

# **Gender Mainstreaming and Equality with Focus on MDGs**

A Special Training cum Professional Development Program for the  
Government and UNDP Officials of Afghanistan, 6-11 December 2010

(Funded and supported by the UNDP, Kabul, Afghanistan)

## **Report of the Training Program**

By

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In association with

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## **1. Introduction**

The ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence on Millennium Development Goals (ARCMDG) is a no-profit making outreach program of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). ARCMDG works with its partners to enhance the knowledge management and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in ASEAN and elsewhere. ARCMDG is the only regional Center of Excellence in the world recognized by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Its mission is to catalyze the achievements of the MDGs in the ASEAN region, capacity building, education and applied research programs, coupled with consulting and advisory services, networking and partnership building activities. It also works in close collaboration with national, regional and international organizations, inclusive of civil society and non-governmental organizations.

A six-day training program on “Gender Mainstreaming and Equality with Focus on MDGs” was conducted during 6-11 Dec 2011 for the officials of Afghanistan, at AIT Conference Center, Bangkok, Thailand following the request of Mrs. Sharmistha, Dasbarwa, Gender Equality Project of the UNDP, Kabul Afghanistan. This training program was funded by the UNDP, Kabul Office.

## **2. Objectives of the Training Program**

The broad objective of this training program was to discuss on gender issues in the context of MDGs and making relevant for Afghanistan with focus on gender responsive local planning and community development. A training curriculum (Appendix 1) was specifically designed for the government and UNDP officials of Afghanistan by Prof. Jayant K. Routray of AIT in close consultation with Mrs. Dasbarwa and implemented subsequently. The senior officials and policy makers of the Government of Afghanistan associated with Ministries of Women Affairs, Economic Affairs, and Foreign Affairs attended the training program.

The specific objectives of the training were:

- a. To provide an overview of Millennium Development Goals, its current status and Gender sensitive MDGs indicators and targets,
- b. To familiarize the participants with the Gender Mainstreaming, equality and regulatory measures,
- c. To increase the participants knowledge about economic empowerment and livelihood strategies, and
- d. To expose the officials for undertaking gender sensitive local planning and community development.

## **3. Major Topics Covered**

The topics presented by the resource persons are classified under the following groups.

1. Millennium Development Goals, its current status focusing (ASEAN/SAARC) countries.
2. Introduction to gender concepts, gender mainstreaming, gender equality, policies and regulatory measures.
3. Economic empowerment and livelihood strategies focusing on gender responsive budgeting and economic development.
4. Group exercise on gender sensitive local planning and community development in Afghanistan.

## **5. Participants**

Seventeen participants from Afghanistan and five other AIT student participants from Afghanistan (Appendix 2) attended the training program. AIT student participants served as translator cum interpreters. The participants were from different provinces and different Ministries of Afghanistan and the UNDP office at Kabul. They represented Ministry of Women affairs, Governor Office, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, Member of Provincial Council, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All the participating members occupy high-level positions in their respective ministries and departments.

## **6. Resource Persons**

Resource persons (Appendix 3) for this training program were drawn mostly from Asian Institute of Technology and few were external resource persons drawn from Singapore, United Nations Millennium Campaign, Bangkok. The resource persons are highly qualified in their respective fields and rich in professional and regional experiences. The classroom presentations were based on theoretical as well practical knowledge supported by case studies, followed by lively discussions by the participants and interactive learning sessions with the resource persons.

## **7. Training Materials**

The complete set of reading materials were developed by the Course Director Prof. Routray and circulated among the participants as selected reading materials for the program. The presentations made by respective resource persons in different sessions were also distributed in hard copies during the sessions.

## **8. Inaugural Session of the Training Program**

A joint inaugural session took place with the officials of Sudan and Officials of Afghanistan at Milton Blender Hall of AIT at 08:00 am on 6 December. Ms. Vineeta Thapa (Program

officer of Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Management) welcomed and introduced two training programs - “Gender Mainstreaming and Equality with focus on MDGs” for the officials of Afghanistan and “Public Health and Disaster Management” for the officials of Sudan.

