

Project Efforts to Involve Women in Urban Planning and Governance in Bangladesh:



THE URBAN GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT (SECTOR) PROJECT

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GENDER & DEVELOPMENT
Getting the Balance Right



CONTEXT: The Urban Sector in Bangladesh

Rapid Urbanization:

- Level of urbanization is 41.6%, compared to 39.5% for the region
- About 40% of urban population live in secondary towns; many are in informal settlements (slums)

Urban poverty:

- The proportion of poor households in urban areas continues to increase
- The number of slum households increased by 77% fr. 1997-2014



Source: ADB. 2017. *Institutionalizing Gender Equality: Urban Development Experience of the Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department*. Manila.

CONTEXT

Key issues in Bangladesh's urban areas:

- Overcrowding
- Traffic congestion
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Lack of basic services
- Environmental Degradation
- Extreme vulnerability to natural hazards (cyclones, storm surges, coastal erosions, earthquakes)
- Inhumane conditions and acute welfare outcomes esp. in slums





CONTEXT

Deficiencies in Infrastructure and Services

(When the first UGIIP was designed in 2002):

- Only 25% of urban HH live in dwelling with permanent structure
- Only 30% of urban HH use tap water for drinking
- Less than 20% HH have water connections
- No secondary town has sewerage system
- About 40% HH have no latrines or only have unsanitary hanging latrines
- Poor air quality due to traffic, industry

Weakness in Urban Governance

- Very limited participation in urban management
- Concentration of authority in town chairperson resulting in poor performance, lack of accountability
- Weak capacity of elected officials and community groups

Source: ADB. 2002. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors - Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project*. Manila.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The URBAN GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT (SECTOR) PROJECT



Objective: To assist secondary towns (*pourashavas*)

- improve **urban infrastructure facilities** to increase economic opportunities and to reduce vulnerability to environmental degradation, poverty, and natural hazards
- enhance **accountability** in municipal management and strengthen the capabilities of urban local municipal service delivery



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- UGIIP (2003-2010)
- Second UGIIP (2009 – 2015)
- Third UGIIP (2014 – 2020)

Executing Agency: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) under Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

- ✓ Mandated to plan, develop, and maintain infrastructure at the local level
- ✓ Responsible for **gender and social inclusion** aspects of projects; strong reputation in developing and **using gender mainstreaming approaches**



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PERFORMANCE BASED STRATEGY FOR FUND ALLOCATION:

Participating towns have to successfully implement Urban Governance Improvement Action Program (UGIAP)

THEMES OF UGIAP PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (KEY RESULT AREAS)

- (i) citizen awareness and participation
- (ii) women's participation
- (iii) integration of the urban poor,
- (iv) financial accountability and sustainability,
- (v) administrative transparency.

KEY GENDER ISSUES

- **Workload** – household obligation incl. water collection, waste disposal, family hygiene, etc. more burdensome with lack of services
- **Care burdens** – increased need of care of family members who get sick due to unsanitary conditions; difficulty in providing care due to limited facilities
- **Health** – high risk of illness
- **Personal safety** – exposure to risk due to inadequate facilities; violence in public spaces
- **Inequality in well-being** – women are worse off in social indicators (literacy, nutrition intake)



KEY GENDER ISSUES

Limited participation in decision-making

- There are reserved seats for women in each *pourashava* (female ward commissioners or FWC; now Women Ward Councilors or WWC) but very few participate in decision-making
- WWCs lack experience and skills
- Role of WWCs unclear
- Ward commissioners (regular seats) unsupportive of WWCs
- Town officials and community slow to recognize women as service users and responsible citizens

PROJECT GENDER ACTIONS



Project focused on promoting women's participation at 2 levels:

- ✓ Role of WWCs in municipal governance and in addressing women's needs
- ✓ Women's participation in urban planning and municipal management; and as services users

PROJECT GENDER ACTIONS

UGIAP Performance Criteria on Women's Participation

- ✓ Delineation of responsibilities of WWCs
- ✓ Formation of Gender and Environment subcommittee headed by a WWC
- ✓ Participation of WWC in *pourashava* committees
- ✓ Organization of semi-annual rallies on UGIIP & social & gender dev't involving women
- ✓ Activities undertaken in accordance with GAP
- ✓ Introducing monitoring & reporting system on GAP



