



STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S ABILITY FOR PRODUCTIVE NEW OPPORTUNITIES (SWAPNO)

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) Project

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Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO)

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Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BICC	Bangabandhu International Conference Center
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BRH	Bangkok Regional Hub
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
BSTI	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Association
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPP	Development Project Proposal
ERD	Economic Relations Division
ESDF	Eco-Social Development Foundation
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IMED	Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation Division
IP	Initiation Phase
LGD	Local Government Division
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
ProDoc	Project Document
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
RMG	Ready-made Garments
SANEM	South Asian Network on Economic Modeling
SME	Small & Medium Enterprise
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US Dollar	United States Dollar
VAW	Violence against Women



2022 At a Glance



800+ kgs cheese & ghee sold
From Milk Chilling Plant, worth BDT 4,16,735 (USD 4046)



180000 litre water sold
From Bindu Water Treatment Plant worth BDT 144570 (USD 1403); supported Upazila wide marooned households



48000+ packets of sanitary napkins sold
worth BDT 21,64,050 (USD 23922); raised adolescent menstrual health awareness covering 50 local educational institutions



IDEA Award
SWAPNO entrepreneurs awarded with BDT 50,000 (USD 485) each from ICT Division



CSR Award
Marico wins best CSR award for SWAPNO's Financial Inclusion model

Executive Summary

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) is a joint initiative of the Local Government Division (LGD), Government of Bangladesh and UNDP Bangladesh. Highlighted as one of Bangladesh's flagship social safety net projects (as certified by the Cabinet Division), SWAPNO focuses on empowering rural ultra-poor women in five poverty-stricken and climate-vulnerable districts: Satkhira, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Jamalpur, and Gaibandha. From 2015 to 2020, the project facilitated 12,492 beneficiaries creating their self-identities through income-creation activities. From 2021, the project piloted local Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) establishments and promoted employment in the leather sector alongside employment in green RMG factories. SWAPNO also supported formation of cooperatives, and ensured access to the Department of Cooperatives, Ministry of Women Affairs, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), and financial institutions. The project also enabled beneficiaries to get Bangladesh Standards and Testing Association (BSTI) registration for the products.

After completing its first phase in June 2022, SWAPNO was evaluated by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). Following successful review, UNDP, LGD, the Swedish Embassy, and Marico Bangladesh Ltd agreed to implement SWAPNO II in twelve poverty-stricken and climate-vulnerable districts. While the Swedish Embassy continued its support for SWAPNO II, UNDP agreed to finance an Initiation Phase (IP) for 12 months to ensure flawless support to the enterprises and develop the Project Document (ProDoc) and Development Project Proposal (DPP) for the period of January 2023-June 2025. The ProDoc and DPP were duly developed and submitted to Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the LGD for their review and approval.

This progress report summarizes implemented activities and key results achieved in 2022:

- **Enterprises & Cooperatives:** As mentioned above, the project initiated several enterprises in 2021, which brought success in this year. For example, through Sanitary napkin enterprise in Kurigram, 48,090 packets of sanitary napkins were sold worth BDT 21,64,050 (USD 23,922). Moreover, SWAPNO conducted a campaign called 'Sexual health, menstrual hygiene, and balanced diet' in 50 schools of Kurigram and established Kollyani Sanitary Napkin corner. This initiative assisted the adolescent girls buying Kollyani sanitary napkins at a discounted price at the doorstep.

From Bindu Water treatment plant, the project sold around 1,80,000 liters of water worth BDT 1,44,570 (USD 1403) and supported 200 flood-affected families during the flash flood in May 2022.

Chicken hatchery appeared to be a profitable business for SWAPNO's women. Thus, the project decided to introduce two new enterprises: Milk Chilling Plant and Leaf Plate production using areca leaves. From October 2022, the milk chilling project started selling mozzarella cheese and ghee (clarified butter). 828.5 kgs of cheese and ghee were sold out for BDT 4,16,735 (USD 4046).

In terms of Cooperatives, Kollyani Nari Kollyan Cooperative Limited, Kollyani Boutique, and a SWAPNO entrepreneur running a beauty parlor each received a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) government grant of BDT 50,000 (USD 485) from the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology.

