

# **Gender Equality Strategy Tip Sheet For Women's Voice and Leadership- Bangladesh (WVLB) Project Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)**

## **1. Background**

Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Program is a global initiative of Global Affairs, Canada to support Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy. In Bangladesh, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has been implementing it as a project since 25 February, 2019. This project aims to assist Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and women networks in their efforts to address discrimination and rights violations as well as to challenge social practices for promoting gender equality. Manusher Jonno Foundation has been working with 18 WROs under multi-year funding category and will also benefit some 5-10 small community-based organizations/networks either registered/non-registered through small and one-shot funding called fast response fund.

## **2. MJF's Commitment to Gender Equality**

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) supports rights and governance initiatives in Bangladesh and gender equality has been a core programme principle as well as part of organisational values and culture. The principle of MJF in ensuring gender equality is to respect gender & diversity at all levels, irrespective of sex, different sexual orientation, professions including Sex Work, untouchables, religious and ethnic minority, different class, caste etc. It is mandatory for each of the program/project to integrate gender aspect into problem analysis, strategy development and measures of any project supported by MJF.

### **2a. How MJF Defines Gender Equality**

Gender Equality is a precondition for Socio-economic Progress. Ensuring human rights is the main agenda of MJF, where MJF has defined substantive equality in five major dimensions: transforming social and institutional structures; prevention of sexual harassment & violence against women and children, countering stigma, facilitating social, economic, political participation and social inclusion of women and marginalized peoples and reduce overall discrimination both in practice and policies, laws/rules. Based on this, it has been decided to mainstream gender within all partners and MJF organization itself. MJF believes gender equality can be achieved through a strategy of mainstreaming, which is defined by the United Nations as, "...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality where women and girls can enjoy equal rights."

### **2b. Organizational transformation to achieve gender equality:**

- Leadership for gender equality: A strong commitment to gender equality is crucial from management and governing board level as leadership for gender equality requires vision, passion, and commitment. It requires changing gender programmatic and discriminatory practices, both formal and informal within the organization and in programmatic and policy work.
- Policy, planning and programming: MJF will actively consider gender equality and women's empowerment in all stages of thematic programming cycle. Ensuring gender-responsive policy

and planning at all levels offers clarity and guidance for staff for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment and increases accountability for gender equality results.

- Accountability: MJF will continue integrating accountability for gender equality results within its overall accountability framework. Accountability will be complemented with incentives for staff to work more effectively on gender equality.
- Inclusive, diverse, and safeguarding for all: MJF will ensure and is determined to create an inclusive, diverse, and harmonious working environment that respects the dignity of all persons. Promoting a culture of equality, dignity and respect requires changing values and beliefs.

### **2c. Goal of MJF's Gender Equality strategy: 2019-2023**

To support the achievement of gender equality as an essential component and identifying working methods with partners NGO or WROs, implementing gender equality tools, as well as the measures required to increase the visibility of results.

- Advance equal rights for women and men giving priority to intersectionality.
- Eliminate gender inequalities in access to, control of, and benefit from resources and services.
- Support women's equal participation with men in political and economic decision-making.

This Gender Equality strategy sets two strategic approaches for implementation

- Mainstreaming Gender approach
- Integration of gender equality approach

### **2d. MJF's Guiding principles for the gender equality strategy**

- i. MJF's thematic programs and strategies will adopt a human rights-based approach to development in line with the principles and standards of the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, other human rights treaties including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and global and national commitments.
- ii. Considers men and women as active agents of change, when marginalized people have opportunities to achieve their aspirations and fulfill their potential and when their knowledge and contributions are valued and mobilized.
- iii. Leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first requires improving capacities to analyze and target populations affected by multiple forms of discrimination. Support partners to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as those based on poverty, geographic location, migration, identity, ethnicity, age, race, religion, disability, and other characteristics.
- iv. Advancing gender equality calls for innovative approaches, from community conversations on difficult and controversial topics to behavior-change campaigns and challenge discriminatory social norms and practices which are at the heart of gender inequality.
- v. Transforming gender and power relations seen as essential for achieving gender equality and sustainable development.

### **3. Why Gender Equality Results and Indicators for WVL-Bangladesh Project**

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy recognizes that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world. Accordingly, Gender Equality (GE) outcomes of WVL are describable or measurable changes that explicitly address a reduction in gender inequality, or an improvement in gender equality between women and men, girls, and boys.

Gender equality and women's empowerment need to be pursued for a just and equal society and have been acknowledged as important objectives for many decades, including in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)<sup>1</sup>.

