



CREATING A STRONGER ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO COMBAT UNDERNUTRITION IN BANGLADESH: THE MUCH PROJECT

Bangladesh faces a wide diversity of challenges concerning food insecurity and undernutrition. Around 39 million people, representing about one fourth of the country's population, live below the poverty line, many of whom are dealing with extreme poverty. This high level of poverty, together with the rapid rates of population growth and urbanization, place extensive pressure on Bangladesh's food and agriculture system. Further complicating matters, Bangladesh remains highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and is one of the most flood-prone countries in the world, which has significant implications for food production. Both to address the existing rates of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies, as well as the underlying determinants of access to safe, affordable and nutritionally-adequate food, a concerted national effort that takes a multisectoral approach is required. The mainstreaming of food security and nutrition (FSN) into sectoral policies and programmes, along with suitable cross-sectoral governance and coordination mechanisms will prove crucial to the success of these efforts. The Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge (MUCH) project was therefore designed to develop a strengthened enabling environment for responding to FSN challenges in Bangladesh, focusing on capacity development for the Government and national stakeholders, as well as the formulation and implementation of improved policies, strategies and programmes.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The MUCH project fostered the evolution and advancement of the enabling environment for the eradication of food insecurity and malnutrition in Bangladesh. Policies, strategies and investment plans for FSN were improved on a national scale through the development of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bangladesh (NFNSP), the Second National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN2) and the Second Country Investment Plan on Nutrition-sensitive Food Systems (CIP2). Moreover, across multiple sectors and ministries, the ability of decision-makers to address concerns relating to FSN and gender issues was developed. Notably, the project greatly exceeded its target of increasing financial resources for addressing FSN concerns, with a total of USD 14 billion allotted to these efforts by the end of the project, representing a substantial increase on the USD 9.97 billion baseline. Inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms for FSN were also promoted under the MUCH project. This is reflected in the efforts undertaken to revitalize the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), the multistakeholder participation during development of the NPAN2, CIP2 and NFNSP, and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food assuming a lead role in the joint work planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities, in collaboration with 18 other government ministries and departments. Finally, with efforts under way to incorporate mapping and analysis tools into the FPMU's FSN Information System, the project also supported FSN policy and programmes through enhanced information generation.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 8 026 701

Duration

January 2015 – January 2020

Resource Partner

The Government of the United States of America/United States Agency for International Development

Partners

The Food Planning and Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Food

Beneficiaries

Staff from core ministries concerned with food security and nutrition, sectoral and intersectoral policy-makers, civil society and private sector organizations, and the food insecure population of Bangladesh

IMPACT

The project aimed to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition in Bangladesh through measurable reductions in levels of undernourishment and stunting.

ACTIVITIES

A wide variety of project activities were implemented under the MUCH project, including in-country and international capacity development trainings and workshops; meetings, consultations and symposia to evaluate existing policies, strategies and programmes, as well as to support their improvement and draft updated versions; multistakeholder events and initiatives to raise awareness on FSN challenges and promote better FSN practices; and efforts to improve the monitoring, reporting, evaluation and sustainability of national FSN interventions. These activities contributed to broader project outputs that aimed to:

- improve the capacities of the Government and other stakeholders in formulating and implementing FSN frameworks and programmes;
- promote organizational development and improve the Government's human resources;
- increase the Government's capacity for ensuring adequate resource allocation to FSN;
- develop the capacity of the Government, civil society and the private sector for effective engagement in dialogue on FSN policies and programmes; and
- strengthen the capabilities of the FPMU and FSN-related ministries to map, monitor and analyse the various contributions being made to improve FSN in Bangladesh.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code

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Project Title

Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge (MUCH): Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Food Security and Nutrition

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