

Blue Gold Program

Rapid Assessment of Gender and Leadership Training

1 Introduction

With the aim of: (a) ensuring at least 40% female representation in the Water Management Groups and 30% female representation in the elected council (or Executive Committee); and (b) improving the nature of women engagement into the program from mere attendance to their active and meaningful participation in the groups' or councils' decision making process or action plans, Blue Gold Program (BGP) through a service provider conducted 61 batches of Gender and Leadership training with 12 female executive committee members and 3 general members from each of the 132 WMGs (UP representatives) in first phase.

Specific objectives of this training were:

- a) To develop a basic knowledge and understanding on gender issues and the importance of women's participation in the development process;
- b) To identify gender related problems at various levels (family, WMG and society), and to develop knowledge and understanding on how to tackle or practise these issues;
- c) To improve the knowledge and understanding of women leaders on how to participate and contribute more effectively in WMGs and in their family and community
- d) To improve knowledge and awareness on the qualities of leaders and how to apply.

The second phase of this training is expected to cover another 68 batches of group members and UP representatives (female) from the remaining 133 WMGs in Khulna, Satkhira and Patuakhali.

It was originally anticipated and planned that at the end of phase 1, BGP would conduct "an evaluation to determine the extension of the contract for Phase 2". In this context, a quick assessment of the GLD training was conducted with representatives from GLD training participants, trainers, organisers, supervisors and managers. Purposes of this assessment were:

1. To assess the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the provided GLD training
2. To collect evidences on the immediate outcomes or 'impacts' of the training
3. To assess the pros and cons of the modality of the training, i.e. outsourcing to an external service provider.

2 Methodology

Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Literature/ document review, Key Informant Interview and case studies were used to collect information for the Rapid Assessment. Respondents were carefully selected by the zonal teams based on a guideline that ensured a balanced representation of male and female respondents and representation from more than one WMG. The selection not only included the beneficiary group but also respondents from service providers and BGP staffs both at field, zonal and

central level who are directly involved with the program implementation, training supervision, management and follow-up on action plans. The selection and discussion with the wide range of respondents gave the assessment a holistic view.

A total of 70 respondents were consulted during this Rapid Assessment process.

Organisation	Key informants	No. of attendees	Location
WMGs	Male EC members	6	East Kewabunia WMG; Polder – 43/1A
	Female EC members	4	West Matibhanga WMG; Polder – 43/2A
	Female potential leaders from the general members (who participated in the training).	6	South Angulkata WMG; Polder – 43/2F
Upazila parishad - Patuakhali	UP members in Patuakhali	5	Chhotobighai Union Parishad
WMGs	Male EC members	7	Jobra/Kanchan Nagar WMG; Polder - 29
	Female EC members	7	Jobra/ Kanchan Nagar WMG; Polder - 29
	Female potential leaders from the general members (who participated in the training).	8	Fulbari & Sener Ber WMG; Polder - 22
Upazila Parishad – Khulna	UP members in Khulna	5	Deluti Union Parishad
KNKS	GLD trainers, training coordinators	8	Bagerhat Office
Blue Gold Team	• Gender Coordinator (Roksana)	1	Dhaka
	• Training coordinator Patuakhali - Atik • Socio-economist Patuakhali - Ashik Billah	2	Patuakhali Zonal Office
	• Socio-economist - S. K. Mohibullah, Satkhira	1	Khulna Zonal office
	• 5 CDFs in Patuakhali who observed the GLD training	5	Patuakhali Zonal office
	• 5 CDFs in Khulna who observed the GLD training	5	Khulna zonal office

The Rapid assessment of the GLD training collected and analysed information in three key areas:

a) Relevance (of training objectives, contents and materials), b) capacity of the service providers and c) Effectiveness (quality). Changes were assessed against programme needs and training objectives and how gender and leadership issues have been tackled in personal life/ individual, group, community level

and professional life/ BGP work. Some of the indicative questions the Rapid Assessment used for discussion are as follows:

Relevance:

- How do the training objectives respond to project needs?
- How are the module/ sessions/ messages relevant to the needs of the target group? Have there been any changes made to the training materials or approach as a response to the local context and needs?
- What challenges did the service provider/trainer face while imparting the training and how the challenges were mitigated?