PROJECT GENDER ACTIONS

Other Actions in the GAPs

- ✓ Ensure women's access to urban infrastructure
- ✓ Ensure women's participation in infrastructure construction, management & maintenance
- ✓ Promote wage parity in construction, operation & maintenance of infrastructure
- ✓ Increase women's awareness & participation through campaigns in solid waste mgt, sanitation & hygiene
- ✓ Include poor women in slum dev't committees
- ✓ Provide microfinance & skills training for income generation
- ✓ Provide health services for women & children
- ✓ Engage women as staff, consultants, & facilitators
- ✓ Provide orientation of EA, municipal officials, ward commissioners on GAP
- ✓ Improve capacity of EA/PIU to collect sex-disaggregated data, etc.



PROJECT GENDER ACHIEVEMENTS

1. INCREASED WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP

By the end of UGIIP I:

- TLCCs comprised 34% women members; WLCCs comprised 41% women, both exceeding 30% target
- Women members were consulted in approving *pourashava* development plans (PDP)
- Women instrumental in ensuring revenue budgets within annual PDP were earmarked for activities to benefit women
- Project worked with 305 WWCs (i) clearly defined their responsibilities; (ii) improved their skills; (iii) provided suitable workplace:
 - WWCs became more influential
 - Started chairing committees
 - Regularly visited households
 - Conducted meetings & rallies



1. INCREASED WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP

By the end of UGIIP II, the ff. were formed:

- 47 gender committees with at least 33% women members, headed by WWCs and comprising all WWCs;
- municipal standing committees, with 40% women's participation;
- 202 slum improvement committees headed by women (as committee chair in the majority of cases or as co-chair) and with 79% women members (1,989 women);
- 1,574 primary groups with only poor slum women members;
- TLCCs, with more than 33% women's participation (785 out of 2,350 members);
- WLCCs headed by men and women councilors, with about 40.75% women's participation (1,928 out of 4,731 members);
- CBOs led by men and women ward councilors, with 34% women's participation (7,140 of 21,000 members).



1. INCREASED WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP

UGIIP III - Target for women's participation had been exceeded

- Ward Committees comprising at least 40% women members (total 40.7%, target: 40%)
- TLCCs comprise 34.4% women (target: 33%)
- Women and Children Affairs (WCA) Standing Committee with all WWC (96 WWCs or 61.93% of total members, target: 40%), all operational with municipal budget allocation
- Poverty Reduction Slum Improvement Standing Committee comprise more than 40% WWC

Source: December 2017 Quarterly Progress Report



PROJECT GENDER ACHIEVEMENTS

2. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- ✓ Primary groups; savings & credit groups formed w/ 95% women members
- ✓ Through savings, members were able to set-up income generating activities (tailoring, batik making)
- ✓ Monthly income of participating women in slums rose by 50%
- ✓ 18,903 women provided with financial support for IGA; 9,692 of them earned cash income
- ✓ Women's labor days amounted to 5,088 (24.48% of 17,864)
- ✓ Women filled 11 of 30 staff in PMO; 29 of 187 PMU, 15 of 95 consultants; 14 of 111 Urban Mgt Support Unit



PROJECT GENDER ACHIEVEMENTS

3. WOMEN FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC SPACES

- ✓ 80% of municipalities established well-lit & safe sitting areas & separate toilets for women in public parts
- ✓ Street lighting in slums
- ✓ Spaces for women's businesses in markets
- ✓ Separate toilets, waiting areas & ticket counters for women in bus terminals
- ✓ 42 *pourashavas* created women's sections w/ women staff in one-stop service center for municipal services
- ✓ 42 *pourashavas* established resting & breastfeeding rooms
- ✓ Separate office space & toilets for WWCs

LESSONS LEARNED



- Establishing quota for women's representation is an effective gender mainstreaming strategy
- Increased women's representation strengthens structures & become more responsive to citizens' needs, more inclusive & efficient
- Empowers women to influence local decisions
- Improved urban infrastructure & services help reduce women's time poverty;
- Makes it safer & easier for women to reach markets/employment opportunities
- Decrease medical expenses

THANK YOU!

