation, is technically an emergency response operation. EMOPs were planned and implemented to address devastations caused by major disasters, e.g. 1987, 1988, 1998 and 2000 floods and 1990 cyclone. In each instance, WFP led the joint assessment of the emergency needs with the government, donors, UN and non-governmental agencies. Based on the assessments, the necessary emergency response (EMOP) was prepared and implemented.

NGOs soon started to play an active role in the implementation of EMOPs along with the government.

Over the years, rather than merely responding to the current crises, large scale EMOPs came to include rehabilitation with an emphasis on rebuilding and fortifying roads, embankments, and canals. For example, in 1998, the Flood EMOP included seemingly development services to provide people rehabilitation opportunities.



The general food distribution under EMOP has been popularly known as Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme, which has now been undertaken as a regular relief intervention of the government.



WFP EMOP resources are distributed and directly monitored through the VGF. Large scale EMOPs cannot be initiated unless there is an appeal for assistance from the government, which has been a cause of delayed response to emergency situations. Also, launching the intra-

agency assessment formerly contributed to delayed response times for EMOPs because of the time it takes to organize the intra-agency efforts.

The food basket for the EMOP has primarily consisted of cereals supplemented with vegetable oil, pulses, salt and blended food, depending on availability. Since the start of the production of the vitamin and mineral enriched biscuits in Bangladesh, they has been used as a cornerstone item to meet the immediate food requirement, particularly at the initial stages of floods when cooked and ready food is scarce.

WFP has been one of the leading organisations involved in establishing a disaster emergency response (DER) group including the government, donors and NGOs for better preparedness and response in 2001. Disaster monitoring, inter-agency coordination and information sharing have been significantly improved through the DER forum. Mechanism has been established through district level Information Focal Points for quicker collection of ground level information. Information and reports are shared widely through the DER website.

## *Preparedness*

A detailed regional and central level contingency plan has been developed to produce a more expedited and effective response during emergency situations. An effective network between NGOs and other partners has been established for regular monitoring of the situation and immediate assessment and response. More recently, the establishment of a rapid response reserve is being considered through a buffer stock. Improvements have also been made in the monitoring of the emergency operations with results oriented tools and techniques. WFP is maintaining close liaison with other national and local level initiatives to deal with emergencies.

The future activities would focus on:

- Development and capacity building for greater utilization of mapping tools and techniques, forecasting on food security, early warning on disasters, and monitoring;
- Resources for rapid response reserve;
- Strategy for national capacity building; and
- Enhancement of inter-agency cooperation.





## SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- WFP uses the GoB Public Food Distribution System (PFDS).
- WFP-GoB work together in the improvement of the food management and distribution chain.
- The joint GoB-donors' comprehensive food aid leakage study laid the platform of joint-actions for efficient food management.
- Leakage reduced further.
- COMPAS promotes better commodity tracking.

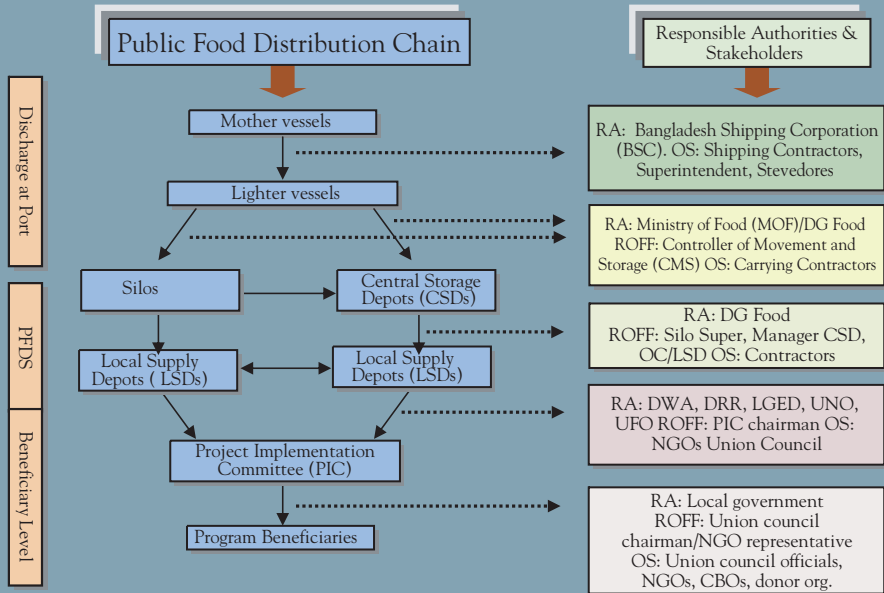


At the beginning of WFP assistance to Bangladesh, the government did not have enough capacity for the storage, movement and distribution of commodities. Therefore, additional support was provided by international and national voluntary agencies. With donor assistance, the government gradually has been able to build

an efficient system for food discharge, storage, movement and distribution.

WFP has been providing technical and logistic support to strengthen the GoB Public Food Distribution System since its inception. The GoB Public Food Distribution System (PFDS) is used for discharge at the port, movement, storage and distribution commodities. Only fifty percent of the local transport storage and handling (LTSH) cost is shared by WFP for its commodities. The existing rate of LTSH cost is US\$ 40 per

# Food Aid Flow Chart



KEY: RA = Responsible Authority; ROFF = Responsible Officer; OS= Other Stakeholders; DWA= Dept. of Women Affairs DRR= Dept. of Relief and Rehabilitation; LGED= Local Govt. Engineering Dept.; UNO= Upazilla Nirbahi Officer; UFO= Upazilla Food Officer; PIC = Project Implementation Committee; CBO = Community based Organization

Source: Study on Food Aid Leakage in Bangladesh, IFPRI, October 2003

ton, of which WFP provides US\$ 20. The GoB bears the total cost for the government and other donors' commodities, which is about 89 percent of the total LTSH cost at the country level. The LTSH rates are now being reviewed, particularly the carrying contingency cost at the distribution level.

After arrival in the port, WFP commodities are merged with the national stock and distribution is made from the storage depots nearest to the distribution points. No loss of WFP commodities is accounted-for in the port and the PFDS. The bill of lading quantity is considered as the total WFP quantity received and replenished based on the quantities finally distributed to beneficiaries.

