

Bangladesh



Organization: Footsteps Bangladesh

Location: Kurigram District, Bangladesh

Solution: Empowering women in converting flood disaster into economic opportunity in Bangladesh

Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (16 months)



An initiative supporting women in Bangladesh develops portable filters to clean water @Footsteps Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, women and girls are over ten times more likely than men to collect water for their households, which increases their vulnerability to safety risks while traveling long distances and reduces the time available for education or income-generating activities (UNICEF and WHO, 2023). This risk is especially significant due to the floods that submerge almost 25% of the country annually (LSE, 2023). To provide access to drinking water during a crisis, Footsteps Bangladesh has designed and distributed the 'Dreamwater' filter, a portable device that cleans 15,000 litres of water with its five stage UV and ultrafiltration process, removing 99.99% of contaminants. The solution empowers women from low-income, rural communities to become entrepreneurs, using the device for household use, disaster response and water entrepreneurship.



Key achievements

- Manufactured 30 Dreamwater portable filters with an enhanced filtration system to process 25,000 litres per cycle, with advanced nano silver cartridges for contaminant removal
- Conducted four successful awareness sessions on disaster resilience and drinking water, engaging 800 community members
- Selected 20 women as Dreamwater entrepreneurs, providing them with a monthly income of US\$27-38 through the sales of clean water
- Provided up to 400 litres of filtered water per day during Kurigram flooding in July 2024, where Dreamwater entrepreneurs were the first responders to the crisis



Social impact

- Boosting the social and economic status of women as first responders to disaster and entrepreneurs in their local communities
- Improving health outcomes through clean drinking water
- Strengthening community resilience during times of flooding





Adaptation benefits

- Providing vulnerable communities with a reliable source of clean, drinkable water, especially during flooding season in flood-prone areas
- Training communities for flood and cyclone preparedness to increase climate resilience



Innovation

- Filters have been upgraded with a significantly lighter and more compact model, improving distribution and accessibility for women
- An advanced filtration system provides clean water access in times of crisis and emergency



Replication potential

- The portable filter technology is scalable and can be deployed internationally in areas with low access to drinking water
- The curriculum of climate awareness sessions can be replicated and adapted in other communities with similar contexts



Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US\$125,000 (initial grant)

Investability

Revenue per year	67 devices have been sold to date, creating \$12,000 in revenue (50% profit margin).
Sustaining criteria	The initiative's operations are currently funded by both grant funding and revenue from device sales.
Financial innovation	<p>Exploring microcredit schemes for women to purchase Dreamwater filters and sell filtered water to their local communities.</p> <p>Introducing a highly competitive pricing of water (1/25th market rate).</p> <p>Increased user-friendliness and performance of filter to drive higher sales and wider adoption.</p>
Expected return	\$260,000 from selling 1,250 devices by 2026 at 25,000 BDT per unit (approximately US\$210).