Capacity:

- What experience and expertise the service provider brings to the table in the area of GLD?
- How familiar the trainers were to the concept of Gender and Leadership Development and to the contexts of the target groups?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the service provider and the individual trainers in relation to conducting GLD sessions?

Effectiveness:

- Was the training methodology suitable and attractive, including participatory methodologies?
- How did the training meet the (felt or unfelt) needs of the trainees? What type of follow-up support was provided after initial training?
- To what extent did the trainers inspire the trainees to develop their own ideas on solutions to address gender inequalities, especially within the WMG (e.g. as presented in the GAPs prepared by each WMG)?
- How did the participants bring the learnings into practice? What changes have been noticed among participants' attitude and practice as a result of GLD training?
- What impact/effect did the GLD training have on WMG Executive Committee meetings, particularly in the relationships between male and female Executive Committee members and participation of female members in dialogues and decision-making and leadership?

3 Review, analysis and findings

There was no denial of the importance of Gender and Leadership training in Blue Gold Programme. With the overall programme objective - *“to reduce poverty for 150,000 households living in 160,000 ha area of selected coastal polders by creating a healthy living environment and a sustainable socio-economic development”*, the Gender and Leadership Training is rightly positioned to raise awareness on Gender and Leadership and widen the scope of female members of the society to become more productive.

Contents selected for GLD training are mainly generic in nature, such as – concept of Gender, difference between sex and gender, gender role and type, what is food and nutrition, diseases caused by malnutrition, early marriage – its definition, consequences and laws, leadership, qualities and skills of leaders and others and fairly appropriate to raise awareness of any group of people. It does not necessarily emphasize on the Gender issues in Water Management or the work of the Executive committee, rather, such programme specific contents are limited in the training module. The contents are also independent and isolated and not interdependent or progressive in any manner. Such independent contents can mean both good and bad. It also means that the contents/modules can be split into smaller segments and does not need to follow the current sequence.

BGP’s current GLD training module is a revised version of the one developed under IPSWAM project. New contents like food and nutrition for women development and importance of the role of women in agriculture and Government law and acts were added and other materials were revised as a result of the revision. In general, the module reflects modern and participatory methods and techniques for disseminating information in each session. Although there are provisions for debates, drawing, drama and leadership games, they are limited in scale. Group discussions (both large and small) along with writing posters largely dominate the overall training methodology. The module also misses out the opportunity of using a wide range of interactive training materials, i.e – pictures/drawings, printed posters, Audio-visual contents, flash cards, information booklets or any other which have historically been proven to be very effective with grass root level participants and on concepts like Rights and Gender. The main material used in this training is handwritten posters and there have not been any takeaway materials produced and distributed to the participants which would have reinforced key messages and learning from the training and acted as a reminder. In its current form, the training appears to be more knowledge-driven than experiential. The way the module is written is also not easy to understand and follow especially considering the target user of the module.

GLD training is currently being offered to only 12 female executive committee members and 3 general members from each WMGs while there are approximately 200+ members in each WMG. GLD training contents are very generic in nature, relevant for all and not specially customised to suit the needs of the Executive Committee only. Therefore, restricting this training to 15 members of the WMG Executive Committee has limited the scope of impacts this intervention could have brought to the programme if disseminated widely to all the WMG members. There was also a strong suggestion from the respondent groups both the WMG members and CDFs to do this training for couples as it has been difficult for the participants to communicate and motivate their partners to change who never received the training and does not understand/recognize the challenge.