- **Skills & local employment:** The project facilitated its beneficiaries to get access to both formal and informal economy by ensuring 588 women's employment in the formal sector and 393 women's job opportunities in local SMEs. Beneficiaries are now working at several RMG and Leather factories in Dhaka, earning BDT 7,500 - 10,000 (USD 71 - USD 94) per month. After acquiring multi-tasking skills, a woman from SWAPNO can earn BDT 12000 to BDT 15000 (USD 113 - USD 142) in a month.
- **Resilience building & adaptive livelihoods:** SWAPNO has trained its beneficiaries on climate adaptive livelihood options to make beneficiaries and the communities' climate resilient. Different interventions like sack cultivation (average 5 sacks at each household), low-cost hydroponic technology for fodder production (40 households), cropping pattern development for model kitchen garden (7564), vermicomposting (100 households produced 85.2 metric tons of bio-fertilizer), tree plantation (Basak leaf¹), homestead raising of 198 beneficiary households have strengthened their resiliency and financial stability. SWAPNO has also completed refresher training for 5,814 Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) members of 171 unions regarding gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.
- **Gender equality & Women empowerment:** This year, SWAPNO organized a knowledge-sharing workshop in collaboration with UNDP's Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) project to observe International Women's Day 2022. SWAPNO also conducted a webinar on '16 Days of Activism' where project staff and cooperative members participated. Moreover, a module on Violence against Women (VAW) was developed and published, which assisted beneficiaries to learn basic concepts of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- **M&E and MIS:** The project follows a transparent and integrated M&E and MIS system, which helps to track and review the project performance. This year, the project submitted the completion report and the donor reports to UNDP and published BIDS Endline evaluation report 2022. Link of the evaluation report is available here: http://swapno-bd.org/beta/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SWAPNO-endline-survey-report-by-BIDS_27062022.pdf
- **Media and Communication:** Diverse communication tools, including video documentaries, booklets, posters, print publications, etc., were developed and distributed to project stakeholders to highlight the project's success. For SWAPNO's Financial Inclusion model Marico Bangladesh Ltd received the '**Best CSR Award**' in 2022, which got print and social media coverage. The project published two modules and one Booklet portraying decent workplace environment, VAW, and project's unique interventions, respectively. UNDP published a success story of Bindu Water treatment plant on their website. A story on

¹ Basak is a medicinal plant. Botanical name is *Justicia Adhatoda*. Basak leaf is widely used in the pharmaceuticals to produce cough syrups and communities to get immediate relief from coughing.

Kollyani Sanitary Napkin was also highlighted as part of an article on UNDP Bangladesh's efforts on supporting women's economic empowerment that was published in UNDP's regional Gender Equality Newsletter.

- **Meetings & visits:** This year, most of the meetings were conducted with the government representatives to devise the next phase's implementation plans. Project stakeholders like donors and implementing partners visited the project areas to review the activities.



INTRODUCTION



Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the last several years, Bangladesh has demonstrated consistent economic growth and made outstanding progress in all socio-economic metrics, except for the slowdown in 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several macroeconomic measures, including per capita income, food production, imports and exports, remittances, and foreign exchange reserves, made notable and consistent improvements during the past few years.

However, the Ukraine-Russia war posed new challenges in 2022. Due to this war, the government had to devalue the local currency to boost exports and keep imports uninterrupted. Global energy price hikes also affected the country's economy.

Marginalized people suffered the most due to the inflationary strain brought on by supply chain disruption and rising prices of food and other necessities. They also faced the dire consequences of natural disasters. A total of 3.7 million additional individuals have been impacted by monsoon flooding in northern districts, bringing the total number of affected people to an estimated 7.2 million².

In terms of gender discrimination, Bangladesh ranked 71st out of 146 nations in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022³. According to Bangladesh Mahila Parishad's Violence Against Women and Girl Child (VAWG) statistics, 3945 women and girls experienced physical violence (VAWG Report 2022)⁴.

All these factors disproportionately affect the marginalized women and girls. Local Government Division of the Bangladesh Government and UNDP Bangladesh have been working on these above mentioned issues for the past seven years through a gender-responsive project titled "Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO)". Despite the challenges emerged in 2022, SWAPNO's innovative interventions facilitated its beneficiaries to sustain their economic growth. **Given its effectiveness, Cabinet Division suggested expanding the project to 200 upazilas in Bangladesh.**⁵ The Cambodian government intends to adopt the



² <https://www.ifrc.org/media/50815>

³ <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/0pbu68bbhc>

⁴ <https://mahilaparishad.org/vawg/vawg-chart-january-december-2022/>

⁵ <https://socialprotection.gov.bd/en/action-plan-phase-ii/>

poverty graduation model of SWAPNO, which might benefit up to 3,00,000 households countrywide.

1.2 CONTRIBUTION TO UNDP'S SIX SIGNATURE SOLUTIONS

For achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, UNDP has devised a set of approaches called 'Six Signature Solutions'. Each solution consists of a combination of funding, programmes, technical support, and policy recommendations. These solutions are:

- Keeping people out of **POVERTY**
- **GOVERNANCE** for peaceful, just, and inclusive development
- Crisis prevention and increased **RESILIENCE**
- **ENVIRONMENT**: nature-based solutions for development
- Clean, affordable **ENERGY**
- Women's Empowerment and **GENDER** equality

SWAPNO contributes to three approaches: Poverty, Resilience and Gender equality.

