



GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ADB OPERATIONS IN NEPAL, 2011–2015

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Contents

Tables, Figures, and Boxes	iv
Preface	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Abbreviations	vii
Introduction	1
Asian Development Bank Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	1
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Nepal Country Partnership Strategy	2
Approaches to Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	2
Achievements and Progress	4
Enabling Policy and Institutional Environment	6
Equitable Access to Basic Infrastructure	7
Participation in Decision Making	9
Human Capital Development	11
Capacity Building and Skills Development	14
Employment and Economic Opportunities	16
Lessons, Challenges, and Recommendations	18
Lessons	18
Challenges and the Way Forward	18
Appendix: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Approaches, by Sector	20

Tables, Figures, and Boxes

Tables

1	Gender Equity Theme and Effective Gender Mainstreaming Projects, by Sector	5
2	Participation in Community Groups, User Groups, Farmer Groups, and Cooperatives	10
3	Representation of Women in the Executive Committees of Community-Based Organizations, Farmer Groups, User Groups, and Cooperatives	11
4	Net Enrollment Ratio, Completion Ratio, and Teachers Trained in Primary, Basic, and Lower Secondary School	12
5	Employment and Economic Opportunities Created through Ongoing Projects	16
A1	Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Projects	20
A2	Education and Skills Development Sector Projects	23
A3	Water Supply, Sanitation, and Municipal Infrastructure Sector Projects	24
A4	Transport Sector Projects	25
A5	Energy Sector Projects	26

Figures

1	Gender Equity Theme and Effective Gender Mainstreaming Projects, by Sector	4
2	Access to Basic Infrastructure and Services	8

Boxes

1	Training Events Led by the Nepal Resident Mission	7
A1	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project	27
A2	Establishing Women and Children Service Centers Project	29

Preface

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is a serious global challenge that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is fully committed to pursuing. Its mainstreaming into the design, implementation, and monitoring of ADB-financed operations is considered critical to ensuring that women, the poor, and other disadvantaged groups share equitably in the benefits arising from ADB projects.

This report on GESI in the operations of ADB in Nepal from 2011 to 2015 marks the culmination of systematic efforts made by the GESI staff at ADB's Nepal Resident Mission (NRM) to gather GESI results from ADB projects in the various sectors in Nepal, and consolidate these into a comprehensive and cohesive written record. Five sectors are covered in this report: agriculture and natural resources, education and skills development, urban development and water supply and sanitation, transport, and energy. The results, derived from a thorough analysis of GESI Action Plan Status Reports for 2011–2015, are presented under six themes: enabling policy and institutional environment, participation in decision making, equitable access to basic infrastructure, human capital development, capacity building and skills development, and employment and economic empowerment.

It is hoped that this report will spur further endeavors by the NRM to maximize opportunities for GESI mainstreaming in the ADB portfolio, and achieve better GESI results. This is also envisaged to guide NRM in helping the government address—through policy dialogue, legal reform, and institutional strengthening—barriers to greater equality and inclusion based on gender, caste, ethnicity, regional identity, location, or disability.

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Team at the Nepal Resident Mission (NRM) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), composed of Suman Subba, senior social development officer for gender, and Jaya Sharma, GESI consultant.

Kenichi Yokoyama, country director, advised and guided the team, and Francesco Tornieri, principal social development specialist (gender and development), provided technical advice that helped give the report its final shape.

The authors acknowledge the assistance provided by NRM staff, project team members of executing and implementing agencies, gender focal persons, and GESI consultants for ADB-supported projects in Nepal.

Abbreviations

ADB	– Asian Development Bank
BCRWME	– Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions
CPS	– country partnership strategy
EGM	– effective gender mainstreaming
ETESIP	– Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project
GEN	– gender equity theme
GESI	– gender equality and social inclusion
IUDP	– Integrated Urban Development Project
NER	– net enrollment ratio
NRM	– Nepal Resident Mission
RISMFP	– Raising Incomes of Small and Medium Farmers Project
SSRP	– School Sector Reform Plan
STIUEIP	– Secondary Towns Integrated Urban Environmental Improvement Project
WUA	– water user association

Introduction

This report takes stock of the progress and achievements related to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in projects and programs financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Nepal in 2011–2015. It is based on a review of all ADB-assisted project-specific actions for GESI in this period, and produced in line with the commitments set out in the Nepal country partnership strategy.

Asian Development Bank Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

ADB’s 1998 Policy on Gender and Development, and Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan 2013–2020 adopt gender mainstreaming as a key strategy in pursuing GESI.¹ This strategy is supported by ADB’s Strategy 2020, its long-term strategy framework, which includes gender equity as one of the five drivers of change toward inclusive growth.²

To measure and report on the extent to which gender equality has been integrated into project design, ADB adopted a four-tier gender categorization system. Projects in the top two tiers—gender equity theme (GEN) and effective gender mainstreaming (EGM)—are deemed to have met ADB’s “gender mainstreaming” standards. Project-specific gender action plans are the key tools used to ensure tangible and explicit attention to gender equality in project design and implementation. These project action plans are structured so that they mirror the project’s target outputs as specified in the project’s design and monitoring framework (DMF). They form an integral part of the project design and are implemented by the borrowing country’s government and the project executing and implementing agencies. ADB’s corporate-level results framework includes the commitment that 45% of ADB-financed operations will meet its gender mainstreaming standards and be categorized as either GEN or EGM at the design stage, and that 70% of all completed sovereign operations will deliver the intended gender equality results.³

ADB is committed to increasing the proportion of projects meeting its gender mainstreaming standards

¹ ADB. 2003. *Policy on Gender and Development*. Manila. www.adb.org/documents/policy-gender-and-development; ADB. 2013. *Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan, 2013–2020*. Manila. www.adb.org/documents/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-operational-plan-2013-2020

² ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: Working for an Asia and Pacific Free of Poverty*. www.adb.org/documents/strategy-2020-working-asia-and-pacific-free-poverty. The other four drivers of change in the ADB Strategy 2020 are private sector development, good governance and capacity development, knowledge solutions, and partnerships.

³ ADB. 2014. *ADB’s Results Framework: Interim Update to Align with the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020*. www.adb.org/documents/adb-results-framework-interim-update-mtr Project achievements reported against the gender action plan (GAP) targets and activities are considered successful if 70% of GAP activities are implemented and completed, and 75% of quantitative targets (proportion of women participants) in the GAP are achieved.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Nepal Country Partnership Strategy

ADB Nepal Resident Mission addresses social inclusion and gender equality together, using ADB gender mainstreaming tools and approaches

In its Nepal operations, ADB promotes gender equality together with social inclusion. This approach recognizes that various groups in Nepal have experienced exclusion and have not been mainstreamed into the nation's development efforts. The Constitution of 2015 defines excluded groups as those consisting of women, Dalits,⁴ Adivasi Janajatis (the indigenous nationalities), Madhesis (natives of the fertile Madhesh plains of southern Nepal), Muslims, members of the third gender,⁵ people with disabilities, and people living in geographically remote areas.

ADB's Nepal country partnership strategy (CPS), 2013–2017, specifies GESI as thematic priorities in accordance with the commitments made by the Government of Nepal. The CPS is aimed at mainstreaming GESI considerations into the design, implementation, and monitoring of ADB-financed operations across all sectors. Besides highlighting specific issues by sector, the CPS makes the following commitments:

ADB will build on (progress under the previous CPS) and increase the proportion of projects with GESI features. GESI action plans will be prepared with disaggregated data and analyses when designing projects, and the plans will be used in monitoring results. Government's capacity will be strengthened through policy, planning, and regulatory reforms, replication of GESI mainstreaming in the government's own sector operations, and monitoring of sector-wide GESI results.⁶

A GESI results monitoring matrix is part of the CPS. It takes into account the gender-related indicators of ADB's corporate results framework, the 2013 operational plan for gender equality, and the gender results monitoring matrix of the South Asia Department.

Approaches to Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Improved monitoring tools and approaches at the project and program levels represent an important advance

The Nepal Resident Mission (NRM) works in close partnership with sector agencies and the project executing and implementing agencies to mainstream GESI considerations into ADB operations. Key strategies and measures are summarized below. Further details by sector and project are provided in the Appendix.

- **Gender equality and social inclusion institutionalization within executing and implementing agencies.** For increased institutional accountability and ownership, GESI institutionalization is continually promoted among executing and implementing agencies of ADB-supported projects. Possible measures include support, provided through a specific component of a grant or loan project or separate technical assistance (TA), for the establishment of a GESI unit or desk, the development of terms of reference for the

⁴ Dalits are members of the so-called "lowest caste" in the traditional Hindu caste system. This socially and politically excluded group forms 13% of Nepal's population.