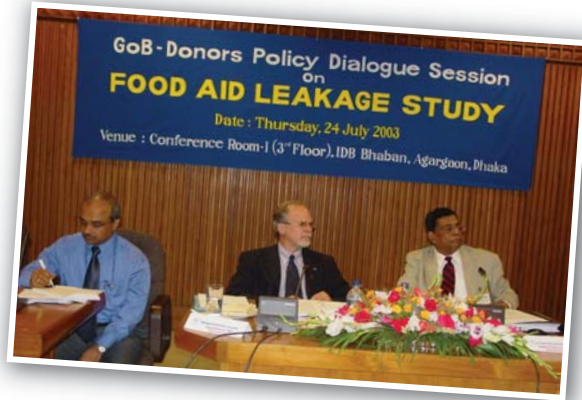
The Bangladesh Government PFDS network covers the entire country to the Upazila level, and to the union level in some areas. The PFDS works

well even when tested by an emergency or crisis situation. Storage and supplies are managed through silos in ports and other strategic locations, central storage depots at the regional level, and local storage depots at the Upazila level.

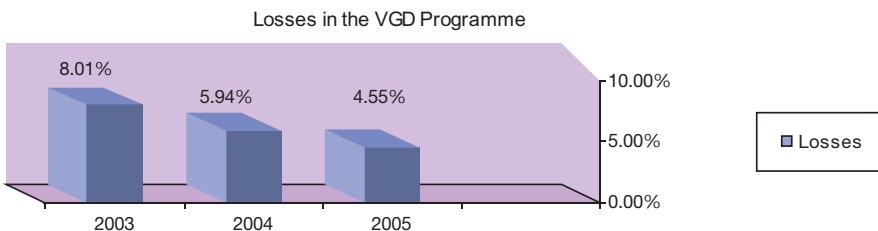
The government appoints contractors to move commodities using railway, waterways and road networks.

## Leakage

WFP's decentralized monitoring helps in controlling misappropriation or leakage of commodities and other project resources. However, there was strong debate about the level of leakage in the food-



aided interventions among different stakeholders. Therefore, a joint GoB-donors study was undertaken to determine the actual level of leakages in the food-aided interventions in 2003. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA conducted the study examining all three stages of food distribution channel: discharge at port, PFDS, and distribution at the beneficiary level. The study revealed 1.5% food grain losses at harbours and 1.02% losses in movement and storage. The total losses in case of VGD programme were 8.01%. The exact VGD breakdown was: 3.5% for short lifting from LSD, 0.9% from the sale of commodities to cover carrying and contingency cost, 3.13% for ad hoc distribution to needy people and pilferage, and 0.48% for under coverage/non-existence of a cardholder. The study also determined 5.56% loss due to sharing of commodities with non-cardholders, who are equally poor but left uncovered due to limited resources.



The food aid leakage study recommended 26 actions for consideration to improve the efficiency of food aid management, and to reduce leakages. The GoB-Donors Steering Committee co-chaired by the Secretary for Economic Relations Division and the Representative of WFP has been continuously monitoring the progress in the implementation of the recommended actions. A joint technical committee and two inter-ministerial task forces have been working at the action level. Many of the actions have already been implemented including improvement of port operations, introduction of scoops for distribution, improved transportation, food tracking and data base, joint-monitoring, revision of carrying and contingency cost, pre-packaging of food (fortified atta). The situation has improved significantly. WFP monitoring findings confirmed a gradual decline in the level of leakage as illustrated. However, the level of leakage is mainly reported in areas with whole grain distribution, which can be contrasted to the significantly lower leakage reported in areas that feature the distribution of packaged fortified atta.

## COMPAS

WFP introduced the Commodity Movement, Processing and Analysis System (COMPAS) in Bangladesh in March 2004. COMPAS is the WFP's global commodity tracking application. It is an electronic system for monitoring the status of commodities from the time they are first requested by the country office through the procurement, shipment and distribution to beneficiaries. After delivery of WFP commodities to Bangladesh, all subsequent storage, processing and delivery data for these commodities are entered into COMPAS locally. The result is a comprehensive on-line picture of the entire WFP food supply chain.

COMPAS enables (1) better planning, analysis and decision-making in the use of food resources, and (2) better reporting and accountability (e.g. Standard Project Reports).

Currently COMPAS is operational in 5 stations in Bangladesh:

1. Dhaka Country Office
2. Rangpur Sub-Office
3. Jessore Sub-Office
4. Chittagong Sub-Office and Port-Office
5. Dhaka Sub-Office





## COORDINATION, CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

### *Key Changes:*

- Coordination role shifts from Disaster Management and Relief to the Planning Commission;
- Line ministries manage and implement the relevant components of the projects;
- Transfer of coordination responsibility of the VGD Programme from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; and
- Extensive capacity building efforts.

During the initial years of WFP assistance to Bangladesh, the government designated the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation to coordinate implementation of various programmes and mediate between the government and WFP on policy matters.

The Ministries of Health, Population Control and Family Planning; Labour and Social Welfare; and Agriculture along with their relevant departments were responsible for execution of the schemes falling under their respective jurisdiction. An inter-ministerial coordination committee comprising concerned ministries was established to review the implementation. WFP contracted CARE to assist and advise government agencies on the implementation of activities. In the early 1980s, the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, later renamed as the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR), assumed the full responsibility of implementation of the WFP assisted projects through the relevant ministries and their departments, and NGOs.

In January 1988, as an outcome of the GoB/WFP Seminar on Food for Human and Infrastructure Development in Bangladesh, a joint GoB-donor task force was established to make recommendations for strengthening institutions for food assisted development known as the SIFAD Task Force. The SIFAD Task Force submitted its recommendations in 1989, which were approved by the SIFAD ministerial Steering Committee in April 1990 and a project was instituted to prepare six action plans and studies with technical assistance from UNDP.

Based on the action plans and recommendations of the SIFAD project, major institutional shifts were made to deal with the food assisted interventions. The important changes included: 1) transfer of the coordination role to the Planning Commission; 2) transfer of full implementation responsibilities of project components to the relevant ministries and departments with direct sectoral responsibilities; 3) transfer of the coordination responsibilities of VGD to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (effected in 1997); 4) integration of FFW and RMP in the Upazila level development planning; 5) incorporation of the VGD Programme with national poverty alleviation works; and 6) various capacity building initiatives for relevant departments.