Despite long-standing international commitments and the demonstrated benefits of addressing gender inequalities, incorporating gender perspectives into development work remains a significant challenge. One of the most important lessons is that actions to address gender inequalities must be explicit throughout development planning and programming if consistent progress is to be made toward gender equality. Without explicit objectives, strategies, targets, and actions to ensure women's equal participation and outcomes, the needs of women and girls continue to be overlooked. Identifying clear indicators to measure gender equality results is essential to measure and improve performance.

In this regard, identifying the gender equality results for WVL-Bangladesh project aims to achieve-along with the concrete actions are needed to achieve these results, and identified the indicators to measure progress, are essential steps for reducing poverty, advancing gender equality, and empowering women.

Gender equality results by MJF will be identified at different levels of WROs such as organization development for WROs, programming & interventions, defining implementation strategies and actions with communities. Besides, MJF overall project implementation will focus gender sensitive and feminist approach to capacity building of WROs, project monitoring, WROs program assessment.

### **3a. What Is Gender Equality Indicator for WVL-Bangladesh Project?**

Gender equality indicators are measures of performance that require the collection and analysis of sex disaggregated information on who participates in and benefits from project activities.

#### **Box 1: Examples of Gender Equality Indicators (for WVL-Bangladesh project)**

Gender equality indicators might measure the following:

- Partnership with the WROs are women led and 100% board members are women.
- Improved organization policy, provision, and entitlements are inclusive and gender sensitive.
- Strengthened programs strategies to respond to gender-based violence and human rights violation in selected geographic locations.
- Included feminist principal in project management.
- Increased movement and rights claiming by WROs against violence and injustice.
- Strengthened skills in advocacy, negotiation, and program management
- Increased representation and participation of women, girls, and transgender in democratic or community management bodies, especially at local level.
- Enhanced capacity of WROs to achieve their program objectives, particularly leadership, empowerment (social & economic) and rights.
- Enhanced delivery of quality services to advance gender equality through WROs in Bangladesh.
- Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's rights platforms, networks, and alliances to affect policy, legal and social change.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 is "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"

### **Box 1: Examples of Gender Equality Indicators (for WROs)**

- Improved living condition, especially for women, girls, and transgender including intersectionality.
- Enhanced safety and security measures of women, girls, and transgender
- Improved well-being of disabled and ethnic women and girls
- Improved human dignity of VAW survivors, Sex worker and transgender
- Increased participation of women, girls and transgender in leadership and decision-making in family or society.
- Increased awareness among women, girls, and transgender (direct beneficiary), mass community or intermediaries on gender equality issues.
- Enhanced capacity of direct beneficiary (women, girls, transgender) on economic activities.
- Strengthened agency creation of women, girls, and transgender
- Increased access to services of women, girls, and transgender
- Increased life skill capacity of youth women, girls, and transgender
- Strengthened advocacy on *Hijra* (Transgender) Identity
- Reduced school drop out of adolescent girls (grade 5-8)
- Engaged men & boys, played role as defender and supporter to prevent gender-based violence and human rights violation.

### **Cb. Priority Interventions for WVL-Bangladesh Projects**

- Facilitating the process of partnership with WROs by emphasizing gender specific eligible criteria for multi-year fund or fast response fund application, application guidelines and review checklists of MJF.
- Defining guiding principles for staff recruitment at WROs level, especially women in senior position is mandatory and 50% women staff recruitment in proposed program.
- Use gender equality continuum tool/framework to examine WROs program activities and undertake necessary revision in proposal including budget revision at least once in project life.
- Identify differences & inequalities between women and men, between girls and boys, between and women/ transgender men applying gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) that goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. Multiple factors that intersect many other identities like ethnicity, disability, profession, cast etc.
- Institutional capacity building regarding gender friendly policy, procedure, programming, and strategy development for WROs.
- Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making.
- Preventing and responding to gender-based violence and human rights violation.
- Creating mass awareness and capacity building of intermediaries on gender equality issues.
- Advocacy for access to services, resources, and economic opportunities or policy implementation at local level.
- Confidence and life skill building of young girls and transgender.
- Engage men and boys as intermediary to act as defender and supporter to prevent gender-based violence and human rights violation.

#### **Cd. WVL-Bangladesh Implementation Strategy to Gender Equality**

- Integration of gender equality aspects into all policies, guidelines, program implementation strategy etc.
- Gender sensitive environment creation within project and for downstream WROs.
- Integrate gender concerns throughout the project duration in project design, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and budgeting.
- Promote women's voice, agency creation by project interventions of WROs, network, coalitions.
- Involvement of men and boys in the community to change social norms and to combat gender- based violence.
- Participation of women, girls, and transgender in decision-making of the local level bodies, forums, and/or institutions.
- Promote women leadership and women empowerment.
- Gender sensitization of service providers at local level.
- Gender sensitive information and communication materials development.

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