⁵ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals.

⁶ ADB. 2013. *Nepal Country Partnership Strategy, 2013–2017*. Manila. para. 17. The Gender Analysis Summary (linked document 3) sets out the commitments by sector, para. 12. www.adb.org/documents/nepal-country-partnership-strategy-2013-2017

unit or its staff, and the development and implementation of GESI policy or operating guidelines.

- **Gender equality and social inclusion–related policy, legal, or regulatory reform.** ADB supports reforms to address persistent barriers based on gender, caste, ethnicity, regional identity, location, or disability. ADB-supported projects contribute to policy development and reform, and to the strengthening of structures and mechanisms.
- **Promotion of gender-sensitive and socially inclusive projects.** ADB’s key approach is the design and implementation of project-specific GESI action plans. The action plans provide road maps for mainstreaming GESI during project implementation, and consist of targets and indicators that are aligned with the project design and monitoring framework. Project administration manuals set out detailed mechanisms and arrangements for action plan implementation, such as terms of reference for gender and social development specialists.
- **Gender equality and social inclusion capacity development.** Training is provided to enhance technical capacity to effectively implement, monitor, and report on GESI action plans; to improve the ability to mainstream GESI within sectors and projects; and to increase sharing of good practices and lessons.
- **Monitoring and tracking of gender equality and social inclusion results.** Emphasis is placed on ensuring adequate monitoring and reporting on progress toward GESI results in ADB operations, and better capture of ADB’s contribution to the achievement of the government’s GESI-related goals and strategies. For all GEN and EGM projects, the status of action plan implementation is monitored and reported quarterly. GESI-responsive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been established or improved in project management offices. The NRM assesses GESI results in the key domains outlined in the GESI results monitoring matrix.

Achievements and Progress

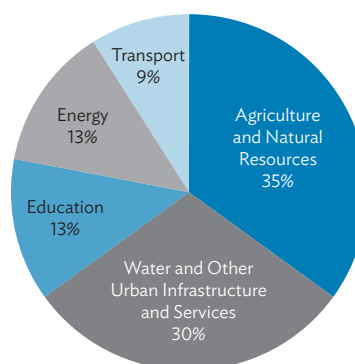
Achievements and progress are monitored using the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) results monitoring matrix, which was approved with the Nepal Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for 2013–2017. The discussion below is based on a thorough review of the information and data on projects categorized under the gender equity theme (GEN) and effective gender mainstreaming (EGM) submitted by executing and implementing agencies to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Nepal Resident Mission (NRM) (for delegated loans) or to sector divisions at ADB headquarters (for non-delegated loans) during the period 2011–2015 (up to the fourth quarter of 2015).

As gender equality and social inclusion are addressed jointly in Nepal, the ADB gender categories are used to track progress toward both. Results are presented under the following six themes of the results monitoring matrix:

- enabling policy and institutional environment,
- participation in decision making,
- equitable access to basic infrastructure,
- human capital development,
- capacity building and skills development, and
- employment and economic empowerment.

This discussion is focused on ongoing GEN and EGM projects in the Nepal portfolio. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the 23 projects by sector, and Table 1 identifies the projects, 18 of which were approved in 2011–2015.

Figure 1: Gender Equity Theme and Effective Gender Mainstreaming Projects, by Sector (2015)



Source: ADB South Asia Department Gender Database (accessed December 2015).

Table 1: Gender Equity Theme and Effective Gender Mainstreaming Projects, by Sector

Period of Approval	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Education	Energy	Transport	Water and Other Urban Infrastructure and Services
Approved under previous CPS	Raising Incomes of Small and Medium Farmers Project (2010) ^a Community Irrigation Project (2010) ^a			Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Project (2010) ^b	Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (2009) ^a Secondary Towns Integrated Urban Environment Improvement Project (2010) ^b
Approved in 2011–2015	Highland Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement Project (2011) ^b Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Development Project–Additional Financing (2011) ^b Water Resources Project Preparatory Facility (2012) ^b Bagmati River Basin Improvement Project (2013) ^b Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions (2013) ^b Community-Managed Irrigated Agriculture Sector Project–Additional Financing (2014) ^b	School Sector Program (2011) ^a Skills Development Project (2013) ^a Emergency Earthquake Assistance Project (2015) ^b	Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project (2011) ^b Tanahu Hydropower Project (2013) ^b South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation Power System Expansion Project (2014) ^b	South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Project (2013) ^b	Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project (2011) ^b Integrated Urban Development Project (2012) ^b Kathmandu Valley Wastewater Management Project (2013) ^b Third Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (2014) ^a Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project–Additional Financing (2015) ^b
Total No. of Projects, by Sector	8	3	3	2	7

CPS = country partnership strategy, EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme, SASEC = South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation.

^a GEN projects.

^b EGM projects.

Note: The Tanahu Hydropower Project, which came into effect only in August 2014, has yet to show results, and is not discussed in this report.

Source: ADB South Asia Department Gender Database (accessed December 2015).

It is encouraging to note that the 18 GEN and EGM projects approved in 2011–2015 made up 78% of all projects approved during the period, well above the corporate target of 45% of projects meeting gender mainstreaming standards.

Enabling Policy and Institutional Environment

Under several projects, there have been steps forward in establishing units or developing policy, but partners must still follow these up to make them effective

ADB support is contributing to a strengthened policy and institutional environment for gender equality and social inclusion in several sectors.

In urban development, with grant support under the **Integrated Urban Development Project (IUDP)**, the Ministry of Urban Development created a GESI Section (now known as the Social Coordination Section) and endorsed its own GESI Operational Guidelines (2013). More than 200 officials from the ministry and two departments, as well as regional and local officials, were trained to use the guidelines. Both the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction and the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage⁷ have also established GESI desks under senior sociologists. These departments developed annual GESI action plans in financial year 2014–2015 and received government funding for implementation. Actions by the ministry’s GESI Section to implement the GESI Guidelines include reviewing policies, strengthening mechanisms for GESI mainstreaming into planning and monitoring activities, supporting the capacity development of staff, developing GESI training modules and toolkits, and monitoring and measuring GESI performance against targets.

In the irrigation sector, the **Water Resources Project Preparatory Facility (WRPPF)** is supporting GESI mainstreaming activities in two departments of the Ministry of Irrigation—the Department of Irrigation (DOI) and the Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP). Departmental restructuring included establishing a GESI section at the DOI and an environment section at the DWIDP, each with senior divisional engineers, a social development staff member, and an engineer. A senior sociologist has been assigned to head the GESI section. To implement the guidelines, the facility has provided support for the development of detailed terms of reference, action plans and budgets, and staff training.

Amendments to the 2003 Irrigation Policy required under the loan conditions of the **Community-Managed Irrigated Agriculture Sector Project (CMIASP)** included provisions for women’s empowerment, gender equality, and social inclusion. These stipulations built on earlier requirements for 33% participation of women in water user associations, with additional specific provisions for improved access to irrigation and related resources for women and other excluded groups, and the strengthening of women’s skills and capacity through irrigation-related training. However, the regulations and directives for policy enactment are yet to be developed.

The **Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project (DRILP)** has prepared a gender policy for rural transportation, including affirmative action measures and requirements for gender mainstreaming. However, here, too, implementation remains a challenge. The policy has never been put into operation because the government lacks the human resources, mechanisms, and technical capacity needed to institutionalize the policy, particularly at the district level, which is responsible for implementation.

⁷ This department was moved to the new Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation in 2016.

The **Skills Development Project** supports the restructuring of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training. A GESI unit has been formed with project support but has not yet been officially endorsed. However, it is being pursued in interim CTEVT reorganization plan.

Another channel for building government capacity to implement a GESI approach in its mainstream development programs is the training given by the NRM to government staff, gender focal persons, social development officers, and gender and social development consultants for ADB-supported projects (Box 1).

Box 1: Training Events Led by the Nepal Resident Mission

Eight gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) training events were organized by the Nepal Resident Mission in 2011–2015:

- for project directors, a 2-day workshop on GESI mainstreaming in Asian Development Bank-supported projects, 1–2 March 2011 and 22 May 2014;
- for gender focal points, gender and social development officers, and project gender specialists, a 2-day workshop on enhancing GESI action plan implementation, monitoring, and reporting, March 2012, February 2014, and March 2015;
- in the energy sector, a sector-specific 2-day workshop on addressing poverty, gender equity, and social inclusion in the sector, February 2012; and
- in the irrigation sector, sector-specific 2-day decentralized sensitization workshops on GESI in the irrigation sector, one each in the Central and Eastern development regions, September 2012.

