



MEETING THE UNDERNUTRITION CHALLENGE (MUCH) IN BANGLADESH

The Government of Bangladesh has set access to food and nutritious diets as one of its priorities. Thanks to the government’s pro-poor policies, an increase in maternal literacy and improved access to health and hygiene services, the country has achieved remarkable success in reducing stunting in children under the age of five in recent decades, and the prevalence of undernourishment dropped from 16 percent in 2016 to 10 percent in 2020. That said, challenges to food security and nutrition (FSN) remain in the country, including the threats to agricultural production and livelihoods that are posed by climate change.

The Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge (MUCH) project was therefore designed to build upon the success of Bangladesh’s National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (2005–2014) and to work towards increasing FSN through the provision of policy advice and capacity-development activities for government staff and other stakeholders so that they can successfully implement, monitor and assess the effects of FSN policies and strategies.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project provided technical support for the formulation of Bangladesh’s second Country Investment Plan (CIP2) 2016–2020 on Nutrition-sensitive Food Systems, as well as for the annual monitoring of the Plan’s implementation progress. The CIP3 (2021–2030) on Resilient Nutrition-sensitive and Sustainable Food Systems was also developed. A National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2020) and a related Plan of Action were formulated, as were National Dietary Guidelines (2020). A Strategic Plan (2022–2026) was developed for the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) and the harmonization of food standards with the Codex Alimentarius was supported. The project fostered the formulation of more than 11 200 food safety regulations.

Capacities in FSN were strengthened for officials of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU), Dhaka City Corporation, Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Bangladesh Institute of Research and Training in Applied Nutrition (BIRTAN), Departments of Fisheries and Livestock, and subnational-level Nutrition Coordination Committees, and a Nutrition Training Manual was developed in cooperation with the Bangladesh Institute of Research and Training in Applied Nutrition (BIRTAN) and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC). Government officials also benefited from international and domestic visits and study programmes. The engagement of youth and adolescents in FSN was fostered through the Nutrition Olympiads, held in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and through the piloting of activities for a Nutrition Challenge Badge (NCB). An e-learning platform for youth on FSN-related topics was also created.

The project led the formulation of a national pathway document for the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021. As part of joint United Nations (UN) support, technical inputs for the achievement of the Global Action Plan (GAP) for reducing child wasting in Bangladesh and for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative were provided.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 8 492 568

Duration
January 2017–May 2023

Resource Partner
The European Union

Partners
Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food (MoFood), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)

Beneficiaries
The Government of Bangladesh, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector actors, research institutions, development partners, and men, women and children experiencing acute and chronic food insecurity and malnutrition

IMPACT

By creating an enabling environment for eradicating food insecurity and malnutrition in Bangladesh, the results of the project are expected to lead to increased FSN in the country.



ACTIVITIES

- The project provided policy assistance and capacity strengthening for the formulation and updating of cross-sectoral FSN policy and investment frameworks, as well as for the timely provision of FSN information and analysis.
- Capacity development was also supported for the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the FPMU and the policy units of other ministries.
- Government staff attended training on FSN and received support in the administration of an institutional needs assessment and in the implementation of organizational development plans.
- The project fostered connections among FSN stakeholders in various sectors, as well as multistakeholder dialogue on FSN.
- Linkages between the design and monitoring of frameworks for FSN policy and investment were created.
- The project supported the improvement of the Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS), the development and implementation of FSN research, and the production of regular monitoring reports on the food situation.
- The inclusion of a specific FSN budget code in Bangladesh’s Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS) was promoted.
- The FPMU received support to coordinate the monitoring of the implementation of the CIP and other FSN-related policy frameworks.
- Technical meetings, workshops and consultations on nutrition-sensitive themes were organized.
- Analyses of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) were carried out.



Project Title
Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge (MUCH):
Strengthening the enabling environment for
food security and nutrition

Project Code
FAO: GCP/BGD/063/EC
Donor: ACA/2016/378-962

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