

GIZ Gender Competition 2016

Country: Bangladesh
Project: Adaptation to Climate Change and Rehabilitation of Livelihoods in Selected Districts of Southwest Bangladesh
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“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.”¹

1. Promoting gender equality

The **objective** is to improve the communication and cooperation between men and women in climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Bangladesh.

In the **context** of Bangladesh women face multiple challenges and impacts, especially in such a climate vulnerable and patriarchal surroundings e.g. during the devastating cyclone 1991 more than 90% of the victims were women. They are hesitant to evacuate towards safe shelter because of the lack of mobility as they need the permission of their husband and are responsible for the children, elderly and livestock. Furthermore the participation of women in the society is limited with less access to resources, education, information, services and employment opportunities. Many interventions rather target the men hence there is a lack of gender-sensitivity and female stakeholder in general; there is a lack of communication and cooperation between men and women at family as well at community level.

The **effective approach** of the project in cooperation with its partner organisation INCIDIN Bangladesh was to develop a joint training module for men and women, focusing on communication and cooperation in regard to CCA and DRR. A gender approach is only effective if it includes men and women equally to raise awareness and change the behavioral system of a society. The module followed a philosophy of action...reflection...and action by using interactive methods, such as role play, case analysis, and group discussion. In particular the role play turned out to be highly successful to expose discrimination and in promoting gender sensitive behavior. In addition video footage/educational films proved to be effective to internalize information regarding dos and don'ts for personal and family safety issues.

The following statements of the participants shall outline the positive results of our gender equality promotion:

“Gender issues are new to us”

“I never thought that we can work together male and female in household.”

“This is the first time I came out from home without my husband.”

¹ Rabindranath Tagore (Bengali Poet)

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“Earlier I was thinking that I do less work than my husband but now I realize that how much work I do in my daily life.”

“Next time I will send my daughter in this training.”

“This training make me feel confident.”

“We have to work together to fight with disaster.”



Claiming for equal rights by the participants through a joint statement

The first step to change a behavioral mindset is to raise awareness about an issue, which is the **expected** short term **impact**. In cooperation with our partners we are aiming to achieve following impacts in the medium- and long term:

- (1) Sensitisation about types and causes of gender discrimination against women.
- (2) Understanding about gender disparity and causes for death of women and children through natural disaster.
- (3) Knowledge about different types of disasters occurring in Bangladesh.
- (4) Ability and utilization of dos and don'ts of men and women at the household level in relation to disaster.
- (5) Know-how of effective methods and techniques for dissemination of disaster preparedness and risk reduction information to women.

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2. Gender as a quality feature of our work

Our partner reacted extremely positive to our initiatives/activities to strengthen gender equality, as it is also one of the core elements of their work e.g. they have a male gender expert, which is highly unusual in a context like Bangladesh. It proved to be highly effective to raise awareness and change the mindset of people.

The gender training module has been selected by the UNFCCC as one of best practices on gender-sensitive approaches and tools, including good practices for the application of these approaches and tools for understanding and assessing impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change:

http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/nairobi_work_programme/application/pdf/d_giz.pdf

3. Gender and RBM

The activities on improving gender equality are documented thoroughly in the project and it's an integral part of our M&E system. The project document the number of female participants received training, livelihood support, start-up support, etc. moreover the project measures improvement of female beneficiaries (food security, income, job opportunities, participation at household/ community level) through yearly rapid surveys comparing the outcome/number with the numbers of the baseline survey.

4. Cooperation

We apply a joint approach strategy to improve gender equality, as it can only achieved through joint efforts of men and female. That implies that promote/support joint training for male and female e.g. first aid training, income generating activities, livelihood support which tremendously helps to overcome disparities. We cooperate with our implementing partner NGOs as it is a common goal to enhance gender equality. One of the major challenges is to convince male beneficiaries to participate in joint trainings and furthermore to allow female members of a household engage in farming activities (which is a male dominated field in Bangladesh).

Few key success factors:

- (1) Joint training approach with male and female including provision of childcare facilities.
- (2) Statistics: increasing the income of households through the involvement of women in income generating activities.
- (3) The approach to promote cooperation among men and women at household level decision making process in any crucial circumstances like natural calamities also contributed to livelihoods continuum.
- (4) Persuasion though good example, having female team-leader and senior advisor and using a male gender expert and promoting/demanding female staff in the partner organisations.

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Husband and wife working together, after receiving a joint agricultural training/support