



PROJECT FACTSHEET

SWAPNO

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities

CONTEXT

Income poverty in Bangladesh has been reduced from 59% in 1991 to 31.5% in 2010 and extreme poverty reduced from 42.7% in 1991 to 17.6% in 2010, indicating that the country is on track in achieving MDG 1 of halving poverty. However, there are still around 25 million people living in abject poverty. Bangladesh aspires to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 - a target that is also drawing very broad international consensus in ongoing consultations to establish the forthcoming SDGs - but many, if not most, of the remaining poor in Bangladesh are caught in poverty traps, which will make further poverty reduction more challenging. Drawing on the encouraging poverty reduction experiences of the earlier UNDP assisted REOPA project implemented in partnership with Local Government Division, the next-generation SWAPNO project assists extreme poor women representing vulnerable households to move out of poverty.

ACTION

SWAPNO is a social transfer project for ultra-poor women engaged in public works essential for the economic and social life of poor local communities. It promotes employment, and most importantly future employability, of extreme poor rural women.

- The entry point is cash-for-work and building human capital of women engaged in public works essential for the economic and social life of poor local communities.
- Saving a portion of wages assists households to move out of poverty, providing seed capital for self-employment, basic household needs (linked to resilience) and further training and educational development. Women will be counselled and supported to invest these savings in productive assets.
- A state-of-the-art 'graduation' strategy aims at smoothening the transition from safety net employment to market-driven employment by vocational skills training, jobplacement and diversified climate change resilient livelihoods options, ensuring market linkages and access to essential public services and by social and economic inclusion for these women.
- In addition to assisting women to start and operate self-employment, micro-enterprises, SWAPNO focuses on facilitating linkages with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Public-Private Partnerships. Local SMEs in the rural non-farm and off-farm sector are encouraged to absorb women trained by the project, with training designed based on private sector demand for skilled workers. This is done in UNDP partnership with ILO.



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- **Timeframe:** 2014-2019
- **Coverage:** 1030 Unions in 106 Upazilas of 22 districts
- **Primary beneficiaries:** 65,000 ultra-poor women headed households
- **Implementing agency:** Local Government Division of MoLGRD&C
- **Local implementation:** 1030 Union Parishads, with development of institutional capacity
- **Development partners:** UNDP, SDG-F, Spanish Cooperation, ILO and others
- **Overall budget:** USD 110,000,000
- **GoB contribution:** USD 27,500,000
- **SDG-F contribution:** USD 1,500,000
- **UNDP contribution:** USD 4,500,000



EXPECTED RESULTS

- About 65,000 ultra-poor households will be able to protect their food security and livelihoods post-project.
- Women beneficiaries and their dependents have improved human capital in terms of nutrition, health, education and voice.
- About 65,000 beneficiary households have access to public services essential for their livelihood activities and family wellbeing.
- Public assets promoting local economic regeneration, improving social conditions and enhancing environmental conditions are maintained and developed for the benefit of the poor of the participating rural communities.
- Local communities have better capacity to withstand natural disasters and recover after disasters.
- Local government has capacity to implement social transfer projects with accountability, transparency, gender sensitivity and pro-poor approach.

The project is implemented under four components:

- **Public Works Employment:** Women are provided 18-month employment in maintenance/repair of important public assets and other public works. Union Parishads are assisted by partner NGOs in selection of women and public works, and in monitoring. A strong human capacity building focus during the employment tenure, including life skills training, confidence building, empowerment and training in livelihoods skills, serves the purpose of reversing social and economic exclusion.
- **Basic Service Delivery:** Cooperation between the Union Parishads and service delivery departments are enhanced, which will have positive impacts on the livelihood activities to be undertaken by the core beneficiaries and will reinforce the graduation strategy. Activities will include services to directly promote livelihoods like agricultural extension, veterinary services, fisheries services, services to cottage industries, etc. but also health and education services for the entire family.
- **Block Grants to Reduce Climate Change Vulnerabilities:** Activities include implementation of schemes to address the challenges posed by climate change, and include raising the height of existing embankments, rehabilitating and maintaining earthen mound cyclone and flood shelters, and other local assets that reduce the risks communities face.
- **Capacity Development of Local Government Institutions:** SWAPNO is enhancing the capacity of local government institutions implementing the project for accountable, transparent, pro-poor and gender-sensitive service delivery.



SWAPNO aims to lift 65,000 ultra-poor women and their families out of poverty sustainably through livelihood and life skills development.



IMPACT

Economic growth achieved in a more inclusive manner, with economic opportunities reaching the rural poor and the protection of vulnerable groups against shocks, will have positive impacts on 65,000 rural ultra-poor households by improving human capital, livelihood status and living conditions. Poor women will be able to avail of opportunities that can offer trajectories out of extreme poverty.



UNDP
BANGLADESH

UNDP, UN Offices, 18th Floor, IDB Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh
Telephone + (880-2) 55667788 Fax + (880-2) 9183099, Email: registry.bd@undp.org, Web: www.undp.org.bd