



- USAID contributed to a 60 percent reduction in under-5 child mortality between 1993 and 2011.
- By expanding the use of fertilizer technology and seed varieties, USAID has helped increase rice production for small-scale farmers in Barisal, a formerly rice deficient district in southern Bangladesh.
- USAID was instrumental in helping communities co-manage forests and wetlands with the Government of Bangladesh, thereby protecting critical natural resources.

Photo credit: USAID/Bangladesh

Country Profile

The United States and Bangladesh enjoy a warm and wide-ranging friendship, driven by common interests and shared values. As a moderate, secular and tolerant democracy that is at peace with its neighbors, Bangladesh is a role model for less developed countries in the South Asia region.

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

OUR WORK

With a population of more than 154 million in a low-lying, riverine area the size of Iowa, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and vulnerable countries to climate change. Yet, Bangladesh's economy has sustained average annual growth rates of about 6 percent over the past 15 years, helping the country cut its poverty rate in half. The country has become the world's second largest exporter of ready-made garments and has achieved self-sufficiency in rice production. Between 2001 and 2010, maternal mortality declined by 40 percent, and since 1990, female literacy has doubled.

Despite these advancements, more than 45 million people still 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 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 improve local government, conduct free and fair elections, address gender-based violence and empower women, and combat trafficking-in-persons. USAID has been a development partner in Bangladesh since the country's independence in 1971.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Despite recent gains in rice production, Bangladesh remains food deficient with diets lacking in diversity, resulting in 41 percent of children being stunted. USAID has helped more than 1.5 million small-scale farmers increase the efficiency of their rice production by introducing a new fertilizer technology and higher yielding seeds. In addition, in 2012, USAID programs helped farmers increase sales of fish and vegetables by more than \$40 million and \$23 million, respectively. USAID also helps improve child nutrition by promoting exclusive breastfeeding for infants up to 6 months of age, a balanced diet for older children and better hygiene practices such as hand-washing.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Despite gains in child survival, each year about 80,000 infants die during the first month of life and Bangladesh has one of the highest tuberculosis rates in the world. Through a network of private sector clinics, USAID provides more than 20 million total maternal, child and family planning consultations a year. In 2012, USAID also helped Bangladesh detect and treat 20 percent more cases of deadly multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. Since 1990, USAID has helped Bangladesh reduce maternal and child mortality by more than 60 percent as well as dramatically increase the use of family planning services.

ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Dense population and intense agriculture has put extreme pressure on natural resources. As a result, Bangladesh has one of the lowest percentages of remaining forest lands worldwide. USAID helps Bangladesh conserve its biodiversity by helping people who live in or near 26 forests and wetlands find employment so they will rely less on exploiting natural resources. In addition, USAID is improving the local management of more than 1.7 million acres of wetlands and forests.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

USAID promotes responsive governance in Bangladesh by strengthening the parliament and political parties, improving the accountability and transparency of the national audit authority and other key institutions, and building the capacity of local governments to deliver health and other social services. In 2012, USAID helped the government implement legislation to reduce domestic violence as well as enact a law against trafficking-in-persons and develop its national implementation plan.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID's Food for Peace program targets more than 600,000 food-insecure households with interventions to improve nutrition, agriculture, incomes, maternal and child health, and disaster preparedness. USAID is constructing 100 multipurpose cyclone shelters to protect people and their livestock during storms and to serve as schools during other times.

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USAID promotes the use of quality seeds and organic fertilizer to produce higher yields and get better prices for crops. Photo credit: USAID/PRICE



USAID trains women in forest-dependent communities to weave baskets as an eco-friendly, alternative income source. Photo credit: USAID/IPAC