By its design, GLD training is one off. But it need not say that changes take time and issue like Gender that challenges very deep-rooted social norms, beliefs and attitudes, demands even more time, hand holding and repeated reinforcement to ensure sustained changes in removing gender barriers. With a one-off training and no provision for follow-up and support limited the scope for a higher impact of this intervention.

With a little exception, there is a general sense of dissatisfaction expressed by the BGP staff at zonal and field level re the capacity and performance of the service provider - KNKS team in facilitating the GLD training. Examples were cited of KNKS's lack of ownership of this training, in-depth understanding of Gender and Leadership, the BGP context and also experience of conducting Gender training with field level participants (facilitation skills).

Meeting with the KNKS team at their Bagerhat office informed us that the trainers engaged in the GLD training were freelancers and engaged on a daily basis. Such arrangement could indeed increase the risk of low ownership that was expressed by some of the concerned BGP officials. It was also learnt from the meeting that key experience of KNKS is in the area of running field level advocacy campaigns. They regularly observe various days, i.e – international women's day, Begum Rokeya day, Breastfeeding day etc. They have some experience of leadership training for brothel women but never conducted Gender Training before Blue Gold Programme. Team members' CVs also did not reflect substantial experience in Gender training. Most of them have training experience in various issues, some of them have received short Gender training but very few of them have experience of conducting Gender training or gender-related programme intervention.

Majority of the respondent group agreed and reported of small changes happened as a result of GLD training. At a personal level, such reported changes included increased recognition of women's work at home; increased sharing of responsibilities in the household work; more women were allowed to be actively engaged in various income generating activities including participating in training or group activities. Some female respondent also cited examples of maintaining a network with various service centres at the local level and being benefitted from their services. At WMG level, the changes reported included more encouragement for women participation in meeting discussion and decision making; women's opinions are taken more seriously than before in the meeting; increased regularity in attendance of women in the meetings; and increased sharing of ideas, needs and opinions by the female members. In some WMGs, more women have been nominated and selected for some critical positions, such as – treasurer and chairperson of the Executive Committee. At the community level, some efforts to stop child marriage and dowry were taken but they were insignificant. It is important to note that these reported changes are small in scale, still limited in frequency (inconsistent) and not applicable for all participants or across all groups. Besides, some of the changes at family and community level cannot be claimed to be a direct and lone result of BGP GLD training as there are other influencing factors, such as – other organisations raising awareness on Gender or campaign on Child Marriage or Violence against Women, poverty and need for increased household income, increased general education and awareness and others.

Every GLD training produced and approved a Gender Action Plan (GAP) and identified a Gender Focal Person (GFP) for each WMG. On behalf of the BGP team, it was expected that the CDFs would monitor the progress of the GAP and provide support where necessary. However, in reality, the follow-up and monitoring did not go as expected. There was no planned monitoring or follow-up took place for GAP, among the CDFs, there was a lack of understanding on Gender and Leadership itself and they also lacked clarity or were confused re their roles in relation to GLD training and Gender Action Plan. Three reasons

were identified as the reasons for such programmatic gap – a) CDFs were not part of the initial GLD training including the action planning session which resulted in lack of clarity on the issue of GLD and the EC's action plan; b) there has been a significant movement among the CDFs and many of them have been transferred to new polders and WMGs; c) the responsibility of follow-up and monitoring of GAP was always perceived as adhoc, never got officially integrated into CDF's regular activity plan and was of least priority. However, this does not mean that CDFs were not engaged in any gender-focused activities, they continued their work by CYS to increase women representation and participation in the WMG, empower women to take lead in various initiatives, problem-solving and decision making as part of their regular activities but did not have planned actions for monitoring and follow-up on the Gender Action Plan.