The shift in the coordination responsibility for the VGD programme to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MWCA) was primarily accomplished based on VGD's strong focus on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. MWCA is the designated ministry to implement all women and children's related development interventions and to address gender discrimination and women's development.

### ***Strengthening the national capacity to manage food assistance and hunger reduction programmes***

WFP included the Strategic Objective toward "strengthening the national capacity to manage food assistance and hunger reduction programmes" in 2004/5. Following this formulation of an express corporate intent, WFP Bangladesh has intensified its in-country efforts to share expertise, transfer skills and strengthen the capacity of the national partners to manage the food assistance/food security programmes

WFP Bangladesh has a long history of implementing such capacity building activities. Partners have been successfully trained in logistics, transportation, procurement, port development and warehousing, food quality and safety monitoring, milling and micronutrient fortification. WFP's Capacity Building and Training Unit concentrates on planning and executing partner training activities.

Along with intensifying such efforts, there are plans to assist the partners to enhance their capacity through a better policy and programme analysis capacity. WFP Bangladesh, with the assistance of DFID, has undertaken a project to enhance analysis and knowledge through:

- Strengthening technical capacity to target, manage and demonstrate results of food-based programmes;
- Stronger engagement in national policy dialogue and food-based social-protection programmes; and
- Knowledge management and knowledge sharing to build collaborative approaches on advocacy on behalf of the ultra-poor.



**Strengthening Technical Capacities:** Capacity-building interventions are linked to specific WFP projects and independent interventions. The goal is to strengthen the efficiency, transparency and impact of partners working on hunger and poverty-reduction. WFP will share and train partners in tools and approaches used in problem analysis (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping), needs assessment techniques and targeting, process monitoring and reporting results-based management.

Extensive efforts have been taken for capacity building of WFP and counterpart and partner staff including:

1. Numerous component-wise training and workshops on programme implementation and monitoring;
2. Policy dialogue and consultation sessions;
3. Study tours and experience sharing visits;
4. Logistics support through providing vehicles, cars and motorcycles;
5. Port assessment and technical support for better port management;
6. Building of VGD food stores; and
7. Supply of office equipment (i.e. computers, printers, photocopying machines, fax machines).

**Policy Dialogue:** WFP has been engaged proactively in policy and technical dialogues in food security to bring the issues of hunger and malnutrition to the forefront. The first national workshop on food



security was organized jointly with the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management in October 2005. A technical cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management and WFP has been developed for further follow-up activities. WFP also

worked with partners including World Bank and DFID in the organization of the workshop on the social protection and safety net in Bangladesh. The outcome of the workshop has already been reflected in the final PRSP.

**Knowledge Management and Advocacy:** To bring the issues of hunger to the forefront, knowledge management focuses on support for operations research and studies that will better inform the policy-making agenda. This includes effective communication of operational lessons learned as well as interpretation of cutting-edge professional and scientific thinking on issues relating to hunger and poverty. A study on

the beneficiary selection process has been completed in order to improve the selection process. The study also has drawn lessons from other relevant interventions in Bangladesh. WFP and its partners are pursuing the implementation of study recommendations.

**Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Through the DER forum WFP has been working with partners to enhance the national capacity to assess emergency needs, design appropriate relief and disaster management projects and deliver a timely response. Some of the key activities undertaken in this regard have been the training of national counterparts in emergency needs assessment, pre-selection of partner NGOs and preparation of contingency plans for emergency response.

## Partnerships

WFP assisted interventions are implemented and improved through a wide range of partnerships with multi-sector agencies including a number of government and non-governmental-agencies, donors and UN agencies. The partnership has been in place since the inception of WFP assistance in Bangladesh.

Apart from the partnership on the programme implementation, special partnering has been made with bilateral donors. WFP interventions have been specially appraised for the sharing of resources by GoB, and multilateral and bilateral donors. Particular interventions have been developed and implemented with special donors' assistance. The key bilateral donors to the programme include Australia, EC, Canada, Japan and more recently India.

Various UN agencies and donors have provided technical support for enhancing development package services, capacity building of implementing partners and strengthening monitoring and evaluation. DFID, GTZ, SDC, Canada, Japan are among such donors. With regard to the fortification of commodities with micronutrients and establishment of the fortification mills, partnership has also been made with the USAID, Canada, and Netherlands through cash and technical support.

A long-term partnership has been agreed and implemented with DFID for overall capacity building. The three major components under the agreement are 1) strategic planning, policy and advocacy; 2) disaster preparedness and response; and 3) knowledge management. Extensive initiatives are being implemented under this partnership, some of which have been explained in chapters 8 and 11 of this report. DFID also provided support for the matching cash funds to utilise and implement the activities supported by GoB resources.

Several interventions have been implemented through partnership with other UN agencies since the start of the WFP assisted operations in Bangladesh. UNHCR has been collaborating in the refugee operation in Cox's Bazar since the beginning, and joint programming has been made with UNICEF in a recent emergency operation. A number of joint UN programmes in different sectors are being developed including:

- Emergency preparedness and responses: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, WFP;
- HIV/AIDS: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, WFP and others;
- Special interventions supporting operations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, WFP; and
- Non-formal education for working children in Dhaka slums: ILO and WFP.

Partnerships would need to be enhanced to obtain support in the continuation and expansion of the fortification and nutrition interventions, capacity building through operational research and impact studies, matching funds for the GoB contribution, development package service, and pilot initiatives such as cash grants to VGD beneficiaries.

### **NGOs as Partners:**

National and international NGOs have played a vital role in the smooth implementation of the programme since the inception of the WFP assistance in Bangladesh. Initially, all NGOs and voluntary organisations were collaborating through the implementation and management of the relief food distribution and the relevant rehabilitation works. Usually, NGOs were implementing component activities within the perspective of their own work and mandates, such as managing relief and training centres.

With the incorporation of the development interventions, the role of NGOs has changed significantly. They have been assigned the responsibility for providing the development package services inclusive of the awareness raising, skills training, and micro-finance. In certain schemes and component, NGOs are vested with direct implementation responsibilities for project activities also.

