

# Developing Gender Capacity of ADB Executing Agencies

## I. Introduction: Capacity Building Framework

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) 6092: *Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries (DMCs) Phase II* emphasizes capacity building of sector ministries to promote and facilitate gender mainstreaming, and the empowerment of women. Since virtually all government programs are implemented through sector agencies, this RETA focuses on building the capacity of these agencies to design and implement gender-inclusive projects.

Mainstreaming gender issues is a challenging task in the design and implementation of development projects. When the challenge seems too high, gender issues are often inadequately addressed by Project Directors leading to suboptimal results. RETA 6092 responds to this challenge by emphasizing results-based lateral learning as a strategic framework for capacity building:

- **Learn From Results Under Ongoing Loan Projects.** Showcase innovative approaches to integrating gender or other thematic cross cutting issues that are simple, feasible and getting positive results in different country contexts.
- **Learn From Each Other.** Exchange experiences among Executing Agency (EA) Project Directors to demonstrate how concepts and techniques on gender mainstreaming and other crosscutting issues are being translated into action in the context of ADB-funded loan projects in their countries. Emphasize lateral learning where participants who are mostly engineers, economists, sector specialists, and financial analysts primarily teach each other through concrete examples, rather than learn from thematic experts presenting abstract material.
- **Learn With Real-Time Feedback.** Highlight positive results that are being achieved under loan projects by using Gender Action Plans (GAPs) as a mechanism to guide implementation, supervision and monitoring of project activities to deliver results.



## II. Regional Seminar: Overview

A three-day Regional Seminar on Gender, Poverty and Development Results was conducted from 3 to 5 May 2006 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for ADB EAs from 10 DMCs as part of the gender capacity building training under RETA 6092. This was the second regional seminar organized under the RETA, providing a unique opportunity for Project Directors to learn about new tools, innovative approaches and positive outcomes related to gender-inclusive loan projects.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of the Seminar was to provide a forum for lateral learning. The Seminar objectives were two-fold: (i) showcase gender-inclusive ADB loan projects achieving successful results, and (ii) build gender capacity of project staff implementing loan projects with GAPs.

The Seminar included 56 participants (33 men and 23 women) Afghanistan, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam (4 each); Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal (5 each); Pakistan (2); Cambodia (13); and ADB headquarters (6).

The participants represented 36 ADB loan projects in the following sectors: water supply and sanitation (6), rural infrastructure (6), education (6), integrated rural development (4), health (4), agriculture (3), livestock (2), irrigation and water resources development (2), governance (2), and microfinance (1). In addition, 9 ADB technical assistance (TA) and Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) projects were represented in agriculture (6), infrastructure (1), rural development (2), and education (1).

The Seminar program included (i) an overview and consultation on ADB's Policy on Gender and Development (GAD) and progress of implementation, (ii) step-by-step guidance on how to conduct gender analysis and develop effective GAPs, (iii) field trip on an ADB education project, and (iv) Project Directors' presentations on their experiences in designing and implementing gender-inclusive loan projects. Mr. Shyam Bajpai, Country Director, ADB Cambodia Resident Mission and H.E. Mrs. Ing Kantha Minister Phavi, Minister, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Royal Government of Cambodia, delivered the opening remarks.

The ADB's Policy on GAD and GAP technical review sessions refreshed the participants' knowledge in these areas. Project Directors' presentations promoted lateral learning and greater acceptance by their peers for addressing gender issues in loan projects. The field trip gave the participants an opportunity to discuss with school officials the achievements under the *JFPR 9028-Cambodia: Targeted Assistance for Education of Poor Girls and Indigenous Children Project* which has been designed to pilot test community-managed scholarship programs in secondary schools. A discussion with the scholarship recipients indicated that all the girls preferred to continue their education beyond the secondary level. However, they were not sure if their parents could afford to keep them in school without scholarships since the girls help with household chores and farming on family plots.



## III. Regional Seminar: Presentations

Rural infrastructure, water resource management, and livestock were featured as sectors where ADB's gender-inclusive loan projects have achieved substantial positive outcomes. In the area of **rural infrastructure**, the Superintendent Engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department from Bangladesh elaborated on how *Loan 1581-Bangladesh: Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project* provided (i) close to 7.2 million days of employment for over 4,500 women in construction works, tree plantations and road maintenance programs; (ii) income generation opportunities for over 4,000 women through training in business and financial management, access to credit, local contracting societies, growth center markets and women's market corners (1,800 shops); (iii) opportunities for women to build leadership skills, and increase participation in local governance as members of traders' associations and Union Parishad Complexes; (iv) gender-sensitive infrastructure designs with separate women's facilities in boat landings and flood refuges; and (v) 604 contractors ensuring safety, sanitation and fair wage for women laborers. The project's gender-based features are replicated in *Loan 1952-Bangladesh: Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project*.