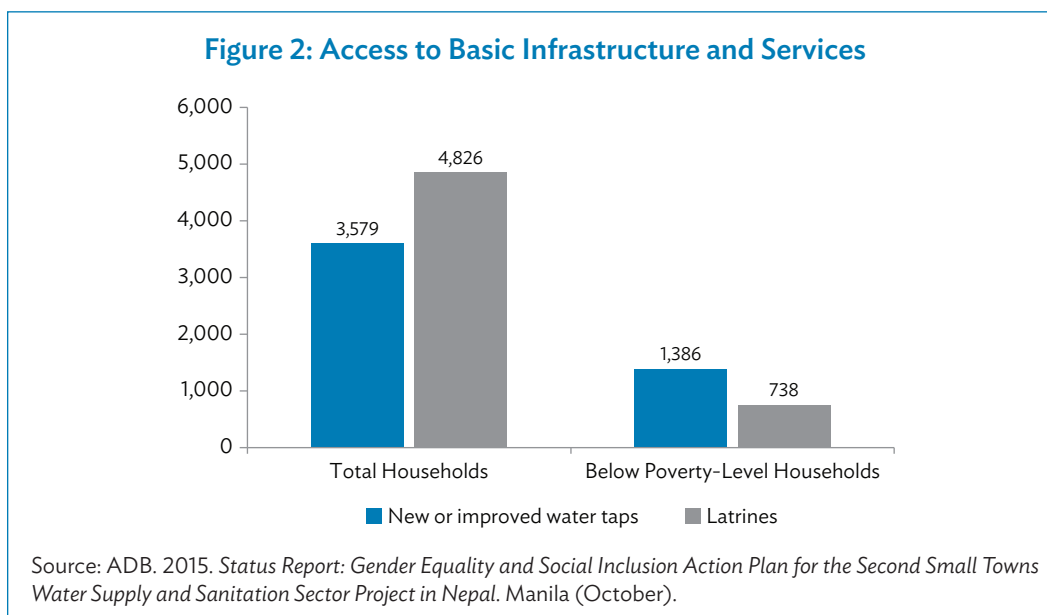
Source: NRM training reports, 2011–2015.

Equitable Access to Basic Infrastructure

ADB projects have contributed to better access to basic infrastructure and services through support for improvements in water supply and sanitation facilities, rural electrification, and rural roads and infrastructure.

In the urban sector, the **Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project** (Figure 2) has provided 6,212 households in 20 small towns with tap or latrine connections (or both). Poor households received 100% coverage under the project. Of the 3,579 households that were connected to new or improved water taps, 1,386 were households below the poverty line. On the other hand, 738 of the 4,826 household latrines constructed were for households below the poverty line. Households headed by women accounted for about 18% of all connections.

The **Secondary Towns Integrated Urban Environment Improvement Project (STIUEIP)** initiated health and sanitation support programs with 33 community-based organizations in three municipalities, benefiting poor women (68%), Dalits (10%), Janajatis (51%), and other



disadvantaged groups (10%).⁸ Under the project, 135 health, hygiene, and sanitation committees and female community health volunteers went through training to gain a better awareness of the need for private latrines to improve sanitation. As female community health volunteers provide regular services to local communities, including them in programs in which they learn new skills also allows the project to expand its outreach.

In addition, STIUEIP is supporting the development of small water supply and sanitation infrastructure, and lane improvement and road construction in poverty clusters of project municipalities. This has helped reduce women's workload and time poverty, improve their health and hygiene, and provided them with opportunities to scale up their income generation activities. Around 866 family toilets, 8 public toilets, and 10 hand pumps have been installed under the project. For community schools, separate toilets for girls and boys that are also appropriate for students with disabilities have been built. Lane improvements have been carried out and 27 roads connecting poverty clusters have been built or upgraded.

The rehabilitation and improvement of small-scale infrastructure in 85 poverty clusters is also benefiting from the community development programs of the **Integrated Urban Development Project (IUDP)** according to the priority needs of covered communities, particularly the poor, households headed by women, and other marginalized groups.

The **Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Development Project (DRILP)** rebuilds and rehabilitates rural roads, and also finances supplementary infrastructure that is identified and selected in a participatory manner to address community priorities, including the needs of women and other disadvantaged groups. The 114 community infrastructure projects completed so far include primary and secondary school buildings, community buildings and health posts, small irrigation schemes, community water supply schemes, micro-hydro power facilities, and

⁸ The projects have started collecting disaggregated data on women, Dalits, Janajatis, and below-poverty-level households. More disaggregation is being attempted to include data on other excluded groups such as Muslims, Madhesis, and Other Backward Classes.

village roads or trails. In the consultation meetings held to ensure participatory and transparent identification and selection of infrastructure, women accounted for 30.5% of participants; and disadvantaged groups, 62%.

The **Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions (BCRWME)** project is focused on the construction and rehabilitation of small water supply infrastructure in remote districts of far-west hills that are highly affected by, and vulnerable to, climate change. Eleven such schemes were identified and selected in a participatory manner through public meetings held at ward level with the extensive participation of women (45%) and Dalits (21%).

The **School Sector Program** has improved education facilities for many students. By the end of the program period, 35,110 new classrooms had been built, 18,925 schools rehabilitated, the external environment of 17,363 schools upgraded, and 11,500 girls' toilets installed. The availability of separate toilets for girls has significantly contributed to reduced absenteeism and dropout rates.

In the transport sector, the **Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Project** held extensive consultations with women and disabled groups during technical design to incorporate appropriate design standards for women, disabled persons, and the general public. Attention was given to streetlights, footpaths, crossings, sidewalks, bridges, traffic signals, toilets, telephone booths, curb ramps, audio-tactile pavement markings at road crossings, and signage.

Participation in Decision Making

ADB-supported projects in several sectors promote the involvement of women and excluded groups in crucial decisions related to matters such as infrastructure selection, infrastructure operation and maintenance, agriculture production and marketing, and access to services.

Participation in User Groups, Committees, and Cooperatives

Women account for 50% of the 179,649 participants in community-based organizations (farmer groups, water and irrigation user groups, and cooperatives) in the agriculture, urban, water supply and sanitation, rural roads, and irrigation sectors (Table 2). Women's participation is highest in community-based organizations in agriculture, in which 50% of general members are women, compared with 40% in irrigation, 38% in rural roads, and 35% in water supply and sanitation. Rising numbers of women and small or marginal farmers are mobilized through saving and credit associations by virtue of their links to microfinance organizations and cooperatives. Women's involvement in the agriculture and livestock sector has traditionally been substantial and the current high level of male out-migration is further feminizing this sector.

Women's participation in road-building groups for the DRILP-Additional Financing (AF) is only 38%, as construction and building works are still considered a predominantly male domain.

Community development programs targeting the urban poor are helping to broaden opportunities for the meaningful participation of women, the poor, and the highly marginalized, including slum and squatter dwellers, in urban and municipal infrastructure projects. "Meaningful participation" means the involvement of members of these groups in prioritizing, planning, and implementing activities conducive to their own development. Women constitute 48% of participants in urban

ADB projects help give visibility and voice to women and other excluded groups

Table 2: Participation in Community Groups, User Groups, Farmer Groups, and Cooperatives

Sector	Women	Dalits	Janajatis	Other ^a
Agriculture (%)	50.0	9.0	43.0	48.0
Irrigation (%)	40.0	14.0	21.0	65.0
Rural roads (%)	38.0	18.0	31.0	52.0
Climate resilience (%)	47.0	25.0	0.3	75.0
Water supply and sanitation (%)	35.0	3.0	37.0	61.0
Urban development (%)	46.0	50.0	64.0	59.0
All Sectors (%)	49.0	11.0	39.0	60.0
Total No. of Beneficiaries	179,649	18,967	69,213	35,111

^a Brahmin/Chettri, Madhesis, Muslims, and other ethnic groups.

Note: Category overlap results in double counting.

Source: Project GESI Action Plan Quarterly Reports 2015.

community-based organizations related to water use, health, sanitation, and associated matters. The proportion is lower for water-related organizations, and higher for organizations established in poverty clusters and in slum and squatter areas.

