



- USAID contributed to a significant reduction in under-5 mortality since 1990, enabling Bangladesh to achieve its Millennium Development Goal for reducing child deaths by 66 percent.
- By expanding the use of fertilizer technology and seed varieties, USAID has enabled more than one million farmers to boost rice production by an average of 7 percent.
- USAID brings communities and government bodies together to protect 1.8 million acres of critical ecosystems in wetlands and forested areas.

Photo credit: Shaifiqu Alam Kiron/Save the Children

Country Profile

With its democratic traditions and active participation in international peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh is a key U.S. strategic partner in South Asia. Yet, with nearly one in three people living in poverty, the country faces immense development challenges and today finds itself at an important crossroads in its democratic evolution. The United States is helping address the underlying factors that threaten Bangladesh's role as a voice for progress and stability in the region and beyond.

Bangladesh is committed to becoming a middle-income country by 2021, its 50th year of independence. USAID assistance supports this goal by promoting economic opportunity, effective health and education services, food security, democratic institutions and practices, resilience to climate change, and preparedness and response to natural disasters.

OUR WORK

With a population of nearly 160 million in a low-lying, riverine area the size of Iowa, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and climate change-vulnerable countries in the world. Despite these challenges, the country's economy has sustained average annual growth rates of about 6 percent over the past 15 years, helping Bangladesh cut its poverty rate in half. Bangladesh is now the world's second largest exporter of ready-made garments and has achieved self-sufficiency in rice production. Since the 1990s, maternal mortality has declined by two-thirds and female literacy has doubled.

At the same time, more than 45 million people continue to live in poverty, Bangladesh still has an overall food deficit, and thousands of preventable deaths of mothers and young children occur each year. Due to climate change and rapid urbanization, Bangladesh is losing up to 1 percent of its arable land every year. And, as a young democracy, the country faces highly centralized and weak governance, corruption, adversarial politics and lack of women's empowerment.

Bangladesh is a key partner country for the U.S. Government's three major development initiatives: Feed the Future (addressing global food insecurity), Global Climate Change and the Global Health Initiative. In addition, USAID provides assistance to address gender-based violence, empower women, and combat both human and wildlife trafficking. USAID has been a development partner in Bangladesh since the country's independence in 1971.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Despite gains in rice production, Bangladesh remains food deficient with diets lacking in diversity, resulting in 36 percent of children under age 5 being stunted. USAID has helped more than one million, small-scale farmers increase the efficiency of their rice production by introducing a new fertilizer technology and higher yielding seeds. Thanks to USAID's efforts, the average yield of rice has increased about 7 percent since 2010. In 2014, USAID programs helped more than one million farmers raise fish and shrimp production, increasing sales by more than \$103 million. USAID is also promoting homestead gardening and nutritional messaging to help improve the dietary diversity in rural households.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Over the past two decades, USAID has helped Bangladesh reduce maternal and child mortality by two-thirds, while dramatically increasing the use of family planning services. Despite gains in child survival, each year about 85,000 newborns die during the first month of life. Through a network of non-governmental organization clinics, USAID is providing more than 30 million maternal, child and family planning consultations a year. USAID has also introduced mobile messaging technology to reach more than one million subscribers with crucial health information about vaccinations and proper nutrition.

ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

A dense population and intense agricultural production have put such extreme pressure on natural resources that Bangladesh now has one of the lowest percentages of forest cover worldwide. USAID helps Bangladesh conserve its biodiversity by helping people who live in or near 28 forests and wetlands find employment so they will rely less on exploiting natural resources. USAID is also improving the local management of more than 1.8 million acres of wetlands and forests.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

USAID promotes responsive governance in Bangladesh by improving the accountability and transparency of key institutions and building the capacity of national and sub-national governments to deliver public services. USAID is helping the government formulate and implement legislation to reduce domestic violence and child marriage, expand access to legal aid, stem human trafficking, and promote human rights for marginalized people. USAID is also addressing labor issues and has helped register approximately 150 trade unions since 2013, to advocate for workers' improved working conditions.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID helps build more resilient communities by training the Bangladeshi government, local communities and households to improve preparedness and response to natural disasters. USAID's Food for Peace program fights hunger and poverty in some of Bangladesh's poorest and most vulnerable communities, helping more than three million people learn new skills like home-based agriculture, to improve their families' health and nutrition while earning more money.

CONTACTS

Mission

Janina Jaruzelski, Mission Director
USAID/Bangladesh, Madani Avenue, Baridhara
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Phone: (880-2) 5566-2000 • E-mail: indhaka@usaid.gov

Headquarters

George Zarycky, Desk Officer
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C., USA 20523
Phone: (202) 712-0224 • E-mail: gzarycky@usaid.gov



Through USAID, 2.8 million farmers learned how to use better seed varieties and fertilization techniques to increase yields and profit margins. Photo: Wasif Hasan/USAID Bangladesh



To mitigate overexploitation of natural resources, USAID helps farmers improve their agricultural practices, manage soil erosion and improve fish farming techniques. Photo credit: David Darg/Ryot