



The Problem

Bangladesh is far from reaching its primary education targets.

Eighty-five percent of the twenty million primary school age children in Bangladesh are enrolled in school. This means that 3 million children are not even enrolled.

Enrolment is only the first part of the challenge. Many children do not attend regularly, and one third of the children in school today – 7 million children – will drop-out before completing primary level education.

Hunger and poverty are the biggest impediments to school attendance. Education is unlikely to be a high priority of parents who struggle to ensure that their families have enough food every day. This problem has been exacerbated by high food prices. As a result, 20 percent of poor families have pulled their children out of school.

Even if children are able to attend school they are often unable to concentrate on their lessons or too ill to study. Micronutrient deficiencies, which affect 93 percent of primary school children in poor areas



of Bangladesh, seriously affect a child's ability to learn. Deficiencies in iron, iodine and vitamin A cause growth retardation, brain damage, learning disabilities and visual impairment.

A large proportion of the next generation are thus being condemned to continued poverty.

The Solution

WFP currently provides one million primary school children in Bangladesh with a morning snack.

Because WFP school feeding is focused in Bangladesh's hunger hotspots, the snack – consisting of a packet of high energy biscuits – draws children into school and helps keep them there. In areas where the programme has been introduced:

- Gross school enrolment rates have risen by **14.2%**.
- The drop-out rate has decreased by **7.5%**.

Families in poor areas cannot afford to give their child breakfast before school. Children therefore are unable to concentrate on lessons. WFP's biscuits boost concentration and have been proven to improve academic achievement by **15.7%**.

There are health benefits too. WFP biscuits are fortified with vitamins and minerals vital for child health and physical and mental development. Studies have revealed that children receiving WFP biscuits in Bangladesh are five times less likely to suffer from anaemia than children who are not in the programme.

Funding Needs

It costs only US\$ 22 to feed a child in school for one year in Bangladesh – a small investment to make in helping a child to break the cycle of hunger.

Additional funding, enabling WFP to feed 130,000 of the country's poorest primary school children, is required.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN :	300,000
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS :	430
DURATION :	1 YEAR
FUNDING REQUIREMENT :	US\$ 2.86m