Dalit and Janajati representation in farmer groups, user committees, and cooperatives has yet to meet the desired number and percentage. While intensive social mobilization and awareness-raising campaigns have led to a gradual increase in the participation of Dalits, Janajatis, and other disadvantaged groups in project activities, the representation of these groups remains low in proportion to their presence in the national population.⁹ Dalits account for 11% of the members of formal and informal bodies of ongoing projects. Dalit representation in agriculture sector projects is only 9% (compared with 43% for Janajatis) but is slightly higher, at 18%, in rural road projects (versus 31% for Janajatis). In the BCRWME project, Dalit participation is at 25% (compared with 0.3% for Janajatis), as the project area has a higher Dalit population.

Urban projects, in particular the IUDP and the STIUEIP, can be considered successful in ensuring the participation of a high proportion of Dalits and Janajatis in tole lane organizations (TLOs).¹⁰ In IUDP-related user committees of TLOs, Dalit representation is 37% and 63% for STIUEIP. Janajati representation is 32% for IUDP and 96% for STIUEIP. Male–female participation among Dalits and Janajatis was noted to be almost equal in both the IUDP and STIUEIP projects. In these projects, TLOs were established in the poverty clusters of project municipalities with a high population of Dalits and Janajatis among the poor, resulting in a participation percentage higher than that of other social groups.

⁹ Information about their representation in the local population, which might be more relevant, is not available.

¹⁰ Tole lane organizations are community-based organizations of households from the same neighborhood, with their own rules and regulations approved by the respective municipalities.

Representation in Key Decision-Making Positions

Of the total executive committee members holding key positions, including those of chair, secretary, or treasurer, 8,103 are women. Around 9% of the total female participation in various groups and in user committees and cooperatives is in key decision-making positions. As shown in Table 3, three sectors—rural roads, climate resilience, and agriculture—have higher percentages of women in key positions. This increase can be attributed to the mandatory quota for women and proportional representation of excluded groups in committees in accordance with the government’s policy. The high percentage is also due to the traditional role of women in the agriculture sector.

Table 3: Representation of Women in the Executive Committees of Community-Based Organizations, Farmer Groups, User Groups, and Cooperatives

Sector	Representation (% of Total)
Agriculture	40
Irrigation	37
Rural roads	45
Climate resilience	44
Water supply and sanitation	28
Urban development	34
Total (8,103 Women in Leadership Positions)	38

Source: Project GESI Action Plan Quarterly Reports 2015.

Projects across the various sectors other than agriculture are yet to report on Dalit and Janajati representation in executive committees. Therefore, a comparative analysis of overall representation could not be made for this report. But field observation shows that women, small and marginal farmers, and other excluded groups are better represented as general members in farmer groups, water user groups, and community-based groups than as executive committee members.

There is also higher acceptance in the community for the inclusion of women and other previously excluded groups in decision-making positions. However, the meaningful participation of these groups in influencing decisions, voicing their needs, and receiving equitable benefits remains a challenge. In some cases, the representation is mere “tokenism” and political party-based representation in user committees is also obstructing inclusion. Unequal power relations among various social groups act as a barrier to equal participation and voice.

Human Capital Development

Education

Good progress has been achieved in the last few years in improving access to basic and secondary education for girls and children from vulnerable communities. According to the Department of

Education's Flash Report 2014–2015, the net enrollment ratio (NER)¹¹ at the primary level is 96.6% (96.3% for girls and 96.9% for boys); and the NER at the basic level is 89.4% (89.4% for girls and 89.6% for boys) (Table 4). Gender parity (equal numbers of boys and girls) has been achieved at the primary, basic, and secondary levels. However, the national data mask disparities across geographic regions, districts, and social groups.

Table 4: Net Enrollment Ratio, Completion Ratio, and Teachers Trained in Primary, Basic, and Lower Secondary School (%)

Parameter	Primary Level		Basic Level		Lower Secondary Level	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Net enrollment ratio	96.9	96.3	89.6	89.4	76.5	78.9
Promotion rate (% of students completing the cycle)	88.2	88.7	90.8	91.0
Teachers fully trained according to quality or competency standards	95.2	94.8	91.7	92.5	81.6	80.2

... = no data available.

Source: Department of Education Flash Report 2015–2016.

Further, the poor quality of school education, including poor learning environments and outdated teaching methods, is evidence of poor performance. At the primary level, promotion rates are 88.2% for boys and 88.7% for girls, repetition rates are 7.8% for boys and 7.5% for girls, and dropout rates are 4.0% for boys and 3.8% for girls. The survival rate to grade 5 is slightly higher for girls (87.9%) than for boys (87.1%), as is the survival rate to grade 8 (77.4% for girls, compared with 75.9% for boys).

For socially excluded groups, there has been progress in improving access to primary and basic education, but enrollment is still low compared with that for other students. Of the total enrollment of 4,335,355 at the primary level and 1,835,313 at lower secondary, the enrollment share of Dalits is 19.7% at the primary level and 14.4% at lower secondary, and for Janajatis it is 34.4% at the primary level and 38.6% at the lower secondary level. In 2014, among Dalits, there were 105 girls for every 100 boys at every level; among Janajatis, the comparative figure (or gender parity index) was 1.02 at the primary level, 1.09 at lower secondary, and 1.04 at the basic level.

From 2009 to 2015, the NER for girls increased from 40.1% to 57.3% at the secondary level, and from 6.8% to 16.9% at the higher secondary level; by 2015, there were 99 girls for every 100 boys at the secondary level (103 girls at the higher secondary level). While the increase in the NER and the lack of a gender gap are encouraging, overall enrollment remains low. Also at the tertiary level, the gender gap is narrowing but low enrollment persists, particularly among girls. For Dalits and Janajatis, their share of enrollment at the secondary level (compared with their percentage share

¹¹ The NER is the ratio of the enrollment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

of the population) has improved, but the increase is not substantial and there are still gender gaps in Dalit enrollment.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2011), the out-of school population by age is 8% at 13 years, 12% at 14 years, 18% at 15 years, and 25% at 16 years. It has been estimated that 8.7% of those in the age group 6–24 years have never attended school.¹² Among the regions, the Terai (plain region) has the highest rate of out-of-school children, followed by the mountain, hill, and valley regions. Poverty and education-related costs, poor academic progress and learning outcomes, sociocultural norms and practices, and geographic remoteness keep the children out of school.¹³ Government strategies for addressing the issues include the development of an equity index to identify districts and schools that need support in bringing children into the formal school system, and the continuation of other equity measures such as scholarships and incentives.

In 2015–2016, women accounted for less than half of teachers at each level: 42.3% at the primary level, 27.9% at lower secondary, and 39.1% at the basic level. At the primary and basic levels, the percentage of female Dalit and Janajati teachers was lower than that of male teachers. Female Dalit teachers made up 3.6% of teachers at the primary level (5.1% for all Dalit teachers, male and female), and 3.7% at the basic level (5.0% for all Dalit teachers). Female Janajati teachers composed 27.7% of primary-school teachers (30.4% for all Janajati teachers) and 26.6% at the basic level (28.2% for all Janajati teachers). Progress is being made toward improving teacher qualifications and making recruitment more equitable. Whether these measures will have a positive impact on student learning is yet to be seen.

Skills Development

The **Skills Development Project (SDP)** is building on the achievements and lessons of the earlier **Skills for Employment Project (SEP)**. The SEP was considered largely successful in increasing opportunities for market-oriented short-term skills training among women, Dalits, and other excluded groups. Of those who received training under the SEP, 54% (31,811) were women and 25% (15,053) were Dalits. Collectively, women, Dalits, and Janajatis accounted for 79% of all trainees (46,939 persons). Strategies that contributed to achieving these levels of participation included the selection of trades that were attractive to women and Dalits, the promotion of nontraditional sectors (plumbing, electrical work, and masonry), and the provision of a stipend (59% of recipients of a full stipend were female and 42% were Dalits). Under the SDP, short-term certified training for skills with high market demand is planned for 45,000 unemployed youths. Training enrollment has so far reached 8,479 students, including 2,988 women trainees and 5,918 trainees from other excluded groups (Janajatis, Dalits, Madhesi, and Muslims). Women trainees from the Madhesi and Muslim communities have been few. Of all the women who have enrolled in the training, only 16.6% were in construction and 18.7% in manufacturing, while 64.7% were in the service sector. Mid-level training for 600 students in 15 new courses is being planned. Of the 233 who have been trained so far, 27.9% were women (target: 15%), and 50.64% were from socially excluded groups, 13.3% of them women. Janajati enrollment (45.92% of the total) was high, followed by the enrollment of Dalits (4%), and Madhesi (1.7%). No women from the Madhesi and Muslim communities have enrolled thus far in the mid-level training. These data show that, while the overall participation of women has exceeded the target, the participation of women from different caste groups still needs attention.