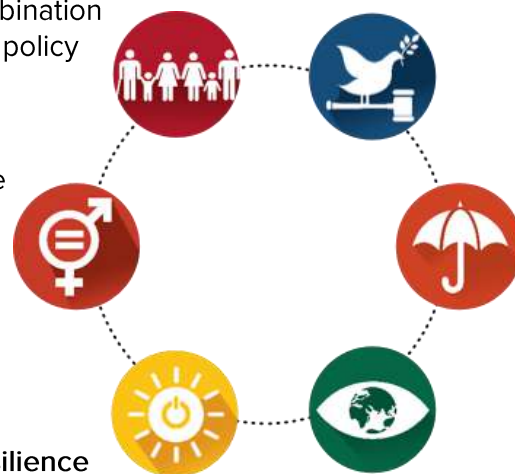


Figure 1: Six Signature Solutions

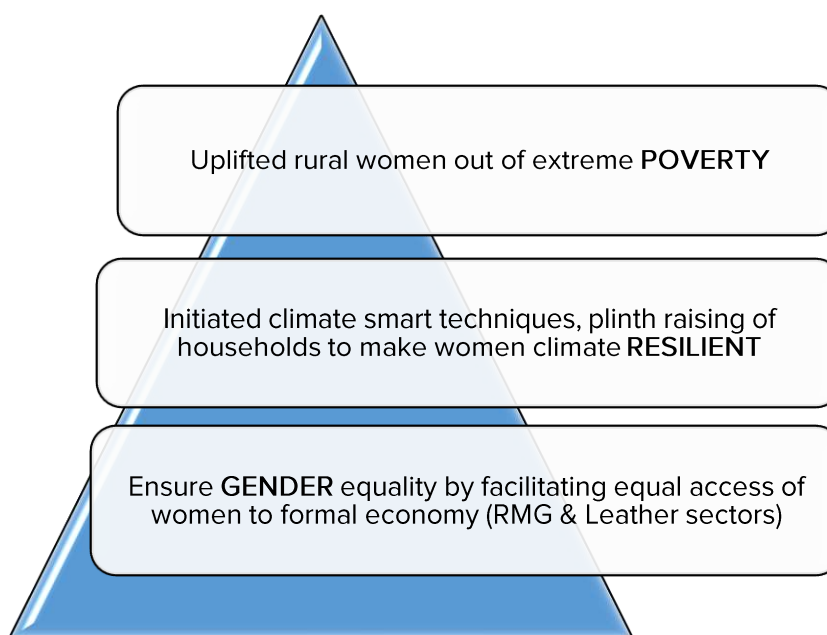


Figure 2: SWAPNO's contribution to Six signature solutions



SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS



2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS

2.1 ENTERPRISES & COOPERATIVES

Keeping the notion of 'Sustainable Employment' in mind, the project started its journey of enterprise development and cooperative formation in 2020. It brought immense success in the lives of project beneficiaries. Brief description of these enterprises is given below:

Water Treatment Plant

After setting up Bindu Water Treatment Plant in Gaibandha district in 2022, it is proved to be a sustainable source of mitigating drinking water problems during emergencies and normal times. For both the cooperative members and the local communities, it is a mutually beneficial situation as it promotes women's empowerment and saves the lives of the poor.

This year, through this plant, the project earned BDT 1,44,570 (USD 1403) by selling 1,80,000 liters of safe drinking water. Moreover, to minimize the safe water crisis during the flash flood held in May 2022, the SWAPNO Women Cooperative, initiated a supply of safe drinking water from this Plant to the surrounding communities of Gaibandha. Approximately 200 households benefitted from this initiative.



Figure 3: Water treatment plant, Gaibandha

Milk Chilling Plant

In 2021, the project started the process of establishing a Milk chilling plant to create a Dairy value chain system in Kurigram. This is a multi-stakeholder model among United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Eco-Social Development Foundation (ESDF) and SWAPNO Nari Kollyan Cooperative Ltd. From October 2022, the Cooperative started processing and selling milk through this chilling plant. Apart from milk processing, they also produced and sold Cheese and Ghee (Clarified butter). They sold 828.5 kg Cheese and Ghee (Clarified butter) worth BDT 4,16,735 (USD 4046).



Figure 4: Milk chilling plant, Kurigram

10 people are currently working, comprising both the Cooperative members and the local people. Both the local dairy farmers and the project beneficiaries are getting benefits from this plant. The

local "*Foria*⁶," to which dairy farmers used to sell their milk, was never willing to pay them a reasonable price. But the Milk Chilling Plant helps them get paid fairly. For the Cooperative members, this chilling plant has appeared as a sustainable source of income.