In the area of **water resources management**, two good practice case studies were presented by Project Directors. Nepal highlighted women's key roles in water collection, use and management; and positive outcomes of involving women in community decisions for developing water supply and sanitation facilities and associated public and family hygiene and health improvement programs. Key initiatives under *Loan 1755-Nepal: Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project* include: (i) 33% women in Water User Supply Committees, 1 male and 1 female member representing water users in the Town Project Office, and 60% women nongovernment organization (NGO) field staff; (ii) 50% water users' cash contribution for water supply and sanitation services; (iii) greater equity in water distribution,

<sup>1</sup> The first Regional Seminar: Gender, Poverty and Rural Development was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, 24-26 March 2004 under RETA 5835: *Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in DMCs*.

including among urban poor and disadvantaged groups; and (iv) close to 60% female participation in health and hygiene education, and technical training. Field observations confirm women's understanding of the water system and cost-sharing, tariff and water quality issues. Construction of separate school latrines for boys and girls have contributed to 20% increase in girls' enrollment rate in school. The presentation on *Loan 1831-Bangladesh: Second Small-Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project* elaborated on the replication of successful gender-based features from the first project (*Loan 1381-Bangladesh: Small-Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project*): (i) 33% women in management committees, and 100% women in tree plantation and care-taking; (ii) equal wage for equal work among men and women; (iii) 50% women in all meetings; and (iv) training women farmers to increase agricultural and fishery production.

Positive outcomes in gender-inclusive loan implementation in the **livestock** sector were also featured under *Loan 1461-Nepal: Third Livestock Development Project*: (i) women's time savings (3-4 hours) in forage collection; (ii) increased livestock and forage cover; (iii) improved livestock productivity and family nutrition; (iv) better technical knowledge of women in livestock health, nutrition and management as a result of 51% participation in on-site training programs; (v) increased control of income by women through access to credit and mandatory group livestock insurance for livestock-rearing activities and other employment opportunities (e.g., village animal health workers, animal slaughtering, and forage seeds collection); (vi) shifts in gender roles as men have begun to share household management tasks (e.g., forage development and collection around homesteads); and (vii) 80% increase in girls' attendance in school. The project's achievements in gender mainstreaming are being consolidated and advanced further under *Loan 2071-Nepal: Community Livestock Development Project* which covers 48 of 75 districts in Nepal. Under the latter project, 50% women's involvement will be ensured in 6,900 farmers' groups, 1,380 livestock-raising committees, 10,000 hectares of perennial forage coverage and fodder seed production, access to microfinance, all capacity building and training activities, and appointment of gender focal points in project implementation.

Seminar presentations in the **health and education** sectors, such as on *Loan 2172-Bangladesh: Second Urban Primary Health Care Project*, *Loan 2122-Cambodia: Second Education Sector Development Program*, and *Loan 1840-Nepal: Teacher Education Project*, highlighted how gender disparities in human development pose critical obstacles to achieving potential capabilities, earning decent livelihoods and breaking out of the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

With respect to **integrated rural development, agriculture** and **microfinance** presentations of *TA 3831-Viet Nam: Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development* and *TA 4459-Cambodia: Implementation of the Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming in the Agriculture Sector*; *Loan 1782-Bangladesh: Northwest Crop Diversification Project*; *Loan 2027-Sri Lanka: North East Coastal Community Restoration and Development Project*; *Loan 1531-Pakistan: Dera Ghazi Khan Rural Development Project*; *Loans 1085/1086-Pakistan: Microfinance Sector Development Program*; and *JFPR 9010-Uzbekistan: Innovative Poverty Reduction in Karakalpakstan Project*, exchanged experiences in implementing gender-inclusive

poverty reduction programs that improve women's access to resources, productivity and income-generating opportunities. The discussions highlighted the importance of building a gender-responsive environment at the policy, institutional and community levels to strengthen local ownership and sustainability of integrated rural development, agriculture, and microfinance programs.

The Seminar ended with three presentations focusing on gender and **governance**, *Loan 1861-Nepal: Governance Reform Program*, *Loan 1953-Cambodia: Commune Council Development Project*, and *Loan 1947-Bangladesh: Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project*. They described the importance of increasing women's representation in local government, public decision-making bodies and civil service ranks to ensure gender-based needs and interests are included in poverty reduction policies and associated allocation of resources.