While the overall participation of women has exceeded the target, the participation of women from different caste groups still needs attention.

¹² Ministry of Education. 2016. *Flash Report, FY 2015–2016*. Kathmandu.

¹³ Ministry of Education. 2014. *Consolidated Equity Strategy, 2014*. Kathmandu.

Capacity Building and Skills Development

Technical Skills Development Training

Specific targets for participation of women and excluded groups help ensure that they participate in technical and skills training

Apart from the skills development activities discussed in the previous section, training in technical and entrepreneurship-based skills is provided as part of many sector projects, including projects in agriculture, irrigation, rural roads, water supply and sanitation, urban development, energy, and transport. In total, 21,356 women (24% of the trainee population of 89,750) have undergone skills training. The trainees included 4,354 Dalits (5% of the total), 9,433 Janajatis (11%), and 17,520 members of other disadvantaged groups (20%).

In the two projects that were focused on agribusiness and small farmers, **High Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement Project (HIMALI)** and **Raising Incomes of Small and Medium Farmers Project (RISMFP)**, women's participation in technical training varied depending on the subject matter. In training related to proposal writing, business management, agro-based production and processing, and marketing links, women composed 39% of HIMALI and 42% of RISMFP trainees. In technical training, such as training of trainers for farmers, farmer leader training, and training for improved production and for agro processing and marketing, women's participation ranged from 39% to 55%. On the other hand, their participation in training dealing with operation and management, quality control, value chain management, high-value crop production and postharvest processing, account keeping, business plan development, and road maintenance and bioengineering remained low, at 26%–29% of the total trainees. Among the constraints on the participation of women and Dalits are illiteracy, low education, and time poverty. But the HIMALI and RISMFP experiences show that setting specific targets for the participation of female farmers, women heads of households, and small and marginal farmers can ensure their involvement.

A livelihood enhancement skills training component built into the DRILP provides certified training programs (3–9 months' training affiliated with the Council for Technical Education and Vocation Training) to 1,000 trainees, 45% of whom are women and 38% are from poor and excluded groups. The training has been found to be highly useful in enhancing short-term skills among women, the poor, and other excluded and affected populations, mostly in nontraditional sectors (such as building electrician, computer operator, and mobile phone repair, as well as cook, beautician, and community livestock assistant, for a total of 22 trades). This training has created opportunities for skilled work and for increased household income.

Urban projects also offer market-oriented skills training for members of poor or otherwise disadvantaged households. Both the IUDP and the STIUEIP show high participation of women (61% for IUDP and 70% for STIUEIP). Priority is given to women heads of households and members of project-affected households. The participation of Dalits (40%) and Janajatis (70%) has also been substantial. Subjects covered in the short-term skills training include driving, plumbing, electrical equipment installation and maintenance, computer hardware servicing, and mobile phone and TV repair.

In the energy sector, the ADB technical assistance project Gender-Focused Capacity Building in Clean Energy, linked to the **Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project (ETESIP)**, provided targeted skills training, capacity building for livelihood activities, and access to credit facilities. Basic enterprise training was given to 1,597 participants, 1,397 (87%) of whom were women. The project also trained 339 women in agro-based enterprise development

(e.g., poultry raising, mushroom farming, animal husbandry), and 80% of those trained were able to put the skills learned to good use. Another grant project linked to the ETESIP, Improving Gender-Inclusive Access to Clean and Renewable Energy in Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, conducted management training programs for 49 participants (including 18 women) representing 10 energy user committees. Still another group of 556 women received basic training in energy-based enterprise development, and 116 of them later received advanced, skills-based training.

Capacity Development and Awareness Raising

Besides technical training, a total of 80,462, including 53,267 women (66%), 20,831 Dalits (25%), 19,153 Janajatis (24%), and 40,955 from other excluded groups (51%),¹⁴ participated in awareness-raising and community mobilization programs. Participation differed to some extent, depending on the sector and the project.

In the agriculture and natural resources sector (including agriculture, irrigation, rural roads, and climate change projects), women's overall participation in awareness and social mobilization activities was 40%. Participation was highest for the RISMF (60%), followed by the BCRWME (45%), HIMALI and CIP (43%), and DRILP-AF (33%). In the urban sector, women's participation in community and mass awareness programs was at 51% for both IUDP and SITUEIP, 39% in water supply and sanitation sector projects, and 60% in the energy sector.

Community awareness and orientation programs have also been part of transport projects. In particular, activities to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and human trafficking issues, as well as safety and security issues, were conducted with various groups including officials of the Department of Roads, local government employees, local community people, schoolteachers and children, health workers, construction workers, transport workers, hotel staff, and female sex workers. Changes were subsequently seen in compliance with safety and security measures, such as the practice of wearing helmets and seat belts, among project contractors and local government employees. Besides ensuring participation in awareness events, the transport projects have developed various awareness-raising materials (including public service announcements, pamphlets, and brochures) and have made use of FM radio and other local media.

In the energy sector, under the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) grant for Improving Gender-Inclusive Access to Clean and Renewable Energy, 323 community members (200 men and 123 women) attended an orientation course for energy users, an awareness-raising program in which 1,926 school children and 11,000 community members participated. Another group of community members along the transmission line, numbering around 1,500, attended an orientation course in rights-of-way, safety risks, electricity hazards, and the required participation of women in the project. By the end of the project, the number of women and men demonstrating awareness of these issues had increased by 30%. Gender-sensitive education in energy saving, electricity-associated risks and hazards, and livelihood opportunities from electrification was also provided to 2,000 newly electrified households. In addition, information, education, and communication materials were developed and used to improve public awareness of the efficient use of renewable energy, and energy-based livelihood options, safety and hazards. Female participation in the campaigns was 60%.

¹⁴ Category overlap results in double counting.

Employment and Economic Opportunities

Project-Generated Employment

Table 5 shows that from 2011 to 2015, the projects provided employment to 439,532 persons, including 106,597 women (24%), 67,585 Dalits (15%), 246,021 Janajatis (56%), and 66,874 persons from other excluded groups (15%).¹⁵ For these various groups, the rural road projects generated more direct employment than other sectors, and the agriculture projects, more self-employment opportunities. The DRILP led to a total of 2,533,791 person-days of employment through building groups and contractor packages. Women took up 32% of these person-days; Dalits, 17%; Janajatis, 29%; and other excluded groups, 54%. In the urban sector, the **Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project** also created significant employment opportunities for local people, women in particular, through the construction of small-scale water and sanitation infrastructure.¹⁶

Table 5: Employment and Economic Opportunities Created through Ongoing Projects

Opportunity Created	Women	Dalits	Janajatis	Other Excluded Groups	All Beneficiaries of Economic Opportunities
Employment through jobs generated or assisted by projects	106,597 (24%)	67,585 (15%)	246,021 (56%)	66,874 (15%)	439,532
Income generation, livelihood, or entrepreneurial activities under projects	485 (54%)	11 (1%)	155 (17%)	173 (19%)	902
Access to enterprise development or agricultural extension services	4,920 (53%)	140 (2%)	1,452 (16%)	1,201 (13%)	9,261
Access to project-funded grants	44,361 (68%)	6,328 (10%)	27,205 (42%)	31,328 (48%)	64,884

Note: Category overlap results in double counting.

Source: Project GESI Action Plan Quarterly Reports 2015.

The core labor standards that are mandatory for all projects include equal employment and pay opportunities, irrespective of gender, caste, and ethnicity. While reports indicate that projects have complied with this requirement, disparities in employment opportunities and wages persist. Various sociocultural norms and practices also limit the benefits women gain from such opportunities. Further, rural women have been overburdened with household and farm work as male out-migration makes them de facto heads of households.

¹⁵ Category overlap has resulted in double counting.

¹⁶ A total of 342,340 people in 21 towns found employment under the SSTWSSP. Of this total, 77,813 (22.7%) were women, 43,286 (12.6%) Dalits, and 217,542 (63.5%) Janajatis.

Enterprise Development

Through two agriculture projects, HIMALI and RISMFP, 485 women successfully started or expanded income generation, livelihood, or entrepreneurial activities. In addition, access to grants for small and subsistence farmers as members of a group or cooperative or as private entities allowed them to graduate to commercial farming. Grant support also enabled more women, Dalits, and Janajatis to engage in agro enterprises such as production and processing of high-value crops. Project-funded grants benefited 44,361 women, 6,328 Dalits, 27,205 Janajatis, and 31,328 members of other excluded groups (Table 5).

