

Breaking Barriers, Building Futures: Catalyzing Gender Equality Across Five Nations

This poster outlines the progress of the Empowering Women and Girls (EWG) project after its first year of implementation. The project's ultimate outcome is improved realisation of human rights and a life of dignity for women and girls from disadvantaged communities in Bangladesh, Malawi, Mozambique, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. During the second year, an outcome monitoring study was conducted to analyze progress toward the ultimate goal and assess pathways of change.

Project Scope

- Duration: 2023-2026.
- Geographic Coverage: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malawi and Mozambique.
- Implementation Partners: 8 local organizations.
- Community Reach: 933 villages.
- Beneficiaries: 75,000 women and girls & 20,000 men and boys.

Research Methodology

- Mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative techniques).
- Sample Size: 1,000 respondents (individuals, groups, and institutions).
- Data collected by consultants and partner organizations.

Research Objectives

Measuring progress in achievement of intermediate and immediate outcomes and identifying good practices, gaps, challenges, and potential solutions for future work.

Data Collection Methods

45 case studies and 112 monitoring reports, including 70 most significant change (MSC) reports, 35 social mapping reports and seven self-reflection reports.

Results and Discussion

Intermediate Outcome 1100

- 20%–25% gains in women's decision-making (health, education, marriage, economy).
- 21.3%–32.6% rise in WRO engagement tackling gender discrimination, child marriage, GBV.
- 35.4% increase in men's gender equality knowledge; 42.1% in supportive practices.

Intermediate Outcome 1200

- 10%–20% increase in girls' lower secondary school retention.
- 16.3% rise in GBV knowledge; 11.7% improvement in GBV protective practices in schools.
- 90% of communities took action to support girls' secondary education.
- 64.3%–70% LSG involvement in supporting girls' education shows strong community progress.
- 60%–70% of trained women/girls moved from unemployment to entrepreneurship across 5 countries.

Intermediate Outcome 1300

- 40%–60% yield and income gains for female farmers via climate-smart practices (except Malawi).
- 60%–70% adopted crop rotation, organic farming, resilient crops; 30%–40% adopted water conservation.
- Improved food security and reduced chemical input use across project areas.
- Land ownership gains for women: strong in Mozambique; 4%–5% in Pakistan and Sri Lanka; no change in Bangladesh and Malawi.
- All countries exceeded targets for non-farm employment days; Mozambique and Pakistan led with 126 and 129 extra days.

Challenges

- Limited state-level advocacy for gender equality.
- Financial constraints and entrenched gender norms.
- Limited access to schools and TVET facilities.
- Inadequate inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Limited access to credit and cultural resistance to women's land ownership.
- Climate events, poor seed quality, and infrastructure gaps.

Key Innovations

- WhatsApp groups provided safe spaces for women to discuss discrimination and access legal services.
- Community forums bridged grassroots activism with civil society.
- Traditional chiefs involvement in addressing GBV.
- Holistic support systems for school dropout reintegration.
- Continuous mentoring for female entrepreneurs for sustainable livelihoods.

Limitations

Study limitations include inadequate data collection on inclusion of children and adults with disabilities, insufficient probing in some areas, and potential social desirability bias in responses.

Conclusion

The EWG project has laid a strong foundation for sustainable, gender-inclusive development by empowering women and WROs with decision-making skills, improving access to services, and promoting income generation. Sustained collaboration with governments and civil society, along with adaptive strategies and capacity building, will be key to scaling and sustaining the project's transformative impact.

Authors

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