4 Recommendations for the future

- Gender and Leadership Training was highly valued at all level and therefore must not be stopped. Moreover, to have a real impact, the contents must be disseminated to a larger group of audience and include all WMG members (and if possible, their families).
- Impact benefit for having a one-off training on Gender and Leadership with no follow-up support is very low. An alternative mode of delivery of GLD contents has to be adapted.
- As an alternative mode of delivery, it is strongly recommended that the GLD training contents are split into 4 two hour sessions to be conducted through courtyard meeting over a period of one year. Participants of the courtyard meeting will be WMG general members. Ideally, the spouses should also join these sessions but for practical management reasons if it is not possible, then only the WMG general members can participate. Each group size must not exceed 30 participants. Every WMG Executive Committee meeting will have an hour discussion on GLD issues, action plan and reflection on what could be achieved and what not. Such discussion can also be replicated in the Annual General Meeting of the WMGs.

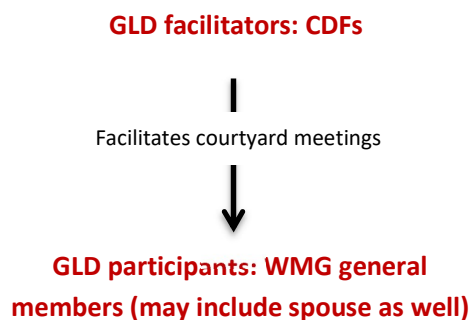
It is acknowledged that splitting the training into more sessions can lead to the perception of a need for more human and financial resources. To respond to that notion, two alternative models with a quick human resource analysis are proposed as a food for thought:

Model 1: CDFs act as facilitator and conducts all the courtyard meetings.

Model 2: CDFs act as Core Facilitator and five members (at least three females) from the WMG executive and general committee are selected and engaged as facilitators. Core facilitators (CDF in this case) train and mentor the facilitators to conduct each GLD session with the community group/WMG general members' sub-group.

A visual representation of the two models would be as follows:

Model 1



Human days calculation for Model 1

80 CDFs will cover 265 WMGs;
 Each CDF will cover 3-4 WMGs
 Each WMG will have 6-7 sub-groups of WMG general members
 Each CDF will conduct 18 -28 group meetings (2 hours) every 3 months

Model 2



Human days calculation for Model 2

80 CDFs will cover 265 WMGs; Each CDF will cover 3-4 WMGs
 Each WMG will have 6-7 sub-groups of WMG general members
 Each CDF will conduct 3-4 GLD group facilitators' meetings (2 hours) every 3 months on each
 Each GLD group facilitator will conduct only 1-2 group meetings (2 hours each) every 3 months

- While model 1 provides total control of the activity, implementation and its quality, it also demands heavy involvement of the CDFs in the intervention. Model 2 engages CDFs in a more supervisory role with planning, mentoring and monitoring, reduces direct facilitation related workload, builds local capacity on GLD along with facilitation skills and also does not overload anyone – CDF or EC members with too many group facilitations at a time.
- Develop more training materials with visuals for participants including small video clips with key messages that can also be disseminated so that the participants can take it back home to sensitise other family members. It is suggested that prior to develop any materials, a quick search of existing materials (both print and AV) among other organisations with Gender and Leadership programmes can be conducted and if available and appropriate, then used.

- The need for CDF capacity building with ToT on GLD prior to field implementation for both models cannot be emphasised enough. In addition, Blue Gold Programme must ensure thorough briefing to the CDFs on their GLD related tasks, roles and responsibilities before going for field implementation.

5 Limitations of the study

- Practical observation of GLD training could not be done
- Most of the GLD trainers from KNKS could not be mobilised for interview as they are no longer contracted with KNKS
- WMG meetings could not be practically observed
- Participant selection for the FGD did not always follow the criteria. As a result, CDFs did not always represent WMGs that received the GLD training; one of the two UP members' group did not receive GLD training.