Among women, disadvantaged and marginal farmer groups, and women heads of households, the RISMFP kindled awareness and enthusiasm about the comparative benefits and value addition of commercial farming. Some initial results include significant increases in production and profit switching to high-value non-cereal crops and vegetables (estimates of almost fivefold increases, based on discussions with beneficiaries, and validated by various groups and cooperatives). Improved household incomes due to increased production have contributed to better schooling for children, enhanced food security, increased confidence, and greater mobility and access to services and input, leading to overall socioeconomic empowerment for women and other disadvantaged or marginal groups.

About 4,920 women gained access to enterprise development support services, agriculture extension services, and equipment support, and were able to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. Easy access to agriculture extension services and market centers encouraged more women and other disadvantaged groups to engage in off-season vegetable and fruit farming for increased income, contributing to improved quality and standard of life.

Apart from agriculture, the JFPR grant attached to the **Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project** supported training in basic enterprise development for 556 women and advanced skills training for 116 women. Livelihood programs for women that were implemented in partnership with local nongovernment and community-based organizations focused on training in the use of labor-saving energy technologies, access to microcredit and concessional loans, business management, marketing strategies, and other business development services. Equipment support was made available to 150 women entrepreneurs whose businesses were affected by the 2015 earthquake and who had earlier participated in the project's entrepreneurship training.

Lessons, Challenges, and the Way Forward

Lessons

There have been improvements in gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming across sector operations and projects. At the implementation level, achievements are visible in key areas such as participation, representation, capacity development, livelihood skills enhancement, and employment opportunities for women and excluded groups. A mandatory policy of including women and other previously excluded groups in all institutional structures has had an impact, but sustained effort and capacity building is required to enable women to be effective participants and to influence decision making. Significant numbers of women and people from other excluded groups have gained access to employment and to project services and input, resulting in increased incomes and better living conditions. Improved infrastructure has boosted mobility, reduced time poverty, and increased access to basic services and productive economic activities. Indeed, these outcomes may contribute to the empowerment of these groups in the long run.

Progress in GESI institutionalization is evident in the development of policies and strategies, the establishment of sections or units addressing GESI issues, and the assignment of GESI staff or consultants, although more attention to sustainability issues is needed.

Monitoring of activities and targets set in GESI action plans has strengthened within projects in response to the implementation of the GESI results monitoring matrix and the institutionalization of the GESI database. Better monitoring means better tracking of activities and achievements, which would be amplified if monitoring were to move beyond its current focus on quantitative indicators.

Challenges and the Way Forward

GESI action plans are focused on quantitative targets and indicators and do not include indicators or mechanisms for monitoring and reporting qualitative results, such as changes in time poverty, human development, economic empowerment, and leadership of women and the socially excluded. To assess qualitative results, capacity for qualitative reporting and documentation must be strengthened and the resources increased.

Though project targets for women's quantitative participation and representation in groups, committees, and cooperatives have generally been met, achieving effective and meaningful participation in these forums, particularly influence on decision making, continues to be a challenge. Strategic targeted interventions are needed to strengthen the skills of women position holders (e.g., skills in negotiation, management, leadership, finance, and technical matters).

Even more challenging is increasing the participation of Dalits, Janajatis, Muslims, and members of other socially excluded groups, and particularly the women of these groups, in committees, key positions, and project activities in general. Unable to commit time for project activities, the ultra-poor and the most vulnerable do not fully participate and benefit. This issue needs to be addressed continuously through awareness, sensitization, and a mandatory quota system.

Among executing and implementing agencies, the lack of adequate institutional mechanisms, resources (staff and budget), and technical capacity for GESI issues poses hurdles to implementation and ownership of GESI activities. This situation requires more input from the Nepal Resident Mission for sustainable and longer-term impact. The necessary input includes continuous support for the development of sector-specific GESI policies, particularly sector-specific guidelines for hard sectors (transport, energy, and irrigation) and institutional capacity development of partner agencies in these sectors.

Greater efforts must be made to involve women and other highly marginalized groups in project-related capacity development activities. Approaches could include extensive information dissemination and effective consultation with civil society organizations in finalizing consultation and participation plans that target women and excluded groups, increase their engagement, and promote partnership with national and local nongovernment organizations in social mobilization strategies.

A number of good GESI practices and results are emerging from the projects that were implemented. These must be collected, documented, and disseminated. There is a capacity and resource gap within projects in documenting such results, and less priority is assigned to collecting qualitative results.

The capacity of project gender specialists and social development staff of executing and implementing agencies is still an issue, both for gender mainstreaming in those agencies and for the effective implementation of GESI action plans. The intermittent input of gender specialists in most projects weakens the quality and performance of GESI-related activities and monitoring.

GESI sensitization and training for Asian Development Bank (ADB) and government staff is necessary and available but not adequate at present. ADB should provide effective GESI training relevant to the various sectors, to both ADB and government staff. The country portfolio review of ADB should continue to assess GESI operations and improve the quality of reporting by the implementing agencies.

Projects with outcome-level gender results are more likely to advance gender equality.¹⁷ The midterm review of ADB's Strategy 2020 also recognized the need for direct and targeted interventions for women and girls, in addition to gender mainstreaming in operations, and identified possible areas for intervention. Particularly where women endure persistent discrimination and gender inequality, the strategy of mainstreaming gender in sector projects must be complemented with interventions that directly and primarily promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

¹⁷ ADB. 2009. *The Asian Development Bank's Support to Gender and Development—Phase I: Relevance, Responsiveness and Results to Date*. Manila. Special evaluation study prepared by the Independent Evaluation Department. p.30.

APPENDIX

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Approaches, by Sector

Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector

Table A1: Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Projects

Project Name	Subsector	GEN/EGM
Highland Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement Project	Agriculture	EGM
Raising Incomes of Small and Medium Farmers Project	Agriculture	GEN
Community-Managed Irrigated Agriculture Sector Project-Additional Financing	Irrigation	EGM
Community Irrigation Project	Irrigation	GEN
Water Resources Project Preparatory Facility	Irrigation	EGM
Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Development Project-Additional Financing	Rural roads	EGM
Bagmati River Basin Improvement Project	River basin	EGM
Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions	Climate change	EGM

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Agriculture

In agriculture projects, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) initiatives are focused on increasing agriculture productivity and incomes of women, the poor, and those who are otherwise excluded. This objective is pursued through training in business plan development, adoption of inclusive business practices, direct access to grants for commercialization, and support for marketing of high-value crops. Increased involvement of women and disadvantaged groups in the agriculture value chain is also promoted through mobilization of farmer groups and cooperatives (including participation in key leadership and executive committee positions), access to employment opportunities, support for small-scale infrastructure facilities (irrigation, storage, tunnels, collection and marketing centers), and public-private partnerships to better link these groups to markets.

Two projects provide targeted grant support to women and disadvantaged small farmer groups. The **Highland Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement Project** provides targeted grants for women (30% of all grantees) and disadvantaged groups (50%). The **Raising Incomes**

of Small and Medium Farmers Project provides direct grants to indigenous, disadvantaged, and marginal farmers groups. There is an additional special modality for grants to highly vulnerable farmer groups in the Far-Western region (such as the Kamaiya and the Haliya) and for grants to female-owned private firms and enterprises. The project seeks high representation of women in key decision-making positions in both farmer groups and cooperatives (50%–60%). Other elements in both projects consist of support from nongovernment organizations or local resource persons in developing grant proposals, training in pre- and post-harvest technologies, development of women farmer leaders, access to extension services (80% of women), training in agribusiness management, and links to value chain actors for access to improved seeds, fertilizers, and marketing.

Irrigation

GESI strategies in irrigation projects include promoting the participation of women and disadvantaged groups in the executive committees of water user associations (WUAs). Both irrigation projects, the **Community-Managed Irrigated Agriculture Sector Project** and the **Community Irrigation Project**, target 33% women's participation and a key leadership position for at least one woman. The GESI action plan requires WUA constitutions to provide for the meaningful participation of women, small and marginal farmers, tail-enders, disadvantaged groups, and women heads of households. Implementation activities comprise leadership and technical training for women farmers and assured access to project extension services. The agriculture development components of the projects aim for 40% overall participation of women in farmer groups (mixed and separate groups) and the engagement of women in farmer field schools and short-term agriculture skills training. To enhance agricultural livelihoods, loans and savings plans have been introduced by linking WUAs with cooperatives working as microfinance institutions. The strategy also includes the engagement of women and disadvantaged groups in construction-related activities and the provision of technical training in quality control and water management.

