

Bangladesh



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General Country Profile



Total population: 166.50¹ million.
Percentage of population under age 18: 59.3 million (35.6²% of total population).
Percentage of population 10-19 years: 34.6 million (20.8³% of total population).



Annual population growth: 1.37 per cent (SVRS 2019, BBS).



Bangladesh is a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC).



50 million people live in urban areas, millions of them in underserved slums where they face multiple overlapping deprivations. Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels. This has led to an increase in the intensity and frequency of natural disasters, as well as coastal saltwater intrusion.



A limited amount of religiously and politically motivated violence has changed the security landscape and operating environment in Bangladesh over the past few years.



The first COVID-19 case was reported in Bangladesh on 8 March 2020. The spread of the infection remained low until the end of March, but has since risen steeply. As of 21 September 2020, Bangladesh had identified over 350,000 positive cases with nearly 5,000 deaths⁴.

[1] Sample Vital Registration System of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (SVRS-BBS) 2019, published in 2020.

[2] SVRS-BBS for total population and BBS projected population by single years for proportion of age groups.

[3] MICS 2019.

[4] <https://corona.gov.bd>; accessed 22 September 2020 08:55.



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Bangladesh Key Indicators on Children

Indicator	Value	Year	Source
Under-five mortality	40 per 1,000 live births	2019	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)
Stunting in under-five children	28%	2019	MICS
Primary school net attendance (adjusted ⁵)	86%	2019	MICS
Lower secondary school attendance	58%	2019	MICS
Household sanitation (improved sanitation facilities which are not shared)	64%	2019	MICS
Birth registration (under-five children)	56%	2019	MICS
Child marriage (females 20–24 years married before age 18)	51%	2019	MICS
Child labour (5–17 years)	2.9 million	2019	MICS and population projections from 2011 census
Percentage of children age 1-14 years who experienced any violent discipline method during the last one month	88.8%	2019	MICS



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[5] Ratio presented in the indicator are “adjusted” since they include not only primary school attendance, but also secondary school attendance in the numerator.



Biggest challenges facing children and UNICEF targets for 2017-2021t

- The exodus of **Rohingya refugees** from Myanmar to Bangladesh since August 2017 has created a humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar, already one of the poorest performing districts in terms of child-related indicators. With the new influx, the current total number of Rohingyas who have fled into the district, plus the affected population in host communities, has reached 1.1 million, including 585,000 children⁶.
- **Adolescents** face multiple deprivations. Failure to invest in this large segment of the population during this important demographic transition will depress Bangladesh's development trajectory.
- **Child marriage** remains persistently high. Little more than 51 per cent of girls aged 20-24 are married before the age of 18 – this is one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world.
- Employment opportunities, driven by the growing ready-made-garment sector, along with forced migration of communities affected by disasters and climate change, have led to **unplanned urban growth**. Rapid urbanization has placed immense pressure on cities' limited land and over-stretched and under-resourced services. Bangladesh's urban slum dwellers are amongst the most severely deprived in the country.
- **Maternal and newborn mortality** is stagnating, and the Universal Health Coverage index is 50 per cent (WHO 2018): access to quality health care and high out-of-pocket expenditure (67%) are major challenges (BNHA 1997-2015).
- Around 4.5 million children (**28%**) in Bangladesh are **stunted**. Nearly ten per cent are wasted, and half a million need immediate nutritional care to prevent mortality.
- The country is reaching the last mile in the fight against **open defecation** (only 1.5 per cent in 2019) and promoting the scale-up of safely managed sanitation for all. While the country has almost universal access (98 per cent) to improved water sources, only half the population has access to safe water.
- Access and quality of **education** remains a major concern in some geographic locations especially in the urban slums, tea gardens, coastal areas and islands and Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is also a concern among children with disabilities, those affected by disasters, and the Rohingya refugees. Despite nearly 100 per cent enrolment in primary education, only 38 per cent of Grade 3 students achieved competencies in maths and 47 per cent in Bangla. For Grade 5 students the rates are 24 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, and only 44 per cent of Grade 8 achieved mastery of English⁷.
- **Violence against children** in all settings is high in Bangladesh. An estimated 88.5% of children between 1-14 years old experience any form of violent discipline in their homes. In the education system violence is also prevalent despite the High Court directive on prohibition of corporal punishment in schools.
- 7 million under-five children have not had their **births registered**⁸. Registration of children at birth is the recognition of their existence before law and ensures protection from violation of rights.