## IV. Regional Seminar: Participants' Feedback

The participants' written evaluations indicated that the Seminar met their expectations in terms of learning about good practices in gender mainstreaming and concrete results that can be achieved through developing and implementing project-specific GAPs. The key lesson learned from the rich exchange of experiences was that specific project design features are required to facilitate participation and ensure equitable access to resources and benefits for both men and women. The Seminar provided participants with increased motivation and knowledge to incorporate gender issues in their ongoing and follow-on loan projects to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of development programs.

The Project Directors' follow-up plans in their respective DMCs include the following:

- Replicate the knowledge gained on gender mainstreaming from best practices in other countries in the design and implementation of projects in their own countries.



- Develop GAPs for projects under design.
- Monitor or revise GAPs for projects under implementation.
- Provide gender sensitization for project staff prior to project implementation.
- Pay particular attention to GAD concerns during project review missions, and consistently record progress in achieving GAD-relevant targets and indicators in project progress reports.
- Conduct similar workshops for policymakers in Ministries, and disseminate knowledge gained and resource materials to EA and Project Implementation Unit staff who could not attend the Seminar.
- Sensitize policymakers in Ministries to develop sector-wide comprehensive GAD policy and strategies with clear objectives, goals, targets and program for monitoring and evaluation.

## V. Consultation with Executing Agencies on the Review of ADB's Policy on Gender and Development

The Seminar provided an opportunity to consult a large group of Project Directors from ADB's EAs in 10 DMCs on key GAD issues in their countries and assess whether ADB's current gender mainstreaming activities are sufficiently addressing the problems.

All the participants unanimously stated that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical issues in their countries. Even in countries like Uzbekistan and Viet Nam where gender equality exists "de jure", "de facto" gender inequities are pervasive particularly in rural areas where women are unemployed in large numbers and do not have any decision-making power. Key common gender concerns articulated across the region include:

- low level of education for girls (except in Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam), and low level of education for boys in Mongolia; low technical/professional skills for women;
- lack of access to resources primarily property rights for women;
- lack of economic opportunities (both wage-employment and self-employment);
- low mobility of women due to cultural norms;
- women's poor health indicators; and
- limited representation of women in decision-making levels in central and local governments, NGOs, and community-based organizations.

The Project Directors agreed that ADB has been partially addressing these gender concerns through its loan and TA projects. They shared positive results from projects where project-specific GAPs are being implemented by Project Implementation Unit staff

who are aware of gender-based objectives, and gender experts are hired to guide loan implementation. Some Project Directors felt that project loans were better suited to focus on specific development problems and solutions rather than sector or policy-based loans.

To improve ADB's support to gender mainstreaming, and address some of these key GAD concerns, the Project Directors made the following recommendations:

- Increase capacity building assistance and training workshops to raise awareness on gender issues at all levels of government and project executing and implementing agency staff.
- Increase gender awareness of project staff in ADB country resident missions, and gender mainstreaming in sector work in ADB headquarters.
- Share experiences and good gender mainstreaming practices across DMCs frequently.
- Conduct gender assessments in all sectors of ADB operations in DMCs, and develop sector-based gender strategies and policies with line agencies.
- Ensure gender issues are integral to all ADB activities by mandating GAPs in all ADB loans with specific activities, targets, budgets, practical progress indicators, and gender specialists and NGOs to help in implementation.
- Increase grants for pilot projects to demonstrate the close linkages between GAD issues and development results.
- Improve gender-inclusive project monitoring by (i) adding a Gender Monitoring System/Table as an attachment to the Project Administration Memorandum; (ii) increasing the number of social development and gender specialists in loan implementation teams, line ministries and main counterpart agencies; (iii) having a woman representative in project steering committees; and (iv) discussing gender issues in events and all other opportunities related to ADB projects.
- Strike a balance between advancing gender issues and respecting socio-cultural norms.
- Continue GAD research and sex-disaggregated data collection with local research institutions and universities.
- Coordinate with other donors to harmonize GAD initiatives.
- Conduct an annual gender mainstreaming review.

For more information on GAD-related activities at the ADB, visit [www.adb.org/gender](http://www.adb.org/gender). To share suggestions and/or experiences on innovative aspects/modalities to further mainstream concerns in ADB operations, please contact Francesco Tornieri, Social Development Specialist (GAD) ([ftornieri@adb.org](mailto:ftornieri@adb.org)) at the Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division.