Prof. Said Iran Dost, President of Asian Institute of Technology delivered the opening address. He welcomed the officials from both the countries and emphasized on the importance of cross cutting themes of training programs, MDGs and environmental sustainability. He further added that Asian Institutional of Technology has extended its services for capacity building through different programs in other developing countries apart from the Asia and Pacific region. He wished the participants for a comfortable stay for their stay at Thailand and making the best use of AIT resources for their respective professional development. He looked forward for strengthening further partnership and collaboration with Asian Institute of Technology for academic, research and outreach activities. Dr. Sandro Calvani, Director of ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence for Millennium Development Goals also expressed his thought on the importance of MDGs particularly the cross cutting themes like gender and disaster management in the contemporary development arena.

Prof. Jayant K Routray, the Course Director of both the programs, delivered the contents, outlines and focus of the training programs. He elaborated on the expected outcomes and benefits to the participating members. He also emphasized that Asian Institute of Technology has the capacity and expertise to undertake such training programs, pulling internal as well as external resources from organizations located in Bangkok. Participants’ knowledge could be further enhanced and expanded through field visits in Thailand as this country has done pretty well in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and also demonstrated many good practices regarding Disaster Management and Preparedness.

## **9. Training Sessions**

Prof. Jayant K. Routray made a presentation on “Social and Economic Empowerment for Gender Development”. The presentation started with elaboration of key terms used in contemporary gender studies such as gender parity, gender equality, gender equity and gender mainstreaming. The second part of the presentation was consisting of gender equality and empowerment of women with focus on that equal rights, equal access to resources, and equal opportunities for education, skill development and livelihood options for both men and women.



Joint Inaugural Address by Prof. Said Irandoust, President of AIT at Melton E Bender Auditorium



Dr. Sandro Calvani, Director of ARCMDG, Prof. Said Irandoust, and Prof. Jayant K. Routray in the Inaugural Session at Melton E Bender Auditorium

Dr. Mokbul Morshed Ahamad made a presentation on “Current Status of MDGs, Achievements and Its Future”. His presentation included a brief introduction to MDGs and its importance, and the current status with examples. It was also followed by the challenges faced in achieving them by 2015. Apart from that he highlighted on the issues and points associated with taking practical steps and bearing the costs in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015. He concluded his presentation with critical remarks and existing policy flaws.

A Country Presentation on Afghanistan was made by the participating officials in order to orient every body and understand about the needs and current situation in terms of gender development and mainstreaming in Afghanistan. The presentation provided the general picture of the country, its geography, demography, and culture etc. The presentation also highlighted the developments issues and progress made so far by the Afghanistan Government in mainstreaming gender in their national development policy and agenda. Prof. Routray moderated the session.

Ms. Jagriti Shanker made a presentation on “Gender Mainstreaming and Equality Concepts, Theories and Practices”. Her presentation included the basic terminologies used in gender and development studies. These terms are gender discrimination, gender roles, gender needs, gender equality, women empowerment, WID vs GAD, gender mainstreaming, gender planning, gender analysis, and gender responsive budgeting.

Dr. Karabi Baruah made a presentation on “Laws, Human Rights, CEDAW and BPFA”. Her presentation covered human rights, its principals, laws and the hierarchical structure of human rights laws, followed by the salient features of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women. The last part included the Beijing deceleration/platform.

Ms. Nanako Tsukahara made a presentation on “Millennium Summit &Evaluation of MDGs with focus on regional perspective (AREAN/SAARC)”. Her presentation was on the origin of MDGs and explanation of all 8 goals. The second part of her presentation explained the progress of the MDGs particularly in the Asia Pacific region, its current status with statistics and challenges face by the Asia Pacific Region in achieving the MDGs so far. Her last part of the presentation covered the wide views expressed by the critiques weather goals can be achieved by 2015 or not. She referred to a number of critical actions required by the Asia Pacific region in order to catalyze their performance towards MDGs.