The role of partner NGOs has been enhanced through the concept and goal of the graduating project participants into the mainstream via development interventions including micro-credit. Some of the NGOs have also been given the lead responsibilities for coordinating activities of smaller NGOs at the local level. All NGO service providers are contracted through specific agreements signed with the relevant government agencies and WFP, and provided with service charges at an agreed rate, which differs intervention to intervention based on the level of services.



## FROM REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS



### Major Evaluation Findings:

WFP projects have been extensively evaluated through internal and external appraisal and evaluation systems and initiatives. The effect and impact of activities and innovations have been reviewed over the time including longitudinal impact analysis. Project activities were changed and adjusted at different stages of expansion to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness. Several of the important findings are incorporated below.

#### General Findings

- The success of WFP projects in Bangladesh has been based on wide-ranging support and effective partnership with the GoB to include numerous ministries and departments; bilateral donors including Australia, EC, Canada, USA, Germany and others; various UN agencies; a myriad of NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs); and communities; and project participants/beneficiaries themselves, mostly women . WFP Bangladesh provides a prominent example of functioning partnerships. The joint approach clearly demonstrates how food aid, in combination with cash and other resources and services, can lead to sustainable human development.<sup>1</sup>
- Targeting of the poorest populations especially women and children is ensured through the WFP assisted interventions indicating the consistency between the target group and development policies and objectives of donors. Targeting based upon spatial information (VAM approach) has become an integral part of the WFP country programme and serves as a model for other donors. It has led to a satisfactory identification of vulnerable groups and provides a precondition for a more effective and efficient use of resources.<sup>1</sup>

- In the context of the frequent and severe disasters resulting in setbacks and the loss of previous development results and resources in Bangladesh, WFP's approach of investing in human capital rather than in the creation of material assets has become more logical and promising, resulting in greater long term impact. The approach of using food aid as a catalyst for socio-economic development has been well reflected in practice.<sup>1</sup>
- WFP Country Programme applies systematic and integrated programming, planning and monitoring of interventions, assigning food aid to a functionally subordinate, complementary role within a wider development policy rationale. This notion has been conceived through a decade-long continuous process of negotiations between GoB and the donor community. It is in line with the cornerstone of the Enabling Development Policy (EDP), which entails inter-alia the mainstreaming of food aid interventions into wider contexts of development, site specific and participatory targeting routines, and enhanced monitoring, which is focused on results, for both medium and long term impact.<sup>1</sup>
- Nutritional initiatives through the diversification of food items and fortification of wheat flour and biscuits with vitamins and minerals have proven to be effective in the improvement of the nutrition status of the project participants and beneficiaries, women and children in particular. Organoleptic and efficacy studies revealed that fortifications have resulted in better edibility in terms of taste, texture and appearance of the food prepared by fortified atta, and contributed to a significant reduction in the vitamin A and iron deficiency among the children.<sup>2</sup>
- Gender mainstreaming, a major prerequisite within the enabling development framework, is well reflected in current WFP interventions. WFP has also embarked on awareness raising on HIV/AIDS prevention through mainstreaming in training curricula and activities.<sup>1</sup>

1. Joint Evaluation of Effectiveness and Impact of the Enabling Development Policy of the World Food Programme: Bangladesh Country Study, Volume 1, December 2004

## Food and cash

- In regards to the general option of food aid versus cash, female beneficiaries clearly preferred food aid, as it would be more difficult for them to retain control over cash. Also, given the extent of children's malnutrition and its consequences for education and girl's livelihoods, food is an indispensable key to development for this target group.<sup>1</sup>
- The marginal propensity to consume food (MPC) out of wheat income transfer (0.61) is higher than the cash income transfer (0.48).<sup>3</sup>
- Consumption effects of targeted food interventions in both developed and developing countries indicate that the MPC for in-kind subsidy transfer is substantially higher than that of cash income.<sup>4</sup>
- The participants, 80% women, under Food for Asset with both food and cash wages, gave favourable judgement of food aid supplies and monetary support provided by the project. The cash share is perceived as equally important because participants can use the money to buy complementary food or to meet other needs. If only cash were provided, the nutritional benefit probably would be smaller, because the temptation exists to use the money for things other than buying food.<sup>1</sup>

2. Wheat Flour Fortification Program in Bangladesh, MOST - the USAID Micronutrient Program, October 2003

3. Nutritional Effects of Cash Versus Commodity-Based Public Works Programs, IFPRI, 1994

4. Davaney and Moffitt 1991; Gracia and Pinstrup-Andersen 1987; Edirisinghe 1987; Senauer and Young 1986; Kumar 1979; Benus, Kmenta and Shapiro 1976.

## Vulnerable Group Development:

### *Income generation for VGD (IGVGD)/Food Security for VGD (FSVGD)*

The important impact of the VGD project has been confirmed in a number of studies and research. The food combined with the development package services (awareness building, skill training, savings and credit) have significantly improved the livelihoods of the VGD women and their households, which includes: <sup>5</sup>



- VGD women have attained access to more meals in terms of both quantity and quality improving the levels of calorie intake;
- Proportion of household expenditures devoted to food has decreased;
- VGD participants are increasingly engaged in income earning activities and earn more after the cycle than they were earning before joining the programme;
- Household assets including ownership of poultry and livestock of VGD women have increased;
- VGD women became aware of social and legal issues and showed better perception regarding gender discrimination;
- VGD women developed financial discipline and entrepreneurial ability;
- Enrolled their children in schools, girls with greater frequency; and
- VGD projects have increased the women's mobility, access to public resources, and made them better able to cope in difficult situations and significantly improved their decision-making ability.

5. Syed M. Hashemi; Rasheda Akhter & Nurul Islam; IFPRI; Tufts University; Management-review-cum-Appraisal; Outcome Survey report; Evaluation reports of IFADEP-1; Joint Evaluation of Enabling Development Policy.

Recent outcome survey results indicate that the participants under FSVGD, with food plus cash initiatives, have acquired more assets than the participants under IGVGD, with only food distribution.

