

Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh (GWAPB)

Gender and water

Neglect of the social aspects of water management worldwide contributes to resource inefficiencies, to the degradation of the environment, to climate change, and to poor health of at least one billion children. Of all social relations those between men and women are most crucial to consider at all levels, especially at the lowest level. They are often ignored by decision-makers, or only included in words, without bringing actual change. This is called lip-service.

The Gender and Water Alliance works for better decisions made at all levels of water management through knowledge development, capacity building and awareness raising, collaboration, advocacy and sharing with a wider network, involving her many members worldwide and supporting water professionals with gender mainstreaming. The gender concept is applied in the broad sense, referring not only to relations between women and men, but also to diversity in ethnicity, race, socio-economic position, age, religion, different abilities and caste. All these forms of diversity interact, and



awareness about power relations helps development to be more sustainable and effective.

In spite of the recent economic progress in Bangladesh, the position of a large number of women still remains extremely deprived, as is illustrated by the UNDP Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which globally, apart from Yemen, is the lowest for Bangladesh. In the UN Gender Inequality Index 2014 Bangladesh ranks 115 of 150 countries (with 1 showing most gender equality). Though water is formally recognised as a basic human right in Bangladesh, the number of women and men who depend on unsafe water, have no

water for irrigation and who lack improved sanitation facilities are many.

Netherlands funded projects, and others as well, have paid attention to gender already for decades, sometimes with success, but not to the extent that enough structural changes were achieved. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) is supporting the water sector in Bangladesh with some large programmes: for water and sanitation and for food security. To make sure that these programmes benefit poor women, children and men equally and to make sure that the specific local knowledge of water users is tapped, the Gender and Water Alliance has developed and is implementing the Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh (GWAPB).

The overall goal of the GWAPB is poverty eradication by the empowerment of poor women, girls, men and boys and the efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable management of water in Bangladesh, with a focus on the South West coastal area. GWAPB's work is directed at water professionals, decision-makers and politicians who in their turn work to increase access to water resources for all. The ultimate beneficiaries of the programme are poor women, children and men of different backgrounds.

Objective

The purpose of the GWAPB is to support EKN supported water programmes, civil society, water professionals and government organisations in Bangladesh to adopt and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy in their water related policies and practices, in order to achieve measurable and positive impact on the lives of poor women and men. This in turn will make an essential contribution to the achievement of the EKN targets related to water, food security, sanitation and poverty eradication.

Our Approach: Water management becomes sustainable when all levels of water users are involved in planning and decision making. Impact and clear result is achieved by a demand-driven approach, which guarantees ownership by organizations and stakeholders in Bangladesh. GWA executes the work by involving its local members as much as possible, after selecting the most qualified amongst them. Mainstreaming of

gender works best when it is applied to the technical and institutional work of a partner organization, by identifying the best methods together. This is shared learning, and it is based on the knowledge that technical specialists already possess about the significance of GM for the benefit of their work.



Programme Components

1. Collaboration, Networking and Coordination:

Cooperation between the GWA member organisations, the EKN supported water-related projects, various civil society and GoB organisations, identifying their need for support and strategizing effective mainstreaming of gender in their policies and activities.

2. Capacity building (CB), Training and Coaching:

CB for Gender Mainstreaming (GM) at all levels (from Govt. departments, engineers and technical staff, LGI staff, NGOs, and grass-roots user groups) is a core need in the water sector. Consequently this is a focus of the GWAPB and is recognised as the only way to go from 'lip service' to effective implementation of GM at field level. The GWA approach is one of participatory and shared learning.

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3. Knowledge Development: Existing gender-and-water information is inventorised, gaps are identified and relevant sources and resources listed. Studies, surveys and inquiries are conducted.

4. Communication: Dissemination and sharing, Advocacy: Existing and newly developed knowledge needs to be shared and used to influence policies and practices. It is made accessible to all who need it.

5. Monitoring: To ensure that the outcome of this programme as well as the other Dutch funded water related programmes are benefitting poor women, are mainstreaming gender effectively and actually result in empowerment of women (and men). GWAPB does this by setting up a practical, doable and efficient methodology for monitoring together with these programmes.

Our Partners:

The GWAPB is working with the following EKN supported projects: Blue Gold, SaFal, CDSP IV, MaxWASH, BRACWASH II, WOP-DWASA VEI, UDDP, IFC-PaCT, Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, and collaboration with the River Management Programme is envisaged.

Furthermore, GWAPB works in partnership with a number of University departments, Research Institutes and GoB Departments.

GWAPB: At a Glance

Duration

2013-2016 (3 years)

Program Area

Bangladesh, with a focus on the South West coastal area

Donor:

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN)

Registered under:

NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh

Latest Progress:

- Capacity Building Workshops on Gender and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)
- Support to the development of Individual Gender Action Plans (more than 40 IGAPs)
- Stakeholders' and GWA members' Meeting
- Trainers' Workshop on Gender and Water
- ToTs for staff of MaxWash, CDSP IV, SaFal, IFC-Water-PaCT including support to GAPs
- Conduction of various gender and water training sessions for Cadre Officials at the NAPD
- Field visits with open inquiries in SaFal, CDSP IV and BRAC-WASH programmes, with case studies written
- Research in Women and Technical Vocational Training
- Research Gender and Aquaculture together with ULAB
- Gender and Water Inventory
- Translation into Bangla of the GWA-Cap-Net Tutorial for Water managers: Why Gender Matters.