Dr. Philippe Doneys made a presentation on “Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality Laws”. His presentation covered widely on gender mainstreaming with emphasis on gender friendly laws, gender laws in different countries, and gender policies and gender rights (health rights, sexual rights, protective rights, and ownership rights, etc.). Lastly he concluded with gender sensitive national and local level frameworks, where gender mainstreaming can get a chance depending on the country specific culture and family codes of life.

Prof. Jayant K. Routray made a presentation on “Gender sensitive indicators and MDGs”. His presentation started with the general introduction of indicator, purpose of indicators, expression of indicators, characteristics of indicators, gender sensitive indicators for specific sectors such as for assessing development, monitoring and evaluation. He cautioned about the data quality for framing various indicators. Data sources and availability of required data are major issues for such exercise.

Dr. Julaikha Hossain made a presentation on “Gender Mainstreaming in Legal and Constitutional Affairs”. The presentation included the need for mainstreaming associated obstacles in achieving gender mainstreaming. The focus was on right-based approach to gender mainstreaming, and gender mainstreaming in constitutional affairs. The discussion was supported by case studies from developing countries.

Dr. Karabi Baruah made a presentation on “Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Gender”. The presentation was focused on the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS particularly in Asia, where three out of four adults living with HIV in Asia are women, especially 70% of youth are infected with HIV in Thailand are women and girls. The root causes of HIV to women in Asian were discussed. Poor policy implementation has created hurdles in achieving the MDGs. The presentation was concluded with some suggestions such as fostering right-based approach to gender inequality, increase recognition of GBV and development protocols.

Dr. Thelma Kay made a presentation on “Gender Sensitive MDG Targets”. The presentation covered MDGs in general and gender sensitive indicators in particular. Through indicators she highlighted on the current status of Asia Pacific region and forth-coming challenges in achieving the MDGs. Her presentation also covered the gender sensitive indicators in each goal of the MDGs. The final part of her presentation had some critical remarks on the MDGs and its modification and challenges faced for achieving them by 2015.

Dr. Donna L. Doane made a presentation on “Gender and livelihood strategies for economic empowerment”. She focused on the fact that the vast majority of women workers in Asia, as well as in most other parts of the developing world (and in some segments of advanced industrial economies), can be found working in the informal economy. They are among the most vulnerable of all workers, and are subject to very poor working conditions, irregular incomes, and what are considered to be some of the most undesirable forms of economic activity. They are often dependent on unethical middlemen, contractors, and unscrupulous officials. As women, they are often not even recognized as ‘real workers’ and their contributions are either unnoticed or undervalued. For a country such as Afghanistan, with cultural norms and gender-differentiated responsibilities, it may be important to develop home based work as well as other types of livelihoods for women as well as men.

Dr. Julaikha Hossain made another presentation on gender analysis and gender needs assessment. It also provided detail strategies for gender mainstreaming at all levels of government and public affairs. Her second part of the presentation covered the needs of

mainstreaming gender in policies, its components and constraints in implementing gender mainstreaming policy in most of the developing countries of the world. The last part of the session discussed on gender mainstreaming in policy needs for financial resources, accountability mechanisms, and good leadership qualities.

Dr. Mokbul Morshed Ahmad also made another presentation on “Gender and Microfinance”. The presentation covered the brief history of microfinance/microcredit and explained that who really needs and who gets the credits. In addition to that he elaborated the major problems of microcredit and defining its target groups. Lastly he made an argument that microfinance is very popular among the NGOs today not for the sake of the poor and needy for credits rather than to get more funding from their donor agencies in the future as well.