## Integrated Food Security (IFS):

Impact and outcome surveys confirm the following impacts of activities implemented under IFS project: <sup>6</sup>

### *Food for Asset (FFA)*

- Participants' households attained access to more meals in terms of both quantity and quality improving the levels of calorie intake;
- Household income and productive assets increased;
- Training improved participants' literacy and social awareness and contributes to the empowerment of women;
- Helped participants to build community and household assets, e.g. homestead raising protected them from flooding and enable them to grow vegetables;
- Nutrition, food security and hygiene conditions of the participants improved;
- Accumulated savings helped as starter capital;
- Confidence of the group leaders and their social status increased;
- Unity and solidarity among the participants/group members increased; and
- More families sent their children to school.

## Community Nutrition Initiative (CNI)

- Nutritional intake of participants improved;
- Severely malnourished children, who were fed regularly, show improved condition;
- Nutrition education for the participants also had positive influences on non-beneficiaries and the community through sharing of knowledge and practice;
- Women breast-fed more and purchased less artificial baby food;

6. Joint Evaluation of Effectiveness and Impact of the Enabling Development Policy of the World Food Programme: Bangladesh Country Study, December 2004, and Outcome Survey, June 2005

- Homes were cleaner;  
Participant's confidence increased and they embarked on collective actions; and
- Referral system to local health institutions, especially for pregnant women, was ensured and increased the number of safe deliveries;

## School Feeding Programme:

Both longitudinal (with control schools) and specific impact evaluation studies confirmed the following effect and impact of activities under the School Feeding Programme: <sup>7</sup>



- School enrolments increased by 13.4 %, attendance increased by 5% and the probability of drop out rate decreased by 7.5%;
- Academic performance of the children improved;
- Diet/calorie/protein and iron intake of the children improved;
- Children's nutrition status improved: body mass index (BMI) of the participating children increased by an average of 0.62, which represents a 4.3% increase compared to control children; and
- Mothers reported several visible positive effects on the children, e.g. increased interest on study, livelier and happier than before, and a decline in the incidence of illness.

7. Tufts University, 2002 and 2004, IFPRI, 2005

## LESSONS LEARNED: VIEWS EXPRESSED BY PROJECT PARTNERS



Several consultation sessions were organised with experienced field level officials of key implementing partners from both GoB (Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation, Department of Women Affairs, Local Government Engineering Department, Water Development Board, Department of Fisheries), and NGOs (Jagorani Chakra and Eco-Social Development Organisation [ESDO]). Some of the officials had been involved with their relevant interventions since inception and demonstrated substantive knowledge. The key opinions about the WFP assisted interventions with agreement by majority have been included below.

1) WFP assistance, since its inception in 1974, has had a tremendous impact on the improvement in the overall food security and nutrition status of the poorest people in Bangladesh. WFP has helped the poorest people to improve their livelihoods, health and nutrition status (particularly for women and children), and empowered them with awareness on social and legal issues. The empowerment of women is particularly commendable. However, the foremost impact of WFP assistance is that it has made major contributions toward price stabilisation, particularly of cereals, as well as in the reduction of the national poverty level, through protection from the further worsening of the hunger situation and the avoidance of a major famine situation. WFP has played the major role in developing and improving the country's communication through building roads, flood protection and improvement of the irrigation facilities specifically through the construction and maintenance of embankments and channels, fish protein supply, and social forestry. During recurring disaster situations, WFP assistance has been vital, along with the government, in terms of both resources and management. In several aspects of national development, WFP has played the pioneering role.

2) While the current activities should be continued and expanded, some of the interventions, which have been discontinued, should be

reconsidered. The most demanded intervention was the Post Monsoon Rehabilitation project, later reconstituted as the Rural Maintenance Programme (RMP). The key rationales for such proposal were as follows:

- The maintenance work is required to keep the roads pliable year-round and to protect the embankments from damage by monsoon and floods. The GoB funds and other donor resources are inadequate to do the job;
- RMP creates reasonably longer term employment opportunities for the poorest (100% women) participants;
- The performance of RMP is absolutely results oriented as the women are paid only for the work they complete, and the progress can be monitored easily through visible road conditions;
- It is a self-targeted program, reaching the poorest of the poor women as no better-off poor women are willing to work on the roads/embankments within the Bangladesh societal context;
- It completely negates the welfare concept and is seen as full-time job;
- Development package services (human and life skills training, savings and credit) enable the women and their households to achieve better and more sustainable livelihoods;
- The accumulation of savings and seed capital of the RMP women is higher than other interventions due to the food and cash wage combination and mandatory bank accounting; and
- It has an overwhelming effect in the empowerment of women, as participants must be mobile and work outside their homes and communities. Women build their leadership capacity better through group and self-managerial tasks.

The other components that were proposed to be reconsidered includes fisheries and forestry for their proven impacts on the improvement of the livelihood of the poorest through creation of long term income opportunities, as well as the programme contribution towards enhanced access to fish protein and protection of environment.

3) There was a strong feeling for covering all WFP project participants/beneficiaries under the fortification interventions. The fortified atta has been considered the most effective project input for both improvement of the nutritional status of the beneficiaries and arresting leakage through packaging, which has the added benefits of making it easier to distribute and, thus, less time consuming.

- 4) Expansion of the Community Nutrition Initiative (CNI) to all areas of Bangladesh has been strongly recommended for its proven visible impacts in the improvement of the children and mothers' nutritional condition and nutritional awareness in the community.
- 5) While appreciating WFP for pioneering and promoting very effective partnerships including GoB-NGO collaboration, some partners also indicated the need for further streamlining of partnerships, in particular among and within the government agencies, e.g. Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR) and Department of Women Affairs (DWA).
- 6) The process for joint selection of the VGD participants by GoB and NGO officials in the current cycle has been greatly appreciated. Partners recognised a better selection in this cycle and recommended further promotion of the initiative.
- 7) Distribution of biscuits at the initial stages of floods as immediate relief has also been highly appreciated. The affected people need the dry food at the early stages of the crisis and the biscuits gained wide recognition as one of the good dry and nutritious food.