ESDF is the leading customer who sells the produced products in Dhaka through their designated Sales & Marketing Officer. Though the plant is still in its initial phase, it plans to conduct the following activities in the near future:

- Establish district-wise chain shops for selling the produced products
- Develop district-wise seller group to curb the monopoly business of the local *Forias*
- Establish a 24/7 hotline number as a grievance redressal mechanism
- Expanding the product base like sweet and sour curd, sweets, candy, etc.

Chicken Hatchery

In 2021, the project facilitated the beneficiaries of Jamalpur district, establishing 3 Chicken hatcheries and 460 vertical mini poultry farms for rearing a native variety of chickens. The beneficiaries achieved success as they can earn a considerable amount of money through this initiative. This year, the project expanded the activities of this initiative in Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha by establishing 4 Chicken hatcheries (2 in each district). Through these hatcheries, beneficiaries are currently earning between BDT 35000 to BDT 38000 (USD 339 - USD 368). Additionally, this endeavor strengthens the local chicken value stream in these districts.



Figure 5: Chicken Hatchery

⁶ Foria means middleman who buys goods from producers and sells them to retailers and consumers.

Leaf plate production (New)

SWAPNO project is piloting a green business model through social enterprise development for its beneficiaries. The project tries to reduce carbon emissions and transform waste into reusable products to promote eco-friendly business. There are about 1300 women beneficiaries in Lalmonirhat, and there is an excellent opportunity for the enterprises to produce and market the areca leaf plates.

The project plans to initiate this intervention in Lalmonirhat on a pilot basis. **The project will first train 20 beneficiaries on areca leaf plate, spoon, and bowl production. These products will be 100% biodegradable, carbon-free, and disposable.** For sales and marketing, the project will partner with Enroute greeneries limited, a leading manufacturer and supplier of eco-friendly products in Bangladesh. They will facilitate the project beneficiaries in selling and promoting the produced products in the local markets.



Figure 6: Leaf plates

Women-led Cooperatives

SWAPNO works with women from the most marginal segments of society, with limited access to services and resources. Apart from building the self-identity of these beneficiaries, SWAPNO mobilized them to form several Cooperatives to sustain their livelihoods. Project beneficiaries formed four cooperatives in Kurigram and Gaibandha - Kollyani Nari Kollyan Cooperative Ltd, SWAPNO Nari Kollyan Cooperative Ltd, Gazaria Cooperative Ltd, and Kanchipara Cooperative Ltd.

Department of Cooperatives registered all these cooperatives. Members of these Cooperatives are involved in several income-generating activities like sanitary napkin production, milk processing, chicken hatchery management, water treatment plant management, boutique shop management, etc.

This year, Kollyani Nari Kollyan Cooperative Limited, Kollyani Boutique, and one women entrepreneur of SWAPNO beauty parlor received BDT 50,000 (USD 485) each as Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) grant under Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship Academy (iDEA) project of ICT division.

They applied following the selection guideline given by iDEA project of the ICT Division. The selected committee of iDEA project approved the applications after several checking methods. This grant will help them to expand their businesses.

Sanitary Napkin & Kollyani Boutique

Breaking the stereotypes regarding menstrual hygiene is one of the core mandates of SWAPNO project. In this regard, Kollyani Nari Kollyan Cooperative Ltd, one of the Cooperatives formed by SWAPNO beneficiaries, started producing and selling affordable sanitary napkins from the year 2021.

This year, members of this cooperative sold 48,090 packets worth BDT 21,64,050 (USD 23,922). They conducted a campaign called 'Sexual health, menstrual hygiene and balanced diet' in Kurigram, where they partnered with 50 schools and established Kollyani Sanitary Napkin corner. This initiative assisted the adolescent girls in buying Kollyani sanitary napkins at a discounted price. Success of this initiative was also highlighted in an article titled 'Economic empowerment as building blocks for enhancing women's agency: Bangladesh's efforts' published by RBAP Gender Equality Newsletter, UNDP.

In mid-2022, 30 members of Kollyani Nari Kollyan Cooperative Ltd established Kollyani Boutique shop on a pilot basis through which they started selling hand made items like *Nakshi Katha* (embroidered quilt), bed sheets, women's dresses, bags, etc. to the local community.