Rural Roads

The **Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Development Project** provides employment opportunities in construction work for women and persons from poor and other disadvantaged groups through their participation in road-building crews (target: 35% women's participation). Attention is also given to participation in village and district road coordination committees; improved decision making through representation in executive committees (target: 33% of leadership positions occupied by women); and capacity development through awareness raising. Certified skills training for better livelihood options is provided as well to households in the project zone of influence, with special priority given to women, particularly women heads of households (40% of all trainees), the poor, Dalits, Janajatis, and other marginalized groups (60% of all trainees). The project also supports the development of small-scale supplementary infrastructure to meet the immediate needs of the community (including the needs of women, the poor, and other marginalized groups) and training in its operation and maintenance. Finally, the project supports building groups through activities related to saving and credit, record keeping, institutional capacity building, and access to microfinance in pilot districts for women, the poor, and those who are otherwise excluded.

River Basin Improvement

The **Bagmati River Basin Improvement Project** has established stakeholder organizations, such as a river basin organization and subbasin and technical committees for the protection and management of the Bagmati River Basin, with attention to the adequate representation of women and of the diverse communities along the river basin. To promote ownership among community stakeholders and users of environmental improvements, platforms representing local civil society organizations—both nongovernment organizations and community groups—are being formed, with a target of 50% women’s participation. The project requires extensive consultation with local stakeholders (including women, children, youths, the elderly, persons with disabilities, socially marginalized groups, and households headed by women) so that they are actively engaged in the design and monitoring of riverbank beautification activities. The project is also aimed at integrating designs and facilities (which could include ramps, walkways, lampposts, open spaces, children’s parks, resting sheds, etc.) that are appropriate for women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Other GESI elements include equal employment opportunities for women and marginalized groups, and extensive participation in protection and conservation activities in watershed areas. Finally, the project provides training for female members of interested households (with preference given to poor women, women heads of households, and women from other excluded groups along the corridor) in rainwater harvesting, solid waste management, and the use of energy-efficient cooking stoves.

Climate Resilience

Women and other disadvantaged groups are the major beneficiaries of the **Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions** project, which covers remote areas of the Far-Western development region, where water supply is particularly vulnerable to climate change. The project requires the active participation of women and disadvantaged groups in prioritizing water storage infrastructure intended to reduce water collection time during the dry season. It also seeks the increased participation of women in community development groups and coordination committees for catchment improvement, earthworks, planting, grazing, and fodder management (target: 40% women’s participation and proportionate representation from other social groups) and leadership positions for women (at least one). The project includes leadership training, technical training in water conservation and water equity, and vocational training for improved livelihoods (targets: 33% women’s participation in all training, and 45% participation of Dalits or members of other disadvantaged groups). The project also provides for special evaluation studies on social issues related to soil conservation and collective management of water resources, and for knowledge products related to GESI in water rights, water conflict negotiation and resolution, benefit sharing, and behavioral change.

Education and Skills Development Sector

Table A2: Education and Skills Development Sector Projects

Project Name	GEN/EGM
School Sector Program	GEN
Emergency Earthquake Assistance Project	EGM
Skills Development Project	GEN

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Education

ADB is supporting Nepal's **School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP)**, a multi-donor, sector-wide approach, through support for the **School Sector Program (SSPII)**. The focus of the SSRP is on implementing key policy reforms and actions to (i) improve access and equity, (ii) improve quality and relevance, and (iii) strengthen the institutional capacity of the entire school system. The SSRP includes a number of policy reforms in favor of GESI, such as enforcement of compulsory free education for all; scholarships and incentives, such as fees, free textbooks, midday meals, feeder hostels, and flexible learning centers; and a safe and enabling environment, including separate toilets for girls and new classrooms. Other reforms include teacher professional development through pre- and post-service training and a quota for female teachers and teachers from excluded groups in new recruitment. The project ended in 2016 and ADB will then support the new School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) for a 3-year period through results-based lending (RBL). The SSDP will consolidate the SSRP achievements and strengthen reforms to make school education more inclusive and equitable for students, with due focus on secondary education.

The **Emergency Earthquake Assistance Project** was designed to respond to post-earthquake situations in most affected districts. The project includes a number of measures to ensure responsiveness to the post-disaster needs of vulnerable groups, and their equal access to project benefits. The measures include school reconstruction, taking into account GESI concerns and accessibility standards (e.g., sex-segregated latrines and equitable access to water, site selection of schools based on the needs of girls and other disadvantaged groups); equal employment opportunities in construction-related works; integration of safety and security measures for the elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities into road design; mitigation measures for human trafficking and gender-based violence; and promotion of women's participation and representation in user groups.

Skills Development

Through the **Skills for Employment Project** (closed) and the ongoing **Skills Development Project (SDP)**, ADB has been supporting Nepal's technical and vocational education and training system. The SDP includes GESI-responsive measures to increase the enrollment of women and excluded groups in nontraditional skills training and employment in the construction, manufacturing, and service sectors. The project is aimed at providing short-term training to 45,000 unemployed or underemployed people. GESI targets include training participation rates of 40% for women and 30% for excluded groups, and increased female enrollment in nontraditional sectors from

a baseline of 20%. For the diploma-level courses to be offered to 1,000 students, GESI targets are 15% participation for women and 20% for excluded groups. There are also GESI targets for gainful wage or self-employment opportunities for the graduates: women should account for 40% of opportunities, and excluded groups, 30%. The project includes collaboration with nongovernment organizations for greater outreach, information dissemination, and identification and preparation of potential trainees, in particular women and other disadvantaged groups. Other significant measures include the specification of GESI provisions in selection criteria for training providers and a GESI-sensitive social awareness and marketing strategy. The project also provides GESI-based incentives to training providers that meet the employment targets for women and excluded groups and that provide a GESI-friendly training environment and a GESI-sensitive training curriculum.

Water Supply, Sanitation, and Municipal Infrastructure Sector

Table A3: Water Supply, Sanitation, and Municipal Infrastructure Sector Projects

Project Name	Subsector	GEN/EGM
Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project	WSS	GEN
Third Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project	WSS	GEN
Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project–Additional Finance	WSS	EGM
Kathmandu Valley Waste Water Management	WSS	EGM
Secondary Towns Integrated Urban Environment Improvement Project	Urban	EGM
Integrated Urban Development Project	Urban	EGM

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme, WSS = water supply and sanitation.
Source: Asian Development Bank.

Water Supply and Sanitation

The key GESI feature of water supply and sanitation projects is ensuring water connections for poor households, including female-headed households. The **Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project** has been providing improved, affordable, and sustainable water supply and sanitation services that are governed and managed by locally accountable representative bodies. To facilitate connections for the poor, the project includes a program for poor households that is structured as output-based aid.

The **Third Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project** provides free or subsidized piped water connections and private toilet facilities to poor, women-headed, and otherwise vulnerable households in all serviced areas of the project towns. The project has developed a Framework for Inclusion of Poor and Vulnerable Households for the effective identification and targeting of poor and vulnerable households. The project's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) public awareness drives include attention to Chhaupadi Pratha (menstruation taboo) practices and a campaign against open defecation. Women's empowerment elements include

livelihood enhancement and leadership development. The project provides employment opportunities for women and for poor and otherwise vulnerable persons in construction-related works and is aimed at increasing the participation of women in WUA committees (targets: at least 33% women’s participation in executive committees and proportionate representation of socially excluded groups). Leadership training, including training in livelihood skills and utility management, is also provided to women leaders of WUA committees.

The **Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project** is working to improve the accessibility, efficiency, and reliability of water supply services to the residents of Kathmandu Valley, including poor women and men. The project also holds regular consultation sessions with stakeholders; provides public education in health, hygiene, and sanitation; offers community and school programs; and provides employment opportunities to locals through construction-related works. The project, which will construct the water supply distribution network for Melamchi municipality, will cover 100% of households headed by women.

Urban Development

The two urban development projects, the **Secondary Towns Integrated Urban Environment Improvement Project** and the **Integrated Urban Development Project (IUDP)**, have been working with seven municipalities (Biratnagar, Dharan, Janakpur, Birgunj, Siddharthnagar, Butwal, and Nepalgunj) to improve the quality of life of people through affordable municipal services, including drainage and roads, solid waste management, and water supply. The projects include community development programs that support the urban poor, including women, in building small community infrastructure that helps improve health and sanitation (such as community water taps and household, school, and community toilets), and in acquiring market-oriented income generation skills. The activities under the community development programs also include awareness raising on health and hygiene and promoting household or community-level solid waste management through reduce, recycle, and reuse approaches.