## LESSONS LEARNED: VIEWS EXPRESSED BY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/BENEFICIARIES



A total of eight group discussions were held with current and former programme participants of IGVGD, FSVGD, IFS (FFA, TNC and CNI), and Fisheries. All of the participants were women with exception of Fisheries, which included both male and female participants. In general, all participants expressed an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the relevant interventions and described a wide range of benefits with regard to their improved livelihoods, social status and self-esteem. The following items reflect the highlights of the discussions:

- 1) Participants who were involved in work (Food for Assets) appeared to be more confident and honoured as they considered the food and cash wage as payment for their labour, and not a welfare commodity. The activities discussed in the users group include self-management and distribution of food, joint decision making on work, and leadership experience.
- 2) Fortified atta rations were greatly appreciated by the VGD participants, mainly due to no loss and the added nutritional value. All the participants know the fortified atta as "pushti atta" and were not ready to sell or share this commodity. Most of them stated that they have seen the nutritional results themselves, e.g. felt healthier, less illness in the family, their children look better than other poor children etc. However, they also expressed that the atta should be distributed on a timely basis (in few areas distribution was delayed due to non-availability of wheat in the area).
- 3) Most of the FSVGD participants expressed that they could acquire more assets due to the fifty percent cash resource. They also recognised that this was possible mainly due to the fact that they received payments for five months' in one instalment. They expressed serious concern about the irregular disbursement of cash. On two occasions, relevant NGO workers were harassed for the irregular payment of cash.



4) However, there was a clear split among the participants about the food plus cash ration. More than sixty percent of the women (14 of 22) in one FSVGD group opined that the poorest of the poor (like them) would benefit from receiving only food but in an increased amount in order to meet their daily food needs. They also said that even with the cash, they could not meet their food needs, as they had to spend the cash for other emergency needs. One woman reported that she was forced to spend whole amount of her five months cash (Taka 750) to repay her husband's loan. All of the participants expressed that they have more control over food than cash.

5) Other concerns raised about cash disbursement include the reluctance of banks to open and operate so many individual accounts and the bank charge deducted from their amount.

6) Participants expressed that they would like to have access to micro-credit to start their income-generating activities. Ideally, the micro-credit would feature low interest, easy disbursement and an easy repayment process. Most of them, particularly former participants, were happy with the loan facilities provided by the NGOs (JC and ESDO) under the hardcore micro-credit initiative. It may be noted that as reported by NGOs, more than 94 percent of IFS and 75 percent of VGD ex-participants have been covered under the hardcore poor credit programme of PKSf with a 10% simple interest rate.

7) The participants and the community members under the Community Based Initiative (CNI) demonstrated strong appreciation of the intervention for the awareness, nutrition supplement, and referral services. They strongly requested further expansion of the initiatives as they had observed fantastic improvement in the nutrition status of their children, who previously were severely malnourished and were now healthier and more active. They also noted the changes in the health of pregnant women and lactating mothers. In their communities, the problems of maternal mortality and low birth weight babies appear to have been reduced significantly.

Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation, GoB apex body for providing micro-credit funds through partner organizations.



## CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES



WFP assisted interventions in Bangladesh have been highly commended by all stakeholders including the government, donors, implementing partners and, most significantly, by the participants/beneficiaries. Some of the interventions like the VGD programme have been considered as model programmes for other global operations by different evaluators and experts.

The major shift in the programme has been the incorporation of development objectives into welfare projects. This shift represents meeting a basic need for Bangladesh toward attaining the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. It has demonstrated the unique instance of human development through the use of food as the entry level incentive to the ultra-poor for participation in essential development services and activities.

WFP-assisted interventions played a major role in addressing gender concerns in Bangladesh and have established citable examples of women empowerment.

Another key achievement of WFP projects is the innovation of very cost effective and efficient nutrition interventions through fortification of food including the unique production modality for wheat flour and biscuits. The impact of the nutrition interventions has been highly significant and widely recognised.

However, evaluators and monitors have also identified some key areas that need further sharpening and improvement, which are summarised below.

- Invest more in building management capacity of the national partners and government, in particular;
- Review the sustainability issues of the project benefits with particular focus on graduation of the participants into mainstream development programmes and continued access to micro-credit;

- Review of the skills training trades and process, i.e. whether they are sufficiently professional and meet the actual market needs and satisfy the participants' requirements;
- Involve male family members in the relevant awareness building sessions to make the gender mainstreaming more effective;
- Further strengthen the role of NGOs in the VGD women selection; and
- Improve results based monitoring through the integration of an impact evaluation system to track the qualitative changes over time and promote active participation of partners in the monitoring.





## ANNEXES



### Background

In the 1970s, Bangladesh was classified as one of the least developed of the developing countries (LDCs); the most seriously affected countries (MSAs); a food priority country demanding special attention because of the seriousness of its food problems; and as one of the most depressed countries of the world requiring urgent action against the problems of mass poverty and underdevelopment. In addition to, or perhaps because of, its characteristics as disaster prone and densely populated, 80 percent of the 800 million people of Bangladesh were under the poverty line with an annual per capita income of US \$ 72. Nearly 60 percent of the population suffered from serious deficiencies in calorie intake and 80 percent from vitamin deficiency. The country was accorded top priority in the allocation of assistance from the United Nations' system including WFP.

However, Bangladesh has now become a promising Asian country and has made impressive gains in key human development indicators, ranking 139 out of 177 countries in the 2005 Human Development Report, UNDP. The poverty level has dropped from 50 to 40 percent from 1991 to 2003. During the same period, the under-nourishment rate of the population dropped from 35 to 30 percent. However, the country still faces considerable challenges to sustain and build on these achievements and to remain on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. An estimated 28 million ultra-poor still survive on less than 1,805 Kcal a day with many more living marginally and at risk of losing life and livelihood to recurrent natural disasters.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (October 2005) of the Government of Bangladesh includes the improvement of food security, tackling malnutrition, reducing income disparities, education, gender, and protection against inevitable natural shocks as key elements.

The UN World Food Programme has been providing food assistance to Bangladesh since 1974. Initially started as a welfare relief operation with focus on center based feeding interventions, the WFP assistance gradually evolved to rehabilitation (1979 -1987) and to pilot development interventions between 1988 and 1990. Based on the initial successes of the development pilots, development changes were adapted during the period from 1991 to 1996. Finally, full-fledged development interventions were introduced in the expansions covering the period from 1997 to 2000 in line with the WFP's global Enabling Development Policy and FAAD (Food Assistance and Development) priorities.