Figure 7: Swedish Ambassador H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde showing Kollyani sanitary napkin, Kurigram

2.2 SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

Access to skills and employment is the core mandate of SWAPNO project, which empowers women socially and economically. **SWAPNO's partnership with RMG & leather industries facilitated jobs for 588 beneficiaries in RMG and leather factories. They earn BDT 7500 - BDT 10,000 per month (USD 72 - USD 97). In addition to formal sector employment, 393 women were employed at the local level through various women-led enterprise development initiatives** described in the previous section.

Below is a story of a SWAPNO beneficiary successfully working at a Leather factory in Dhaka.

Story of Surma

Hailing from Gaibandha's Moddho Katlamari village, Surma Khatun's (35) was struggling to make ends meet as a single mother of two children. Her husband left her five years back and Surma was leading a life of uncertainty.

Things began to change when she was recruited for SWAPNO's public works programme. She worked for 15 months and in the meanwhile, she was trained on livestock management. Surma also became a member of SWAPNO cooperative and started conducting fistful rice collection. All these initiatives helped improve her socio-economic condition.

It got even better when Surma got an offer from SWAPNO to work for a leather factory in Dhaka. Her family was initially doubtful, but she managed to persuade them. They moved to Dhaka, where she first attended a two-month training on shoe manufacturing. At the end of the training, Surma joined AB Footwear Ltd. Currently, she works eight hours a day and makes about 10,000 BDT (USD 95). From having no permanent income source to a leather factory operator, Surma's story testifies how, with the right push, women can be the change agents for their families and their communities.



Figure 8: SWAPNO beneficiaries working in RMG factories

2.3 RESILIENCE BUILDING & ADAPTIVE LIVELIHOOD

Given Bangladesh's high vulnerability to the climate crisis and its growing impact on development, the interconnections between climate resilience and women's livelihoods are becoming more significant over time.

Against this backdrop, the project introduced and demonstrated different climate-adaptive livelihood interventions. The major adaptative livelihood interventions are:

- Sack cultivation (average 5 sacks at each household),
- Low-cost Hydroponic technology for fodder production (40 households),
- Cropping pattern development for model Kitchen Garden (7564),
- Vermicomposting (100 households produced 85.2 metric tons of bio-fertilizer),
- Tree plantation (Basak leaf),
- Homestead raising of 198 beneficiary households etc.

These adaptive interventions enabled the beneficiaries to earn around BDT 2000 to 3000 monthly (USD 18-USD 28) apart from regular income-generating activities. Homestead raising assisted the beneficiaries in withstanding the flash flood in May 2022. The project also completed refresher training for 5,814 Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) members of 171 unions on Gender responsive Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.



2.4 GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

This year, SWAPNO conducted several activities, including workshops, webinars, and module development to enhance awareness of GBV, women's contribution to the country's e-commerce sector, etc.

International Women's Day 2022



Figure 09: Prasenjit Chakma, ARR of UNDP, discussed on Gender equality at IWD 2022 Workshop

Apart from SWAPNO, UNDP's 'Women's Empowerment For Inclusive Growth (WING)' also focuses on empowering marginalized women entrepreneurs. SWAPNO and WING jointly observed International Women's Day (IWD) by organizing a half-day **"Experience & Knowledge Sharing Workshop"**. This aimed to recognize women's contribution to achieving gender equality and enhancing knowledge of e-commerce ecosystem in Bangladesh. The theme of this year's IWD was 'Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. Kajal Chatterjee, National Project Manager, SWAPNO & WING Programme, UNDP Bangladesh, described how SWAPNO and WING promoted

gender equality by providing access to formal sector employment, facilitating women-led SMEs, building the capacity of local government institutions, etc.

Webinar on 16 days of Activism 2022

Every year, UNDP Bangladesh observes 16 Days of activism, an international UN campaign that aims to increase awareness of the need to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence. This year's theme was – **'UniTE! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls.'** UNDP Bangladesh organized social media campaigns and street theatre performances to raise awareness. SWAPNO also arranged a webinar where the project team and members of SWAPNO cooperatives participated. They shared their perspectives regarding project initiatives like hotline stickers and psycho-social counselling sessions. Kajal Chatterjee, National Project Manager of SWAPNO project, stressed that SWAPNO ensures women's empowerment and exhibits a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse.



Figure 10: Webinar on 16 days of activism

VAW Module

In addition to skills development training modules, **the project developed and published 'Violence Against Women' (VAW) module illustrating GBV forms and preventive measures that the project participants can take.** Through this module, the project participants learned about the

difference between sex and gender, gender equality and equity, gender mainstreaming, mitigation measures to curb gender-based violence, etc. The module's lessons aided the beneficiaries in developing their understanding of violence against women and putting it into action.

