



## New Beginnings in Bangladesh: A Foreign Assistance Success Story

### DELIVERING RESULTS

In FY19, USAID Food for Peace's Developmental Food Security Activity (DFSA) grants reached over 240,000 people in more than 12 countries.<sup>4</sup> But simply capturing activities and outcomes is not enough—DFSA grants emphasize sustainability and resilience over time, so that their positive impact continues beyond the life of the grant. Interventions are designed to self-perpetuate and create change at multiple levels—from behavior change at the individual or household level to systems change in local and national governments.<sup>5</sup> Read more about how World Vision supported systems change in Nobo Jatra.<sup>6</sup>

## Introduction

Food security means having physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet the dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.<sup>1</sup> Access to affordable, safe, and nutritious foods is especially important in the first 1,000 days, from pregnancy through a child's second birthday—and globally, almost half of preventable deaths for children under five years old are attributed to malnutrition.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, food insecurity and under-nutrition are often rooted in poverty and have long-term negative impacts on children and families. Through USAID Food for Peace's Development Food Security Activity (DFSA) grants, the US government takes a holistic approach to addressing food insecurity and under-nutrition around the world.

## A Holistic Approach

Food insecurity and malnutrition are driven by a variety of issues and require a multi-sectoral solution—an understanding that is evident in the approach of Nobo Jatra, a USAID DFSA program implemented by World Vision in Bangladesh. Nobo Jatra, which means 'New Beginnings' in Bangla, has an overall goal of improved food security, nutrition, and resilience—but its approach includes interventions in maternal and child health; water, sanitation, and hygiene; agriculture and livelihoods; disaster relief and resilience; good governance and social accountability; and finally, gender equity as a cross-cutting intervention.<sup>3</sup> Through innovative, integrated activities focused on behavior change and systems strengthening, Nobo Jatra creates long-lasting change—ultimately leading to healthier, more resilient communities.

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# Nobo Jatra: In Action

**Donor:** USAID Food for Peace Title II:

Development Food Security Activity

**Project Name:** Nobo Jatra (New Beginnings)

**Timeline:** September 2015 – September 2022  
(including a two-year cost extension)

**Location:** Southwest Bangladesh

In Southwest Bangladesh, 26 percent of households live below the poverty line of \$1.90 a day,<sup>7</sup> and food insecurity and malnutrition are compounded by natural disasters, lack of access to healthcare services, and economic disparities for women. Over 7 years and through a nearly \$90 million investment, Nobo Jatra has reached over 850,000 people in poverty and celebrated numerous milestones for its key interventions. This not only means access to affordable, safe, and nutritious foods for thousands of vulnerable women and children, but also long-lasting change for an entire community. Below are just some of the interventions used<sup>3</sup> in Nobo Jatra:

- » **Maternal and Child Health:** Provided capacity building for over 7,000 front-line health workers and nutritional programming at 122 community clinics.
- » **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene:** Established potable water sources and rehabilitated latrines to benefit over 140,000 people with water and 90,000 with healthy sanitation practices.
- » **Gender:** Child Protection Committees were formed and strengthened to reduce child marriage and provide over 22,000 youth with leadership opportunities.
- » **Agriculture and Livelihoods:** Provided entrepreneurial training for 59,000 women and men and increased use of sustainable agricultural production practices.
- » **Disaster Relief and Resilience:** Trained 4,800 youth volunteers on disaster preparedness and linked local and national government entities to develop comprehensive disaster management plans.
- » **Good Governance and Social Accountability:** Strengthened Village Development Committees to use their voice with their local institutions through World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action approach.<sup>6</sup>

## SHABITRI'S STORY

The Das family could barely make ends meet on father Arobindo's salary as a van driver. Shabitri remembers, "There was not a single day that we didn't quarrel with each other. We weren't able to buy enough food. I was not able to feed my children. I thought throughout my life I would struggle with poverty, and we would be unhappy forever." That is, until Nobo Jatra afforded her family a new beginning. Shabitri enrolled in Nobo Jatra's entrepreneurial training, where she gained business skills (including basic literacy and numeracy) and received a small fund to start up a bamboo weaving business and small grocery shop to diversify their family's income. In addition, she learned about the dangers of child marriage—an issue that hit home for Shabitri, who married Arobindo when she was 11. She and Arobindo have now agreed to keep their kids (Modhumala, 15; Ratna, 12; and Nayan, 6) in school and away from child marriage. Shabitri's children are proud of the incredible transformation that their mother has undergone. Modhumala, who dreams of being a lawyer, says, "My mother can now write and read. She is independent. The most beautiful thing I love is now she can teach my younger brother."<sup>7</sup>



## References

<sup>1</sup><https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/agriculture-and-food-security>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.usaid.gov/nutrition>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.worldvisionadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Nobo-Jatra-Project-Summary.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.usaid.gov/ffp-2019-fact-sheet>

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FFP-FY19-Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FFP-FY19-Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.usstatic.com/2020/landing-pages/hunger-food-security/Citizen\\_Voice\\_and\\_Action\\_Nobo\\_Jatra\\_Evaluation\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.usstatic.com/2020/landing-pages/hunger-food-security/Citizen_Voice_and_Action_Nobo_Jatra_Evaluation_Summary.pdf)

<sup>7</sup><https://live-advocacy.d2.worldvision.org/2019/08/27/how-world-vision-and-usaid-helped-one-mom-learn-read-start-a-business/>

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

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