Annex A

Rapid assessment of the Gender and Leadership Development Training to WMGs Terms of Reference

Background

The Blue Gold Program is jointly funded by the Governments of Bangladesh and the Netherlands, and is implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). It started in March 2013 and extends over a 7+ year period, until June 2020. Its operations concentrate on twenty-two polders in four coastal districts of south-west Bangladesh: Patuakhali, Barguna, Khulna and Satkhira. The overall objective is to “reduce poverty for 170,000 households living in 115,000 ha of selected coastal polders by creating a healthy living environment and a sustainable socio-economic development”. Stimulating the participation of women aims to ensure that both men and women benefit, and to achieve greater gender equity. Blue Gold aims that at least 40% of the membership of Water Management Groups (WMGs) comprise of women, and that the elected council (or Executive Committee) of the WMGs is made up of at least 30% women.

In general, this target of 30% women in the elected council (or Executive Committee) of the WMGs is achieved, with 4 (and sometimes 5) of the 12 elected members being women. However, the challenge remains to have these women actively participating in the discussions within the Executive Committees and influencing decision-making. To address this, the Blue Gold Program developed the Gender and Leadership Development training, which is a 3-day training program targeting the 12 members of the WMG Executive Committees, several (3) women from the general membership who have leadership potential and a few (female) UP members.

The main objectives of the GLD training are:

- a) To develop a basic knowledge and understanding on gender issues and the importance of women’s participation in the development process;
- b) To identify gender related problems at various levels (family, WMG and society), and to develop knowledge and understanding on how to tackle these issues;
- c) To improve the knowledge and understanding of women leaders on how to participate and contribute more effectively in WMGs and in their family; and
- d) To improve knowledge and awareness on the qualities of leaders and how to apply.

One standard batch of GLD training composes of all Executive Committee member from 2 WMGs, several potential female leaders from the general membership of those 2 WMGs together with several UP representatives, in practice around 30 participants. In the ToR the foreseen training was divided into two phases. Phase 1 with 24 batches (53 WMGs) in Khulna and Satkhira and 37 batches (79 WMGs) in Patuakhali and phase 2 with 38 batches (74 WMGs) in Khulna and Satkhira and 30 batches (59 WMGs) in Patuakhali.

By the end of October 2015 an invitation letter was send to about 15 potential services suppliers. Among those who expressed their interest, 6 were shortlisted. Of those who submitted a technical and financial proposal, KNKS was selected as the service provider. Dry run training was conducted by the end of March 2016, during which BGP staff assessed the trainers, selecting the most suitable ones.

The training module was based on a similar one from the IPSWAM project, but had been revised and updated by the BGP gender coordinator in close cooperation with the BGP training team.

In May 2016 three pilot training sessions were held, one in Patuakhali, one in Khulna and one in Satkhira. BGP staff (gender coordinator and training expert and/or training coordinator) provided feedback to the service provider. Based on this experience, also some improvements in the training module were made.

The actual training sessions of phase 1 started in September 2016 and continued until April/May 2017. By that time 61 batches of 122 WMGs had received the GLD training (including those of the pilot training)

Rationale for the rapid assessment

The Blue Gold Program had entered into a contract with the service provider for the first phase of the training services. It was foreseen in the ToR that at the end of phase 1 Blue Gold would conduct “an evaluation to determine the extension of the contract for Phase 2 or the termination of the contract”. It is important to also collect more evidence on the “impact” or effect of the training. Last but not least, the need is felt to get better insight in the pros and cons of outsourcing training such as this GLD training, which is implemented by service providers selected through a tender procedure and conducting a fixed training module by a pre-set agenda, without taking into account the specific needs of individual WMGs.

This assessment will be conducted by BGP TA, which should be someone who was not involved in developing the module, organizing the training or otherwise involved.

Objective of the rapid assessment and research questions:

The objectives of the assessment are three-fold:

1. To assess the quality of the provided GLD training
2. To assess the relevance and effectiveness of the training, including collecting evidence on the “impact” of the training
3. To assess the pros and cons of the modality of the training, i.e. outsourcing to an external service provider.