2.5 INITIATIVES FOR THE NEXT PHASE

Based on the success of SWAPNO's first phase, stakeholders aim to extend the project across 12 impoverished and climate vulnerable districts in Bangladesh. The project conducted activities for initiating SWAPNO II, as noted below:

Planning Workshop: The project conducted a 2-Day long Planning Workshop on 30 - 31 August 2022, aiming to achieve the following objectives:

- Review project performance throughout the previous phase
- Share challenges & lessons
- Devise a multi-year Project Implementation Plan for the next phase

Mr. A H M Kamruzzaman, Joint Secretary, Planning Branch, LGD, **Van Nguyen**, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh, **Mr. Habibur Rahman**, Joint Secretary, LGD and National Project Director of SWAPNO, **Ikramul H. Sohel**, National Programme Officer - Market Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka, representatives from UNDP, Private sectors attended the workshop. They shared their ideas, opinions, and suggestions to devise project's second phase. They developed the core objective for the second phase: **"Sustainable Livelihoods Promotion through Local SMEs and Formal Sector Employment"**.



ProDoc prepared and submitted to UNDP: The ProDoc was developed through a planning workshop with the participation of the Local Government Division (LGD), donor representatives, UNDP, and SWAPNO project staff. Duration of SWAPNO II is considered to be from January 2023 to December 2025. The project will specifically target youth women groups (18 to 28 years of age) and women groups up to 35 years of age to ensure the employability and sustainability of project outcomes. The ProDoc was submitted to UNDP Country Office, and Bangkok Regional Hub (BRH) for clearance and duly obtained approval.

DPP preparation and submission to LGD and ERD: In reference to the ProDoc, the project also completed and submitted the Development Project Proposal (DPP) based on the prescribed format and guidelines of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, GoB. After getting the approval of the DPP, the next phase of SWAPNO will start the field level activities in twelve poorest and most climate-vulnerable districts of Bangladesh. Through the next phase, the project envisions graduating 10,188 hardcore poor households from poverty by 2025.

Foundation Training Module development for staff development: To give a brief overview of the SWAPNO II, enable the project staff to understand implementation modality, and acquire facilitation skills, the project developed a four-day long staff training module. Key contents are participatory training, basic principles of facilitation, and communication skills. The participants will also learn about training follow-up and extensive practice of using training knowledge in their daily lives. In turn, the staff will be able to train beneficiaries and associated stakeholders in the field effectively.

Enterprise Workshop

Realizing the success of existing enterprises in the first phase, SWAPNO will initiate new enterprises in the second phase with the aim to create sustainable employment for rural women. In the second phase, the project aims to raise awareness among its participants regarding e-commerce, SME development, product promotion. To do so, the project organized a 3-day long workshop on 'Enterprise & Employment Development Approach'.



