



# RIGHT START

## Better nutrition and health for women, adolescent girls and newborns

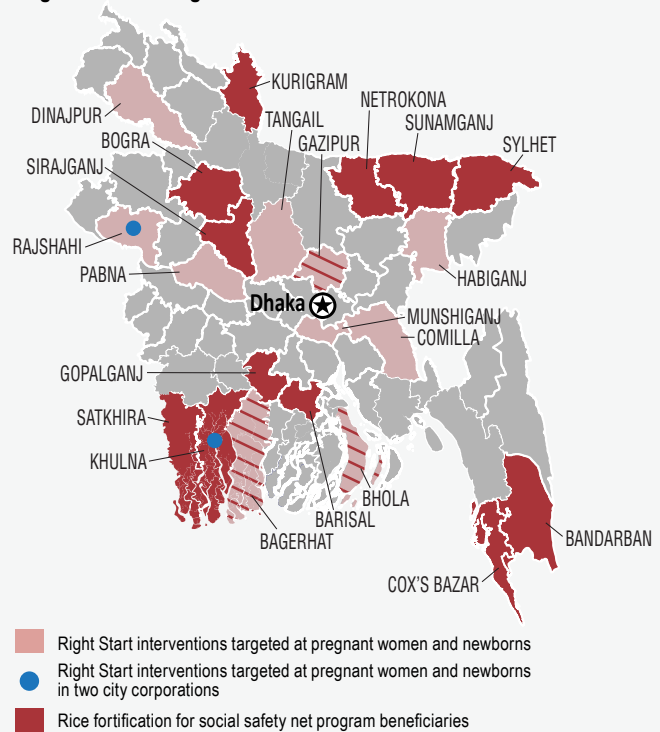
### Improving the quality of nutrition and healthcare for women, adolescent girls and newborns in Bangladesh

The “Right Start Initiative” is a comprehensive program reaching nine countries in Asia and Africa, designed and run by Nutrition International in order to improve the quality of nutrition for millions of adolescent girls, women of reproductive age, newborns and young children. In Bangladesh, Nutrition International will invest \$3.2M (CAD) over five years to 2020. The program is two-fold. Nutrition International will: (1) build the capacity of healthcare service providers to promote and deliver interventions to improve care for pregnant mothers, reducing risks to their health – and the health of their newborns; and (2) work with the national government to ensure that food based social safety net program beneficiaries receive rice fortified with iron, folic acid and other micronutrients to reduce the risk of iron deficiency anaemia and folate deficiency in women of reproductive age and adolescent girls.

### The Need

In Bangladesh, over 40 per cent of women of reproductive age and adolescent girls have anaemia<sup>1</sup>, which can impact their physical well-being, performance at work or school, and increase the possibility of complications and fetal development issues if they become pregnant. More than half of all infants are not exclusively breastfed<sup>2</sup>. In addition, one in three children under five is stunted<sup>3</sup>, which can have long-term effects on cognitive development, school achievement, economic productivity in adulthood – and, for females, increase the risk of having stunted children in the future.

### Right Start in Bangladesh



### Our Goal

The program aims to prevent and control anaemia, complications during pregnancy and delivery for mothers, and low birth weight and neural tube defects such as spina bifida in newborns. It also seeks to reduce stunting in children under five years old. Well-nourished adolescent

<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2011  
<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014  
<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014

girls are better able to go to school and get an education. Well-nourished women have safer pregnancies, healthier children and are more productive members of society and the workforce. Well-nourished infants and young children are more disease-resistant, and have a better chance of becoming contributing members of society. The program will have positive social and economic impacts by eliminating obstacles that malnutrition imposes on some of the most vulnerable populations, preventing them from reaching their full potential and that of the next generation.

## Interventions and impact by 2020

- ➔ **2M women of reproductive age and adolescent girls** benefitting from social programs across Bangladesh will have access to rice fortified with iron, folic acid and other micronutrients to prevent anaemia and protect pregnancies from neural tube defects. Nutrition International will gather evidence supporting rice fortification as an effective, low-cost, high-impact nutrition intervention, and advocate for its scale-up to all government safety net programs, including Vulnerable Group Development, school meals, Open Market Sale, and emergency relief in case of natural disasters.
- ➔ **592,000 pregnant women** in 10 districts and two city corporations will receive better antenatal, delivery and postnatal care. This will include ensuring pregnant women are provided with registration cards so they have access to healthcare services, and iron-folic acid supplementation to take throughout their pregnancy to reduce the risk of maternal anaemia and infections, low birth weight and preterm birth. It will also include training for healthcare service providers to deliver improved antenatal services, and awareness campaigns in mainstream media to promote the importance of good nutrition for pregnant women. Nutrition International will also support the Government of Bangladesh in promoting the consumption of calcium supplements during pregnancy.

## Expectations from the project by 2020

**Avert at least 636,000 cases** of anaemia in women of reproductive age and adolescent girls.

**Avert nearly 200,000 cases** of anaemia in pregnant women.

**Protect 287,000 pregnancies** from neural tube defects associated with a folic acid deficiency.

**Avert 16,000 cases** of stunting in children under five.

**Avert 1,600 deaths.**

**Reduce the number** of low birth weight newborns by **16,000.**

## The Right Start Initiative: A catalytic platform for change

The Right Start Initiative is based on five pillars: high-impact programs, resource mobilization, new strategic partnerships, technical leadership, and advocacy. With \$75M (CAD) in anchor funding granted by the Canadian government, Nutrition International is launching programs in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania, aiming to reach 50 million women, adolescent girls, newborns and young children by 2020.

These programs include packages of interventions adapted to each country: weekly iron and folic acid supplementation for adolescent girls, food fortification, iron and folic acid supplementation for pregnant women, as well as solutions to improve nutrition for infants and young children. Building on the anchor funding, Nutrition International is reaching out to donors, foundations and the private sector working for global nutrition to leverage this investment with the objective of doubling its reach to 100 million people.

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## About Nutrition International

Founded in 1992, Nutrition International is a global organization dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them most. Working in partnership with countries, donors and implementers, our experts conduct cutting-edge nutrition research, support critical policy formulation, and integrate nutrition into broader development programs. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life. Find out more at [www.NutritionIntl.org](http://www.NutritionIntl.org)