A Group Exercise was conducted on the topic “Gender Responsive Local Development Planning”, which was facilitated by Prof. Jayant K. Routray and Dr. Julaikha Hossain (Appendix 4). The participants were divided into three groups: (1) Local Development Council (LDC) and Planning Process in Afghanistan, (2) People Centered Development, and (3) Prioritization of Programs and Projects for Women within LDC. After brainstorming sessions and discussions among the participants, the outputs were recorded and summarised. At the local level administration in Afghanistan, 13 % women are elected presently but two of the key chairs (Director and Deputy Director) must be women. Most importantly it was felt that in the decision-making process both men and women should have equal presence (50-50%). It was also suggested that it is not enough as because the gender mainstreaming is still to be initiated at the local levels, where gender needs, equal opportunities and access need to be implemented. Capacity building of women involved in local planning should be a pre-requisite for gender mainstreaming at the local level in Afghanistan. Apart from access to infrastructure and recourses, the number of women members at the local level planning should be increased simultaneously empowering women taking part in decision- making process at the provincial level as well.

## **10. Closing Ceremony**

The training program was concluded with the presence of Prof. Jayant K. Routray and Dr. Mokbul Morshed Ahmad. Prof. Routray delivered the closing remarks for strengthening ties with Afghanistan Government, UNDP and other institutions for collaborative programs such as capacity building in various areas of research and development. He also thanked the participants for their active participation in the training program and making it very successful. The funding support extended by the UNDP, Kabul office was gratefully acknowledged. The program concluded with distribution of certificates to the participants by Dr. Mokbul Morshed Ahmad and followed by few remarks by the participants.

## **Appendix 1: Training Course Curriculum on “Gender Mainstreaming and Equality with focus on MDGs”**

### **Module 1: Millennium Development Goals**

- Millennium Summit & evolution of MDGs with focus on regional perspectives (ASEAN/SAARC)
- Current status of MDGs, achievements, and its future
- Gender sensitive MDG targets
- Laws, Human Rights, CEDAW and BPFA with cases from the region

### **Module 2: Gender Mainstreaming, Equality and Regulatory Measures**

- GM&E concepts, theories and practices
- Performance in mainstreaming gender equality
- Practical challenges for gender mainstreaming in governance
- GM in legal and constitutional affairs with case studies
- Reproductive health and HIV/AIDS

### **Module 3: Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Strategies**

- Social and economic empowerment with focus on gender parity and equality
- Gender and livelihood strategies
- Gender Responsive Budgeting
- Gender and sustainable livelihood strategies for economic empowerment
- Gender and microfinance

### **Module 4: Gender Responsive Local Planning and Community Development**

- Current status, needs, and priority areas of GME in Afghanistan: A Report presentation by the participants
- Group work on gender responsive local development planning
- Challenges of Afghan women for gender concerns and participation in local planning process (group work)

## **Appendix 2: List of Participants**

1. Mr. Abdul Fayaz Mehr Ain, Director of Governor Office, Balkh Province
2. Ms. Masooda Abdul Jabbar, Manager of Economy Unit, Provincial Directorate of Women's Affairs
3. Mr. Nasir M. Nadir, Manager of Operations, Provincial Directorate of Women's Affairs
4. Mr. Ahmaduddin Sahibi, Provincial Coordinator, UNDP, Gender Equality Project
5. Mr. Noor Aga, Provincial Coordinator, UNDP, Gender Equality Project
6. Mr. Mohammad Anwar, Advisor of Social Affairs, Herat Governor office
7. Ms. Naserin Hashimi, Manager of Gender Unit, Provincial Directorate of Women's Affairs
8. Mr. Hares Akhterzada, Manager of Legal Help Centre, Provincial Directorate of Justice
9. Ms. Mahbooba Sadat, Member of Provincial Council
10. Ms. Karima Sultani, Director of Admin/Finance, Ministry of Women's Affairs
11. Ms. Belqis Hadi, Member of Provincial Council
12. Ms. Lailuma Akbary, Member of Extension Service Centre for Women, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
13. Mr. Mohammad Bahlol Sharifi, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Economy
14. Ms. Abida Safi, Operations Manager, Ministry of Women's Affairs
15. Mr. Mohammad Ismail Amin, Member of Multi-national Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
16. Ms. Sher Mohammad Jami Zada, Deputy Minister (Administration & Finance), Ministry of Economy
17. Mr. Said Mohammad Rafiq Naqshbandi, Executive Director of Budget Unit, Ministry of Finance

### **Observer Participants**

18. Mr. Syed Ainuddin, Regional and Rural Development Planning, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.
19. Mr. Abdul Aziz Mohibbi, Natural Resource Management, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.
20. Mr. Sohail Mehr, water engineering and Management, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.
21. Mr. Mohibull Rahmat, Transportation Engineering, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.
22. Mr. Asmat Nabi Hotaki, Construction, Engineering and Infrastructure Management, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.