The IUDP includes a separate technical assistance grant to strengthen the GESI capacity of the Ministry of Urban Development by establishing appropriate institutional structures and mechanisms for mainstreaming.

Transport Sector

Table A4: Transport Sector Projects

Project Name	GEN/EGM
Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Project	EGM
South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity	EGM

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

The **Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Project** specifies infrastructure design standards that require contractors to reflect the needs of women and disabled persons in their bidding documents. The project training manual includes modules pertaining to gender and social

differences in urban transportation services. The project also raises stakeholder awareness of ways to make urban transport and pedestrian systems more appropriate and safe for women and disabled users, and thus to improve their mobility. Another theme is increased employment opportunities for women. A project target is for women to constitute 30% of public transport drivers and conductors on pilot routes.

The **South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Project** looks forward to 50% women's participation in project activities like bioengineering and afforestation and promotes the selection of women to serve as eco guardians in their communities. Nongovernment organizations have been mobilized to carry out awareness-raising activities to promote road safety for affected communities, with a special focus on women with sexually transmitted infections as well as other disadvantaged groups, along with human trafficking awareness campaigns and livelihood enhancement activities in the project influence area.

Energy Sector

Table A5: Energy Sector Projects

Project Name	GEN/EGM
Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project	EGM
Tanahu Hydropower Project ^a	EGM

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

^a Came into effect in August 2014 and has yet to show results, and hence not covered in this report.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

A technical assistance grant project, the Gender-Focused Capacity Building in Clean Energy project, which supported the implementation of GESI activities and aimed at improving the socioeconomic status of women and marginalized groups in selected project sites, was part of the **Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project (ETESIP)**. The project approach has two main themes: (i) improving access to energy-based livelihood opportunities and (ii) raising awareness of electricity use and conservation. Activities include partnering with local organizations in conducting project orientation and awareness-raising programs, enhancing livelihoods through skills training, developing small-scale enterprises, improving access to microcredit, building capacity to advance gender equity, and mainstreaming gender issues into infrastructure development. Capacity-building measures intended to improve energy-based livelihood opportunities start with technical training—including training in finance, accounting, and business management—and facilitation of loans and marketing. Longer-term support through refresher courses is also provided.

Improving Gender-Inclusive Access to Clean and Renewable Energy in Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, a regional project with grant support from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, was also linked to the ETESIP and complemented the latter by strengthening community management of rural electrification. Activities were focused on building the capacity of women leaders and training them to manage energy user committees; developing women-led energy-based enterprises in project areas through targeted skills training for 500 women; increasing access to credit facilities; and providing gender-sensitive end-user education in 10 communities

in the safe use of electricity, the prevention of electricity leaks, ways of dealing with legal issues, and conflict management and resolution. The project also provided grants to cover 50% of the community contribution for electricity connection required under the Rural Electrification Policy (communities are required to shoulder 10% of total electrification costs).

Targeted Interventions for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Besides mainstreaming GESI in sector projects, ADB has also supported projects directly and primarily targeting gender equality and the promotion of women's rights and empowerment. The **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEOW) Project**, completed in 2013, and the **Establishing Women and Children Service Centers (WCSCs) Project**, which is currently operational, are two ADB-supported projects that are specifically relevant to GESI and women's empowerment. These projects are discussed in more detail in Boxes A1 and A2.

Box A1: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project

The Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEOW) Project, 2002–2013, with \$10 million loan support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), adopted multi-sectoral interventions in four areas:

- **economic empowerment**, to enhance rural women's skills, opportunities, and control over productive assets;
- **legal empowerment**, including access to legal services for poor rural women, and improved gender responsiveness of judicial and administrative institutions;
- **social empowerment**, to enhance social processes at the community level and to improve opportunities for women to pursue both personal and community development; and
- **political empowerment**, to build and develop the capacity of institutions and women's representatives to promote gender equality and to increase their gender responsiveness.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MOWCSW) was the executing agency, and the ministry's implementing wing, the Department of Women and Children (DWC), was the implementing agency. The project covered 82 village development committees (VDCs) across 15 districts. The project supported the formation of 9,392 groups in which women of different social profiles participated (23% Dalits, 16% Janajatis, 21% Madhesis, and 40% other groups). The project provided social mobilization and capacity building through various training programs. Savings and credit cooperatives were registered in 15 districts, and their members trained in cooperative management and financial management. Increased confidence enabled women to express their views, to visit the district offices, and to demand programs that would benefit them.

The project also provided income-generating training to 12,187 women. Some 6,300 (51.6%) of these trainees later used their training to run enterprises. Microenterprises varied, as they were selected according to the interests of the beneficiaries. The average annual income of project beneficiaries increased from NRs28,261 to NRs51,133 (at 2007/08 fixed prices), an increase of 80.9%. Results varied among excluded groups: the increase in income was 79.8% for Dalits, 23.2% for indigenous

continued on next page

Box A1 *continued*

nationalities, and 100.7% for members of other caste households. About 31,535 beneficiaries gained access to savings and credit cooperatives.

The project conducted legal awareness programs, campaigns, and training to raise women's awareness of their legal rights. Alternative dispute resolution committees were formed at the VDC level to resolve and mediate disputes. Many examples of women mediating local cases and being appreciated or recognized for their efforts by their communities were noted. To enable women to claim their rights, women were encouraged to acquire legal documents. For example, during the project period, 17,125 couples registered their marriage, and 19,823 women received citizenship certificates. Similarly, about 97,580 people participated in different workshops, including legal awareness programs; about 6,699 of these joined ward-level legal campaigns.

The project also supported small community infrastructure works serving about 71,189 households that helped to reduce the drudgery of poor and disadvantaged women so that they could have time for productive activities or rest. The 1,024 users' committees formed had 8,597 women members and completed 3,385 small subprojects. Women members of users' committees increased their capacity to negotiate, coordinate, and manage. The new drinking water facilities, toilets, and grinding mills also enabled women to save time. Multipurpose buildings were built and later handed over to the women's federations of the VDCs, and were used for their monthly meetings or rented out.

The policy conditions of the project facilitated the passage of the Gender Equality Act of 2006, which repealed several discriminatory laws and provisions against women, as well as the passage of the Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act of 2008. Both the National Women's Commission Act of 2007 and the National Dalit Commission Act of 2002 were also passed. Women development officers were made permanent government staff. All of these accomplishments contributed to the institutional strengthening of the MOWCSW and the DWC. For the sustainability of the results achieved by the project, 82 project VDCs were integrated into the regular program of the DWC and a budget was allocated the following year to support socioeconomic empowerment activities through district-level staff.

Source: ADB. 2015. *Completion Report: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project in Nepal*. Manila.

Box A2: Establishing Women and Children Service Centers Project

The Establishing Women and Children Service Centers (WCSC) Project (2014–2018) is being implemented by the Nepal Police in 15 districts and is aimed at providing access to justice and social support services and addressing gender-based violence. The project builds on the success of a pilot project implemented in five districts by the Nepal Police in 2010–2014. The pilot project resulted in a 30% increase in the reporting of cases of gender-based violence in each of the project districts, indicating growing trust in the police and in the justice systems.

The new project includes the construction of WCSC buildings and facilities with secure and discreet offices for gender-based crime reporting and counseling; the hiring of specially trained, gender-sensitive counseling officers; and the provision of a small, separate dormitory for short-term emergency accommodation. The project also provides accommodation for the female officer-in-charge as an incentive for serving in rural districts as well as providing constant on-site surveillance, security, and access. Awareness campaigns and preventive strategies will also be implemented to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence and abuse over time. The project continues to encourage the reporting, resolution, and prosecution of cases to improve justice and encourage confidence in the legal system.

The pilot project was cofinanced by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (\$750,000) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (\$195,000). The follow-up project is cofinanced by DFID (\$3,200,000), the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund (\$300,000), and the Technical Assistance Special Fund (\$500,000).

Source: ADB. 2015. *Progress Report: Establishing Women and Children Service Centers Project in Nepal*. Manila (September).

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in ADB Operations in Nepal, 2011–2015

This report presents the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) related works of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Nepal Resident Mission in 2011–2015. It provides information and data on GESI approaches and results at the project and institutional levels across key sectors of ADB operations in Nepal. The report is intended to be used both within ADB and by external audience eager to learn from the resident mission's experience in implementing GESI action plans of sector projects and related challenges in Nepal.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to a large share of the world's poor. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