This long period saw experimentation and implementation of a diverse array of multi-dimensional programme interventions. The two major programmes include: 1) Vulnerable Group Development with interventions like Income Generation for VGD/UPVGD, Women Training Centers (WTC), Institutional Feeding (IF) and Group Leaders Extension Workers (GLEW); and 2) Food For Work/Rural Development with interventions like Local Initiative (LI) Schemes (roads/canals/ponds/earth raising etc), Water (embankments/ irrigation canals etc), Road (mostly Growth Centre Connecting Roads {GCCR} and other feeder roads), Fisheries (excavation and re-excavation of ponds and other water bodies), Forestry (mainly tree plantation and caring), and Rural Maintenance (RM) of roads/embankments etc.

The transition from relief to rehabilitation and then to development mainly happened through the gradual introduction and combination of inputs and services. Food remained the primary and basic input to enable the programme participants/beneficiaries to participate in the development activities as income transfer for their lost opportunities. The added package services include awareness on social and legal issues, training on income generating skills, access to micro-finance (savings and credit), and linking with the mainstream development programmes of partners. The evolution involved sharing responsibilities among multi-faceted government and non-government agencies including Community Based Organizations (CBO) and the communities themselves.

During the period, food inputs had also been diversified through fortification of food items such as the atta and high-energy biscuits with selected micronutrients to meet the challenge of malnutrition. The fortified atta and biscuits are distributed in packets of the entitled quantity, which has reduced the distribution loss significantly.

Targeting the most food insecure poorest people, particularly women and children, remained the prime focus of all of the interventions.

**The current WFP Country Programme** (2001 to 2005 with one year extension to December 2006) combines the aims of poverty alleviation with the creation of food and nutrition security among the extreme poor in Bangladesh. The major interventions under the Country Programme include the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Integrated Food Security (IFS), and Nutrition for Education (NE).

**The VGD (Vulnerable Group Development) Programme** is the world's largest development intervention that exclusively targets the vulnerable women. Currently, 750,000 participants (about 3.75 million beneficiaries) from the ultra-poor households receive a monthly food ration of 30 kg of wheat or 25 kg of fortified wheat flour "atta" per woman and a package of development services inclusive of life skills (awareness on social and legal issues), income generation training, savings and credit for a cycle of 24 months. The ultimate goal is to bring sustainable improvement in the food security and nutritional status of the ultra-poor households through mainstreaming (graduation) of the VGD women into regular NGO development programmes after the termination of food assistance. The goal is that development results earned during the food assistance period should be sustained, and the participant women should be provided with opportunities to continually access training and group-based development services including micro-credit to further improve their lives.

**The Food Security for VGD (FSVGD) component** of the VGD programme provides a combination of both food (15 kg atta) and cash (Taka 150) to the VGD women as monthly entitlements. Thus, the women have the option to use the cash for other food items and essentials.

**The IFS (Integrated Food Security) Programme** aims at enabling the development of the ultra-poor population of rural Bangladesh with an emphasis on household food security, disaster preparedness, and the improvement of the nutritional status of vulnerable groups concentrated in very-high and high food insecure areas. Currently, about 920,000 beneficiaries are covered under the three components of the IFS programme. The Food for Assets (FFA) component builds and promotes community assets and relies on the community participation and planning. The FFA participants (men and women) receive food and cash wages combined with development package services inclusive of life skills and income generation training, savings and credit provided by NGOs.

The Training and Nutrition Centre (TNC) component builds life and income generation skills of women and adolescents through centre based training, and the Community Nutrition Initiative (CNI) component provides supplementary nutritious food to children between 6 and 72 months of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The CNI also provides training on nutrition.

**The Nutrition for Education (School Feeding) programme** currently covers about 750,000 primary school children in highly food insecure areas of Bangladesh. Children receive an early snack of micronutrient-fortified biscuits on each school day. The biscuits cover 75 percent of the recommended daily allowance of the main vitamins and minerals for the children and contain 300 Kcal. This intervention has successfully contributed in increasing school enrolment and attendance, reducing the drop out rate and improving the nutritional status of the children.

In addition to these three major activities under the Country Programme, WFP assists the refugees from Myanmar in Cox's Bazar under **PRRO** and the people affected by the 2004 flood under **EMOP**.

In addition to aforementioned activities, the following joint-interventions have been agreed to and are in the implementation process in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in collaboration with other UN agencies:

- UNICEF/WFP partnership to provide nutritional support (fortified biscuits) to pre-primary school children in the CHT.
- UN Joint Health Initiative in the CHT in which WFP will provide blended food to pregnant/lactating mothers and children less than 2 years of age, as part of the integrated health/nutrition programme that includes life skills training.
- UNDP/WFP parallel programme for Economic Empowerment in CHT that includes rural road maintenance and other Food for Asset activities linked to UNDP's economic empowerment programme.



এই জমির মালিক  
মদন মোহন চক্রবর্তী  
তপাছিনা  
CSBSA ভাটপাড়া পল্লী-১০০৪  
জমিদারপরিবার ৮/১৯৬৬



এই জমির মালিক  
স্বত্বস্বত্ব  
তপছিনা  
CS&SA ভাড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ-১৯৯৯  
অনিয়ন্ত্রিত।/১৯৯৯



### *Concerns for the review*

Over the years WFP and donors have undertaken a number of internal and external impact evaluations, case studies and research projects. The outcomes of these studies and evaluations revealed many successes through the interventions. Most of the activities have proven effective in improving the food and nutritional security of the poorest, and have helped the poorest build their capacity to earn income and sustain a better life. Apart from the evaluations, WFP has an inbuilt comprehensive regular monitoring system to track the results/performance at the process, output and outcome levels.

However, the need remains to review and refine the interventions and activities and to define the appropriate level of success and sustainability. Against the background of the long experience and many notable successes, there are lessons to be drawn out and areas worthy of further examined for future improvement. The highlights are listed below:

1. Identify and analyze evidence of and advocate for activities that worked well in improving and sustaining the food security and nutritional status of ultra-poor households;
2. Revisit and redefine (if need be) the current programme objectives and success criteria;
3. Improve and strengthen ongoing interventions and replicate in the future Country Programme;
4. Develop an inventory of best practices for WFP and other development partners, particularly GoB; and
5. Help GoB enhance its knowledge and capacity to manage food-based interventions in order to reduce hunger effectively through the enactment of the appropriate policies and strategies.