### Appendix 3: Resource Persons

1. Dr. Mokbul Morshed Ahmad, Associate Professor, Regional & Rural Development Planning, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
[morshed@ait.asia](mailto:morshed@ait.asia)
2. Dr. Karabi Baruah, Independent Consultant (Gender and HIV), Inter Tower 10-B, 35 Sukumvit Soi 11, Bangkok 10110, Thailand.  
[kabaruah@gmail.com](mailto:kabaruah@gmail.com)
3. Dr. Donna L. Doane, Visiting Faculty and Researcher, Gender and Development Studies, School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
[donnaldoane@yahoo.com](mailto:donnaldoane@yahoo.com)
4. Dr. Philippe Doney, Assistant Professor, Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
[philippe@ait.ac.th](mailto:philippe@ait.ac.th)
5. Dr. Julaikha Bente Hossain, Research Specialist and Visiting Faculty, School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
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6. Dr. Thelma Kay, 142-144, Soi Soonvijai 8, Bangkok 10310  
[thelmakay@gmail.com](mailto:thelmakay@gmail.com)
7. Prof. Jayant K. Routray, Training Course Director, Regional & Rural Development Planning, School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
[routray@ait.asia](mailto:routray@ait.asia)
8. Ms. Jagriti Shankar, Program officer (Gender and Knowledge Management), Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.  
[jagriti@ait.asia](mailto:jagriti@ait.asia)
9. Ms. Nanako Tsukahara, Programme Officer, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, UN Millennium Campaign, United Nations Building, Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand.  
[tsukahara@un.org](mailto:tsukahara@un.org)

**Appendix 4: Group Exercise on Gender Responsive Local Development Planning**  
(Challenges of Afghan women for gender concerns and participation in local planning process)

Facilitators: Prof. Jayant K. Routray and Dr. J. B. Hossain

8.30 – 8.45: Briefing and discussion on the framework to be used

8.45 – 9.45: Group discussion and reporting following the framework provided

9.45 – 10.00: Break

10.00 – 11.00: Presentation by three groups and discussion

**Group 1: Local Development Council (LDC) and Planning Process in Afghanistan**

- Structure and composition of the LDC (Membership)
- Role and functions
- Participation and decision making process
- Preparation of plan and gender responsive budgeting
- Projects and specific activities for different target groups and more importantly for women
- Activities relating to education, health, infrastructure, and economic and other services with focus on women, etc.

(Members: Mr. Abdul Fayaz Mehr Ain, Ms. Masooda Abdul Jabbar, Mr. Nasir M. Nadir, Mr. Ahmaduddin Sahibi, Mr. Mohammad Anwar, and Ms. Naserin Hashimi)

**Group 2: People Centered Development**

Perception and understanding about local development, vision and expectations (social, economic, and community development, etc with gender development linkages)

(Members: Mr. Noor Aga, Mr. Hares Akhterzada, Ms. Mahbooba Sadat, Ms. Karima Sultani, and Ms. Abida Safi)

**Group 3: Prioritization of Programs and Projects for Women within LDC**

Local potential, needs (current and future), problems and opportunities in general with focus on women and prioritization of activities

Access to resources

Control and management of resources

Sharing benefits, etc

(Members: Ms. Belqis Hadi, Mr. Mohammad Bahlol Sharifi, Ms. Lailuma Akbary, Mr. Mohammad Ismail Amin, Ms. Sher Mohammad Jamizada, and Mr. Said Mohammad Rafiq Naqshbandi)



Group Photograph of the Participants with the Course Director Prof. Jayant K. routray and Dr. Sandro Calvani, Director of the ARCMDG