

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division : SANS

TA No. and Name: TA No. 4085 - BAN: Preparing the Social Protection for Disadvantaged Women and Children Project		Amount Approved: \$500,000	
		Revised Amount: \$500,000	
Executing Agency: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA)	Source of Funding: JSF	Amount Undisbursed: \$66,991.82	Amount Utilized: \$433,008.18
TA Approval Date: 11 Feb 2003	TA Signing Date: 16 Sep 2003	Fielding of First Consultant: 5 Jan 2004	TA Completion Date Original: 31 Dec 2003 Actual: 8 Nov 2006 Account Closing Date Original: 31 Dec 2003 Actual: 13 Dec 2006
<p>Description: Although considerable progress has been made, Bangladesh is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Among the poor, there are two groups which are particularly disadvantaged: women and children. Women in Bangladesh are denied equal rights and opportunities due to socio-cultural and other reasons. Their human rights are often violated at the family as well as community levels.</p> <p>The Asian Development Bank (ADB) social protection strategy has, as one of its main focal points, the protection of children. Children are a second group, apart from women, which requires special attention in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh there are a large number of children working, who live in slums, are denied basic education, have no access to health care, and are malnourished. These children are almost always the children of the poorest people in urban areas. UNICEF estimated that 3 out of 10 urban children in Bangladesh live under difficult circumstances.</p> <p>The Government of Bangladesh gives high priority to poverty reduction and has undertaken major efforts to improve social protection for the vulnerable groups of the society. Examples for social protection activities are the vulnerable group development programs, orphanages with shelter, education and health support, vagrant homes, old age homes for the poor, centers for the disabled, old age pension program for poor, and support for destitute women. During disasters, vulnerable groups receive feeding programs. Though these are important initiatives, the benefits and services that the Government provides currently are far below the level that would sufficiently protect the poor. Especially from the background of the encouraging economic growth in Bangladesh, more efforts could be made to make the very poor benefit from the improvement of macro-economic indicators.</p> <p>Legislation that defines the rights of women and children exists. In recent years new laws have been enacted, for example, dowry prevention and prevention of women and child oppression. However, for a large number of poor and illiterate women access to the judicial system is an insurmountable hurdle.</p> <p>Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs: The objective of the project preparatory technical assistance (PPTA) was to assist the government in the preparation of the project for provision of social protection to vulnerable groups. The technical assistance (TA) was to explore alternative project interventions, involving all relevant government partners at central and district levels, communities, target groups, and stakeholders.</p> <p>The purpose of the project was to improve services for the target groups, improve the access to rights (awareness, recognition, and enforcement of rights), and to improve the capacity of the institutions in charge, especially the MOWCA. Focal areas of the project were: (i) Services. For example, drop-in centers for children (including shelter, basic health care, nutrition, skills training, basic education, and safe drinking water), services for women in distress (legal support, training, basic health care, safe shelter, safe drinking water, assistance in economic activities, prevention of trafficking, and reintegration of trafficked women), and awareness raising at community level. (ii) Legal Issues. For example, to assist in linking MOWCA with the legal support system (lawyers association, legal aid committees, etc.); to look at the need of changes in law enforcement and to support them; to support ongoing activities in the field of improving birth registration in the project districts; and awareness raising in favor of women's and children's rights. (iii) Institutional Strengthening. For example, to enhance the capacity of the MOWCA, Department of Women Affairs (DWA) and other concerned ministries related to the project in order to fulfill their responsibilities; to support the establishment of the Department of Children Affairs; to support the implementation of national plans for women and children; to support the MOWCA in developing a national plan to combat trafficking of women; to assist the MOWCA in developing a time bound strategic plan to implement its mandate taking into account donor supported activities; and to assist in upgrading the skills of the local bodies.</p> <p>Specifically, the TA was expected to: (i) define more clearly the target groups through a socio-economic vulnerability and risk analysis including quantitative data; (ii) identify ongoing projects and activities, especially those implemented by Government and nongovernment organizations and those financed by other agencies; (iii) identify gaps and best practices in the sector; (iv) define the scope of the sustainable interventions to improve the situation of the target</p>			

groups; (v) assess the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of local governments, communities, and nongovernment organizations to manage planned initiatives; (vi) define key program components including management and financing requirements; (vii) identify possible investment components of the project; (viii) identify the geographical scope of the services component; (ix) establish the quantitative framework and estimate costs of the project; (x) identify suitable executing and implementing agency(ies) for the project; (xi) identify possible implementation partners; and (xii) identify the need for TA and human resources.

Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities: The design formulation and the terms of reference (TOR) gave sufficient guidance to the consultants. The implementation of the PPTA was according to plan and timely. There were two review missions. The Ministry provided the in kind inputs agreed during contract negotiations. There were no significant changes to the project during implementation.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcomes: The consultants, in addition to inception and midterm reports, submitted a final report consisting of a background report and a draft report and recommendation of the President (RRP), both of which were a good basis for the further processing though the background report was not sufficiently detailed.

The PPTA contributed to the development and capacity building of MOWCA through inputs and studies during the project design and through discussions with experts and stakeholders. Several planning workshops were held. The targets were met though there was no logical framework, which was not required for PPTAs at the time of the TA approval. Using the surplus TA funds after completion of the original TOR, additional surveys identifying target groups and their problems in two districts and one urban area of Dhaka were undertaken, which gave a lot of insights on the situation of the target groups and possible points of intervention.

Also, as a first step to project implementation, the International Organization of Migration, an inter-governmental organization, was contracted to develop a draft anti-trafficking strategy plan (National Anti-Trafficking Strategic Plan for Action [NATSPA]) for Bangladesh, addressing one of the main problems covered by the project. The draft strategy was elaborated together with Government and non-government stakeholders and presented to the press in February 2006.

Overall Assessment and Rating: The TA is rated partly successful. The reason is as follows:

- The TA is successful in view of output delivery as it produced the expected outcome: a feasible design for a loan project supporting the target groups through effective measures. The TA is also considered successful as it produced the studies and an anti-trafficking plan mentioned above, both of which were of use for the target population and the client as well as they can be used by Government and stakeholders for planning and advocacy purposes.
- The TA was not successful in the sense that it did not lead to a loan project as intended. It was dropped in the course of loan processing. The reasons were (i) different opinions within the Bank about the proposed project design, (ii) a change in ADB and Government priorities in the Country Strategy and Program, and (iii) opinion inside Government and among donors in Bangladesh that MOWCA should focus on gender mainstreaming rather than implementing investment projects.

Major Lessons: Several lessons were learned from the project processing and design. (i) Project designs can benefit greatly from existing models developed by nongovernment organizations (NGOs); (ii) implementation through NGOs is facilitated if all the partners are consulted and involved at an early stage. Especially in a country like Bangladesh, where NGOs have produced very effective models for social protection, implementation by Government authorities might not always be the best choice, especially if the executing agency is weak like MOWCA. (iii) Even if loan projects are cancelled, efforts can be made to pursue the recommended sector objectives and outcomes in the context of future policy dialogue.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions:

ADB and the DMCs can benefit from design elements, studies and findings of PPTAs even if they do not lead to loan projects. This can happen through new project approaches in the same sector or in the context of mainstreaming activities on social protection. Such PPTAs can also contribute to activities of other institutions in the sector. For example, the World Bank is planning to scale up operations in social protection in Bangladesh. Preliminary discussions on possible cooperation in the field of social protection have taken place.