### *Specific Objectives and Scope of Review*

**The objectives of the review are two folds:**

1. To analyze the successes and achievements against set objectives and targets over the last thirty years within the context of the time

and situation that the development interventions were introduced and implemented, with particular focus on the period since 1986 when the major development shifts have taken place; and

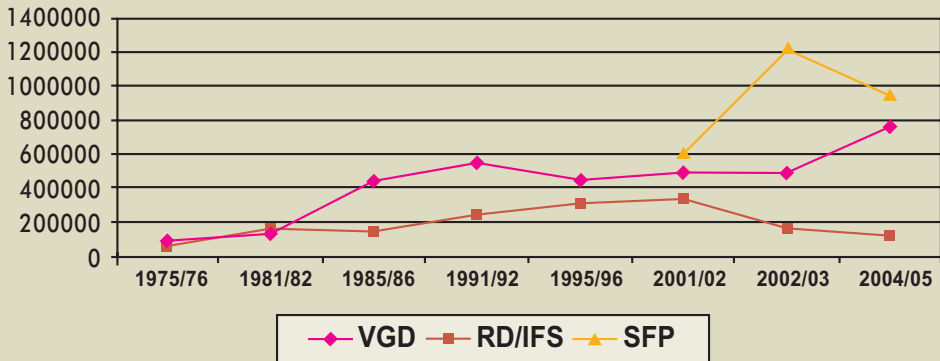
2. To identify the practices that have proven most effective in the achievement of the defined level of success (as per the WFP FAAD and strategic priorities, gender policies, and the Country Programme) toward ensuring sustainable food and nutrition security in the most vulnerable households, and these best practices should be incorporated into the next Country Programme/CP Action Plans/Annual Work Plan.

## *Methods of the Review*

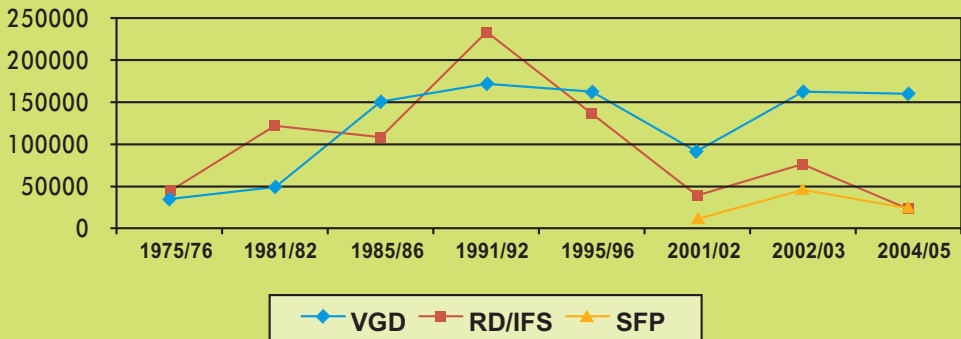
The following methods were used for the review exercise:

1. Desk review made of the available programme documents, appraisal and evaluation reports and findings in a chronological manner with analysis to identify the lessons learned and best practices;
2. Discussions held with key WFP programme and field staff, GoB line agencies and NGO service providers;
3. Field visits to gain practical knowledge and validate the findings and innovative ideas through key informant interviews of the relevant WFP field officials, GoB [Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR), Department of Women Affairs (DWA), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Water Development Board (WDB), Department of Fisheries (DOF)] and NGO officials [Jagorani Chakra (JC) and Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO)] in Jessore, Kushtia, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts; and
4. Focus Group Discussion sessions organized among the current and former programme participants/beneficiaries of VGD, FSVGD, Forestry, FFA, CNI and TNC to gain insight into their perceptions and expectations.

## Trend of WFP Programme Participants/Beneficiaries in numbers (1975 to 2005)

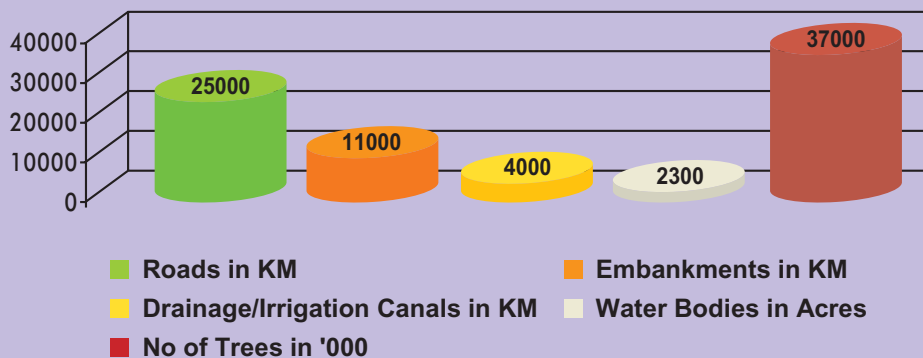


## Trend of WFP Resources in MT of Food (1975 to 2005)

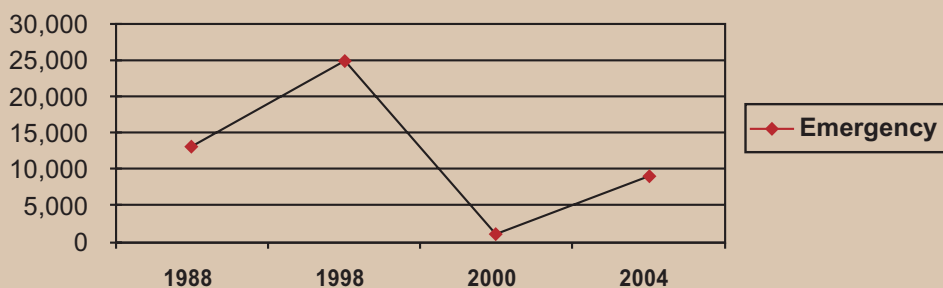


*The graphs exclude emergency assistance and assistance to refugees from Myanmar*

## Creation of Assets under RD/IFS Programmes (1975 to 2005)



## Number of People Assisted During Major Emergency (in, 000)



## Number of Refugees from Myanmar Assisted under PRRO