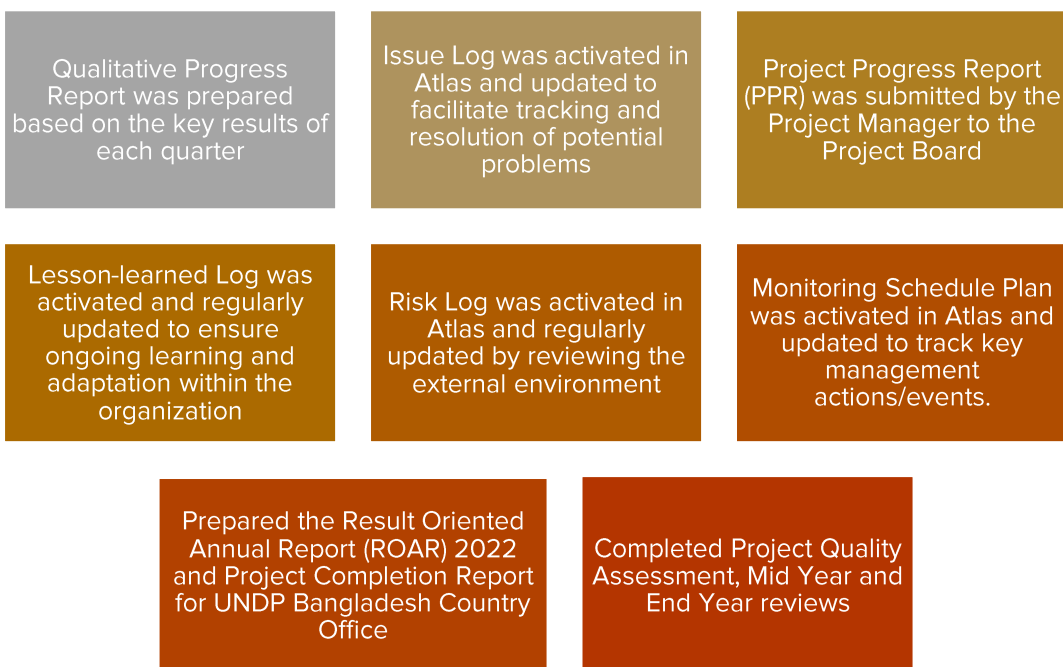
Figure 11: Enterprise Workshop



2.6 M&E AND MIS

SWAPNO has a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation and Management Information Systems (M&E and MIS) unit to track progress and evaluate the progress and achievement of intended results. A central online M&E and real-time MIS, incorporating the key performance indicators, is functional since project inception. Project Coordinator and Project Officers of partner NGOs supported the district managers in maintaining and incorporating all the relevant data into the central MIS for a continuous flow of information. **Results of this mechanism supported the project to achieve 'Level 5 (Satisfactory)' from UNDP's Evaluation Resource Centre.**

M&E Activities performed in 2022





2.7 MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Diverse communication tools, including video documentaries, storybooks, posters, print publications, newsletters, etc., were developed and distributed to project stakeholders to highlight the project's success. Brief description of the communication materials is given below:

Appraisals from project stakeholders



"By providing productive and sustainable livelihoods for our beneficiaries through SWAPNO, women-led households can enhance their quality of life through economic independence"

- Christabel Randolph, Former Legal & Corporate Affairs Director, Marico Bangladesh Ltd, commented about Marico's partnership with SWAPNO project in a leading daily newspaper, The Business Standard.



Embassy of Sweden shared their partnership story with SWAPNO through a social media campaign titled 'Sweden & Bangladesh: 50 years through 50 voices'.

Publications & Print media coverage

This year, the project published Annual Report 2021, one module on VAW, one toolkit on Decent Workplace Environment and Best Practices booklet narrating the successful project interventions. The project published 3rd cycle Endline Evaluation Report 2022 conducted by BIDS. All the published documents are available in project website - www.swapno-bd.org

This year, Marico Bangladesh won the Best CSR award in 'Financial Inclusion' category for SWAPNO project which was widely highlighted in both print and social media. Inauguration of Bindu Water treatment plant was published in the leading newspapers.



Video documentaries

This year, the project developed and published video documentary on SWAPNO's innovative interventions. Meanwhile, Swedish Embassy developed and published a video on Bindu Water Treatment Plant. The video is available in project's youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_HgNUgOE8A

Social Media

This year, the project regularly updated its social media platforms (website, facebook, etc.) by uploading contents like news, stories, videos, etc. The project also created its twitter page at the end of 2022 and started posting news on project activities. Throughout the year, Swedish Ambassador H.E Alexandara Berg von Linde and UNDP Bangladesh's Resident Representative Stefan Liller posted several posts on twitter regarding the interventions of SWAPNO project like sanitary napkin, income earning activities, Sunipun garments (Satkhira), etc.

Visibility on UNDP's FORTNIGHT: FORTNIGHT, an online publication of UNDP, where significant activities of the projects are published fortnightly. This year, several news, stories, and activities of SWAPNO project were published which increased the project visibility.



Documentary: Narir Ogrojatra SWAPNO (নারীর অগ্রযাত্রা স্বপ্ন)



2.8 MEETINGS AND VISITS

Several meetings with stakeholders were held this year regarding the project's first phase performance, planning for the next phase, IP modality, etc. Project stakeholders, particularly representatives from the Swedish Embassy, Marico Bangladesh Ltd, and UNDP, visited the project areas several times to oversee the performance of project beneficiaries. The meetings and visits have been summarized below:

PSC meeting: On 14 June 2022, the 6th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting of the Local Government Division was held at LGD conference room. LGD Secretary Mr. Mesbah Uddin, Van Nguyen, DRR of UNDP Bangladesh, Habibur Rahman, NPD of SWAPNO project, were present. They all agreed that the next phase of the SWAPNO project must be initiated by combining the GoB fund and foreign aid.

Meeting on 'Decent Workplace Toolkit' distribution: The project developed a toolkit on Decent Workplace Environment aiming to aware the beneficiaries of the Workplace Environment of Leather factories. Leather-goods and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) launched the toolkit officially at their general meeting where Mr. Syed Nasim Manzur, President of LFMEAB, Mr. Kajal Chatterjee, National Project Manager of SWAPNO and representatives of the leading leather and footwear industries were present.

Visits

This year, representatives from the Swedish Embassy visited Jamalpur, Gaibandha and Kurigram to observe the activities of SWAPNO cooperatives, Water treatment plant, Kollyani Boutique, Chicken Hatcheries, etc. H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka, Ikramul H. Sohel, National Program Officer, Swedish Embassy, visited the areas. Rashed Bin Ehshan, Legal & Corporate Affairs Director, Marico Bangladesh Ltd, visited Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, and Kurigram to review the performance of the enterprises. Stefan Liller, Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh, and a delegation team of the Swedish Embassy visited Shunipun Garments, Satkhira.





CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED



3. CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges & Remedial Actions

- As per the approved ProDoc of the government, SWAPNO officially completed the first phase in June 2022. From July 2022 to December 2022, the project continued its operation through IP modality. Earlier the project had five outputs, merged into three outputs in the new ProDoc, DPP, and Project Proposal. Integrating five outputs into three outputs addressing relevant activities and indicators was a big challenge. The project team merged all indicators in the Result Framework (RF) in line with the project document approved by the Embassy of Sweden.
- Following the decision of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) meeting held on 27 October 2022, SWAPNO submitted the Project Documents for 2nd phase along with the Development Project Proposal (DPP) to the Economic Relations Divisions (ERD), Ministry of Finance. Initially, the project faced challenges regarding the DPP approval process, as it could delay the initiation of the next phase. SWAPNO continuously followed up with the relevant ministry to speed up the process.

Lessons Learned

- Strong ties between program delivery and influencing stakeholders, such as government, implementing agencies, and private sector organizations, are necessary to achieve impact at scale. This can be done by showcasing effective service delivery models and promoting business models with a positive social impact.
- Strong, context-relevant monitoring tools and small internal research studies will be needed to document the effects of the project interventions. Findings of these studies can be used to replicate the interventions in other areas of Bangladesh as well.
- Proper alignment among the project documents (ProDoc, DPP, and Donor reports) can make the project implementation process effective.



BINDU Water Treatment Plant: Stepping up in times of crisis

ANNEX

SUCCESS STORY

For residents of Gaibandha's Gazaria and Kanchapara unions, the BINDU Water Treatment Plant is the only safe drinking water source for thousands of families, stranded by the flash floods in the North in May 2022. The plant is an initiative of Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) project, UNDP with support from the Swedish government.

Set up in February 2022, the plant aims to overcome safe drinking water crisis in unions where SWAPNO operates in Gaibandha. Residents suffer from high arsenic and iron contamination in water, even when drawn from depths of 35 to 50 feet below ground level. SWAPNO helped establish a cooperative with its beneficiaries and facilitated the start of the water enterprise in Gazaria union, Fulchari upazila (sub-district) in Gaibandha.

The cooperative used their savings, along with co-finance and support from the local government and SWAPNO to launch the water enterprise where they treat water and sell it at an affordable price in and around the community.

The Plant is situated at the “Ashrayan Project Site” which is home to 200 homeless and climate-displaced families. Fulchari Upazila administration allocated two decimals of land for establishing the plant. In addition to technical support, UNDP and the Swedish Government financed installing a solar power system to operate the entire water treatment and cut down carbon emissions.

With the flash floods in May, the river basin areas of Sundarganj, Sadar, Fulchari, and Saghata Upazilas were inundated as the Brahmaputra River level rose. The floods not only marooned over 1800 houses; it destroyed 450 tube wells, adding onto already severe scarcity of safe drinking water.

To minimize the crisis, SWAPNO’s Women Cooperative initiated a supply of safe drinking water from the Bindu Plant to the surrounding affected communities. The cooperative hired a boat to transport water in jars and also used a battery-driven van to distribute water on the mainland.

People bought jars of 20 liters of safe drinking water with each priced at only BDT 5 (approximately USD 0.05) and approximately 200 households benefitted from this initiative. SWAPNO plans to extend this support to other unions by collaborating with the local administration.



FINANCIAL COST STATEMENT

January 2022 – June 2022 (SWAPNO)

SI NO.	Description	Expenditure (USD)
01	Core beneficiary households are able to protect their food security and livelihoods post-project.	156118.81
02	Core beneficiaries and their dependents have improved their human capital in terms of nutrition, health, education, and voice.	44872.09
03	Beneficiary household have access to public services essential for their livelihood activities and family wellbeing.	21530.83
04	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.	27066.2
05	Local communities have better capacity to withstand natural disasters and recover after disasters.	113125.27
06	Local government has capacity to implement social transfer projects with accountability, transparency, gender sensitivity and pro-poor approach.	100884.79
07	Human Resources and Administration.	179166.53
Total		642,764.52

July 2022 – December (SWAPNO IP)

SI NO.	Description	Expenditure (USD)
01	Increased Income and Assets engaging Local Economy and Skill Development.	53094.01
02	Strengthened Human Capabilities and Resilience.	-
03	Strengthen institutional capacity for Sustaining SWAPNO benefits.	153311.4
04	Programme Management	71932.29
Total		278,337.70
Grand Total		921,102.22

SWAPNO

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO)



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