It is foreseen that the rapid assessment should answer questions such as the following (but not be limited to these questions):

- Were the module / sessions suitable for the target group and to get the message across?
- Was the training methodology suitable and attractive, including participatory methodologies?
- Were the service provider and the individual trainers sufficiently capable to conduct the GLD sessions?
- In particular, did the service provider / trainers sufficiently internalize the gender subjects?
- Did the trainers took sufficient time to conduct the sessions?,
- Did the training meet a (felt or unfelt) need of the trainees?

- To what extent did the trainers inspire the trainees to develop their own ideas on solutions to address gender inequalities, especially within the WMG (e.g. as presented in the GAPs prepared by each WMG)?
- What happened after the training, e.g. did the training participants (mainly Executive Committee members) share their learnings and the GAP with general WMG members during a general WMG meeting? And did they bring the learnings into practice?
- Was the follow-up of the training, including the GAP, discussed in monthly WMG Executive Committee meetings and was follow-up given to its implementation?
- What changed in the relationships between male and female Executive Committee members, in particular, did the (active) participation of female members in dialogues and decision-making change / improve?
- What are the pros and cons of the followed training modality (i.e. implementing a training programme for about 130 WMGs by training teams of the external service provider)?
- Including assessing the organizational and administrative aspects of the training and its efficiency.
- What recommendations can be given for the continuation of the GLD training, possibly in a different modality.

Methodology of the assessment

The quality of the provided training will be assessed by interviewing training participants and BGP staff involved in the (monitoring of the) training, such as the gender coordinator, training expert, zonal training coordinators, relevant CDFs and any other zonal staff who were involved or observed the training, including the zonal coordinators and socio-economists. Also any reporting on GLD training, including training course evaluation forms (if available), field visit reports, etc. should be reviewed.

Training participants also need to be interviewed, with representatives from all categories: male and female WMG EC members, potential women leaders from the general WMG membership and UP members who participated in the training.

See also the list of tentative respondents annexed to this ToR.

Duration of the rapid assessment

As soon as agreement has been reached about this ToR and the person conducting this assessment, relevant documents will be shared, to allow preparation.

The field work assessment will start by mid-November. It is expected that about 2.5 weeks will be needed to conduct the interviews in Patuakhali, Bagerhat (KNKS Office) and Khulna, including about one day in Dhaka. Thereafter a draft report will be prepared, which will be finalized into a final report after comments of BGP have been received.

Tentative timeline:

Field work: 19 November to about 5 December

Preparation of draft report: by 15 December

Sharing findings with TL: tbd

Submitting Final report: one week after the comments of BGP have been received.

Estimated total duration: 22 working days: 1 day preparation; 12 days field work; 1 day Dhaka; 7 days report writing and sharing findings with TL; and 1 day final report.

ToR Appendix: Overview of respondents

KNKS Bagerhat Office:

- Director
- GLD Training Coordinator Gopinath
- Most of the regular trainers who conducted the GLD training (especially Sultana, Baby, Dipok, Mobarak)

WMGs: 15 WMGs in Patuakhali and Khulna in total whose EC members received GLD training. Of each WMG:

- Interview (some of the) male EC members
- Interview (some of the) female EC members
- Interview several of the female potential leaders of the general membership who participated in the training.

It seems most appropriate to interview the men and women separately to allow that women speak out more freely. Meeting the female EC members together with some of the female potential leaders who received training can be done.

Union Parishad:

Interview several UP members who participated in the GLD training (several in Khulna and several in Patuakhali)

Blue Gold TA:

- Training Expert (Kashem)
- Former Training Coordinator (Khairul)
- Gender Coordinator (Roksana)
- Team Leader
- Training coordinator Patuakhali Atik
- Training coordinator Satkhira Nripen
- Socio-economist Patuakhali Mohibulla
- Socio-economist Khulna Tahmina
- 5 CDFs in Patuakhali who observed the GLD training
- 5 CDFs in Khulna who observed the GLD training
- Anyone else?