



GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL



EUROPEAN UNION



Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

# Inclusive Steps to Development...

## Empowerment for stronger communities



Rural Village Water Resources Management Project-III  
Sudurpaschim and Karnali Provinces, Nepal





## Access to water and sanitation is a right, also in remote communities

RVWRMP's multi-sectoral actions apply a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and mainstream this into all project activities. We ensure that all beneficiaries in the project area are aware of their rights, and have the tools to access their rights to WASH and livelihood opportunities, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or poverty level.

Access to water and a clean environment is a right for all people, equally. Our water supply and sanitation schemes ensure that all groups including children, disabled people and persons from disadvantaged economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds have access to basic water and sanitation. Human rights are the heart of the project, via:



- Inclusive and participatory, gender sensitive Water and Livelihoods Planning (WUMP/LIP);
- Non-discrimination criteria for investment decisions and mandatory participation of women and disadvantaged people in meetings, trainings and project bodies;
- The democratic and accountability mechanisms and procedures throughout the Project;
- Easy to implement Step-By-Step guidelines for community-led water supply systems and livelihoods activities;
- Community led procurement and finance through user committees;
- Income generation and decent jobs for women and socially and financially excluded groups.

## Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – a core competence of RVWRMP

We believe in equal opportunities and choices for everybody. Therefore, the Project addresses inclusion and empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups so they can benefit from the different activities.

RVWRMP works through and with the Rural Municipalities who are accountable to the people for managing the Project funds. We support local governments to expand WASH coverage to the remote villages. This includes policy development, participatory planning and reporting on the water supply and sanitation situation and schemes Implementation. Through public audits and mass meetings we strengthen local governance and establish a culture of transparency and accountability in municipal development.



Principles of gender equality are incorporated in all steps of the water supply systems implementation cycle by activities to support equality and inclusion. For instance, women-specific confidence-building events, or special toilet designs that enable access for people with disabilities. The project organizes childcare for women with small children to attend training events.

## Female leadership for local development

Women manage household work on the farm and often stay in charge of the family and community affairs while their husbands migrate to India for seasonal work. Women usually fill the role of vice-chairperson in the Rural Municipalities. The Project embraced the task to prepare and encourage women and disadvantaged persons to take up leadership positions. This includes building self-confidence, capacity, learning and addressing the social norms in society.

The Project has initiated “Women as Decision Makers” workshops. Specific issues related to gender roles are identified, along with entry points for empowerment and development of women within the communities. The RMs realize that including women in all decisions is essential for sustainable development of the entire community. The workshops generate a Gender Responsive Plan and budget for joint implementation by local governments. When possible, RVWRMP supports the implementation of these plans. Gender Responsive Plans are reviewed annually. Issues of people with disabilities are also incorporated in the Gender Responsive Plan from FY 2077/78 (the updated plans are now called Gender and Disability Responsive Plans).

- Rural women felt recognized and valued by being involved for the first time in gender responsive planning through the local level workshop on “Women as Decision Makers”.
- Women working with RVWRMP have become so much more vocal.
- Women's issues are addressed through the implementation of Gender Responsive Plans at RM level.

## Women's success with livelihoods improvement

Women almost exclusively manage the household gardens. Women are enthusiastic about incorporating more diverse vegetables in the household diet and also benefit from selling excess production. Over 50% of home-garden training beneficiaries are women.

There is evidence that women-led and/or women-only cooperatives are more successful and sustainable than cooperatives led by men. The project takes into consideration the time schedules and needs of women, so more women can participate in training and other capacity building activities. Childcare is provided during the training. We see that most of the women are depositing their household savings in the cooperatives. They are aware that that money will be in the cooperative to serve them and the community.



Phase	RVWRMP Measures to integrate GESI in the Project Cycle
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project selects Rural Municipalities (RMs) based on remoteness, with limited services and a high proportion of disadvantaged groups, using a Water Supply facility hardship score.</li> <li>• Baseline studies disaggregate data by sex and caste/ethnicity and on differently abled peoples.</li> <li>• NGOs recruited for service provision that have women and disadvantaged group (DAG) members in their executive body get a higher score during selection. For staff selection, female candidates, DAGs and local residents get extra points.</li> <li>• Confidence building trainings for women and DAGs are held before the planning process.</li> <li>• Mandatory representation quotas for mass meetings i.e. social assessment/needs identification events must have at least 75% of households present (1 female/1 male), as well as 50% women and proportionate representation by DAGs.</li> <li>• Separate women and men's groups are formed for mapping and needs identification exercises and in all other project related decision making by the community.</li> <li>• RMs are supported to organise 'Women as Decision Makers', workshops to facilitate elected women and municipal staff to formulate gender responsive plans, with budgets.</li> </ul>
Preparatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target is at least 50% representation of women and proportional representation of DAGs in all users' committees, boards of cooperatives, livelihood related trainings &amp; activities. In addition, 50% representation of women and proportional representation of DAGs in key positions (i.e. Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Joint-Secretary and Treasurer).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and men have separate meetings to select their User Committee (UC) representatives.</li> <li>• Women's/mothers' groups at cluster or ward level are an entry point to trigger behaviour change, build consensus and achieve commitment to eliminate sanitation and hygiene related taboos.</li> <li>• Discussion with girls and female teachers in the schools to incorporate their specific needs in the design of sanitation and hygiene facilities in the schools.</li> <li>• Separate meetings for women to decide the location of the tap stands. In each cluster, the participation of at least one woman from each HH is mandatory.</li> <li>• Selection of suitable venue with appropriate timing, and timely information to all users/UCs for the meetings is made.</li> <li>• Local language is used in facilitation of the trainings and mass meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, ultra-poor and DAGs are given priority in scheme construction activities to earn wages and participate in livelihood promotion and income generating activities.</li> <li>• The project supports where possible construction of Child, Gender and Disabled friendly school and public toilets, MHM friendly WASH facilities in the schools, Child friendly water tap.</li> <li>• The User Committees can decide to lower the water tariff for old and poor members of the community.</li> <li>• Women and DAGs are given priority when selecting participants for skilled training opportunities.</li> <li>• Both female and male village maintenance workers are trained to work in water supply schemes.</li> <li>• Awareness raising and training is provided on Menstrual Hygiene Management and campaigning against menstrual taboos.</li> <li>• Awareness-raising on access issues for People with Disabilities</li> <li>• RMs are supported to develop gender and disability sensitive strategies, such as Water Resources and Dignified Menstruation Management strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Post Construction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users' representation must be at least 50% women and proportionate representation of DAGs. 75% of all households must be present in each public hearing.</li> <li>• Basic O&amp;M and sanitation and hygiene training for women's tap groups is organized.</li> <li>• Workshops for female members of UCs at RM level to build capacities and confidence.</li> <li>• All post construction trainings have at least 50% women and proportionate representatives of DAGs.</li> <li>• Women and DAGs are given priority for learning and sharing visits.</li> <li>• Monitoring teams of RM/water supply schemes should include at least one female member.</li> <li>• Women and DAGs are given priority when selecting participants for skilled training opportunities.</li> <li>• Female Village Maintenance Workers (VMWs) are trained in each water supply scheme.</li> </ul>

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"This brochure was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland"