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UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) 2017-2021: selected targets



- Reduce the percentage of girls aged 15-19 years currently married from 34 to 20 per cent.
- Number and proportion of districts and City Corporations that have functioning mechanisms/ platforms to review situation analysis and identify children-related issues and priorities.
- Reduce the percentage of girls aged 15-19 years with low body mass index (<18.5 kg/m²) from 25 to 20 per cent.
- Number of social service workforce including, Union and Urban social workers skilfully conducting early identification and case management of vulnerable and affected children.
- Targeted parents/primary caregivers reached by programmes addressing child-rearing practices (Child Development-Child Rights Perspective).
- Increase the proportion of live births attended by skilled health personnel⁹ (doctor, nurse, midwife, auxiliary midwife).
- Increase the proportion of newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of birth.
- Provide 1 million people with safely managed sanitation and 1.2 million with safely managed water.

[6] 2020 Global Needs Overview. Includes 810,000 Rohingya refugees (439,020) plus affected host communities in the seven most-affected unions in Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-district.

[7] National Students Assessment (NSA) report, DPE, MoPME 2017.

[8] SVRS 2019 and MICS 2019

[9] GAP Indicator P1.1

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Type of UNICEF programme, presence and partnerships and salient issues

- 2017-2021 Country Programme Document (CPD) for Bangladesh is in its fourth year of implementation. It has a budget envelope of USD 400 million (USD 100 million regular resources and USD 300 million other resources).
- The 2019 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal was USD 152.2 million. The 2020 HAC requirements are USD 135.3 million, which includes the USD 111.3 million required under the 2020 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya response, as well as additional funds for the Humanitarian Response Plan and emergency preparedness nationwide.
- CPD outcomes have been formulated following a life-cycle approach: (a) newborns/infants and their mothers, and young children; (b) children of primary-school age; and (c) adolescents. These programme outcomes are supported by an overarching component (d) of social inclusion and an increasing awareness of children's rights. Considering the evolving situation of COVID-19, UNICEF added a dedicated outcome for COVID-19 response in 2020. The office developed a dashboard¹⁰ on Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh for monitoring and analytical purposes.
- The central office is in Dhaka and it focuses on strategic engagement and programme design, management and technical oversight, with functional accountabilities for upstream policy work, direct implementation in urban slums and peri-urban activities in Dhaka. Seven field offices and one sub-office work on divisional planning, monitoring and implementation, and convergence at field-level.
- Generation Unlimited (GenU) Bangladesh was launched in 2019 as a Government led initiative and private sector driven multi-stakeholder platform, formed by government, 15 industry associations, UN agencies, NGO representatives and youth groups. GenU Bangladesh is chaired by the Principal SDG Coordinator of the Prime Minister's Office with support from World Bank, ILO, BRAC, a2i and UNICEF as foundational partners. To enable catalytic progress, for young people to become productive and engaged members of society, ongoing work focuses on minimizing the negative impact of COVID-19 on the overall agenda of connecting Secondary Education and Training to Entrepreneurship and Employment opportunities.
- Using innovative approaches, UNICEF is supporting the Government of Bangladesh to improve social service delivery through integrated information-management systems that strengthen real-time monitoring for decision-making and transparency. It is also developing e-learning platforms for better learning outcomes and digitally engaging youth and adolescents to create demand for better services, skills development and employability.
- UNICEF Bangladesh has established a private sector engagement and resource mobilization team to support the integration of the private sector into the Country Programme. The team works to scale both international and national partnerships with private sector actors including corporates, private trusts and foundations, major donors and individuals covering the full spectrum of UNICEF engagement with the private sector. To date, more than 100 businesses in the ready-made garment sector have begun to integrate children's rights into their operations, and major partnerships have been secured with national businesses which support resource mobilization and programmatic scaling.
- UNICEF Bangladesh has partnerships with all major public donors to Bangladesh including the US government, Japan, BMZ/KfW, EU, FCDO, GAVI, SIDA, SDC, GAC, CERF, GPE, the Netherlands and the World Bank to support the government in its efforts to improve the lives of children and women in Bangladesh.
- There are 325 staff members (77 IP, 173 NO, 75 GS) as of 20 September 2020



Country Team

- Tomoo Hozumi, Representative.
- Veera Mendonca, Deputy Representative.
- Alain Balandi Domsam, Deputy Representative Operations
- Shairose Mawji, Chief Field Services.
- Jenny Gamming, Chief Communication, Advocacy and Partnership (CAP)
- Ezatullah Majeed, Chief Field Office, Cox's Bazar.
- Mia Seppo, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Bangladesh.



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[10] <https://dashboard.unicefbangladesh.org>