



GREEN RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVE ECOSYSTEMS (GRAPE)

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

General Context

Exclusion has been a cause and result of unequal development in Nepal. Although overall poverty levels at the national level have decreased in recent years, poverty rates among marginalised groups continue to be higher than the national average. The definition of exclusion in Nepal is understood primarily in at least six dimensions: i. Poverty-based; ii. Gender-based; iii. Caste or ethnicity-based; iv. Sexual orientation-based; v. Disability-based; and vii. Geography-based.

A historic milestone in Nepal was reached during the local elections of 2017, with a record number of female representatives elected. The number of women, especially from marginalised communities, coming into power currently augurs well for gender equality and social inclusion. However, the road to women's substantive participation in leadership and decision-making roles is littered with manifold challenges. The Global Gender Gap Index 2018 still ranks Nepal 105 out of 147 countries. Discriminatory attitudes and practices towards women, marginalised castes, ethnic groups, and people living with disabilities persist.

The Government of Nepal has placed special emphasis on gender equality and inclusion in its development plans, considering it a national priority. The GRAPE programme is committed to making special efforts to involve disadvantaged groups in the local economy. Improving the economic situation of women, people living with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups is an essential entry point to achieving positive effects on other exclusion dimensions and on the participation of women and marginalised groups in local decision-making processes.

What is GESI/ GEDSI?

GESI focuses on the need for action to rebalance power relations and ensure equal rights, opportunities, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their social identity. Although GESI is a commonly used concept, the term Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is more commonly used today.

GEDSI refers to targeting and mainstreaming approaches inclusive of people with disabilities. It ensures mainstreaming disability perspectives as part of planning and implementation.

GESI, climate change and agriculture

Agriculture, climate change, and GESI have links and overlaps, but often agriculture, climate, and gender programmes tend to operate in isolation at the provincial and local levels. Women and girls in Nepal are particularly affected by the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, such as loss of access to key natural resources, natural hazards such as floods and landslides, and water-related and vector-borne diseases.

Policies related to gender and climate change show that women and marginalised groups are viewed only as vulnerable groups and not as a broader society. Consequently, social and gender hierarchies persist and limit women's participation in the decision-making process. For example, women are not recognised as legitimate stakeholders in policies and strategies in the water sector, particularly in irrigation. As a result, women's specific needs related to water are repeatedly overlooked. Thus, there is still substantial work needed to equip and strengthen these structures, despite already existing mechanisms and structures to integrate climate change and GESI. Women, people living with disabilities, and people from disadvantaged groups are prevented from participating equally in related governance processes.

There are multiple reasons for this, including harmful GESI norms and exclusion, low access to education, and land ownership. However, these women, people living with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups are change agents and play an essential role in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and environmental protection.

Objective of GRAPE

GRAPE aims to support sustainable agricultural ecosystems in the provinces of Sudurpashchim and Karnali. The project focuses on climate-resilient agriculture. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and GESI are mainstreamed in the project; for each area, group, and value chain, climate and disaster risks, sustainability and biodiversity, gender issues, and social exclusion are properly assessed and addressed.

Target Group of GRAPE

GRAPE's target groups are "economically active or those with the potential to become economically active—poor and ultra-poor, women, people living with disabilities, Dalits, marginalised caste or ethnic groups." The generic term used to address these groups is disadvantaged groups (DAGs).

Diversity Pledge

In March 2021, the UN Gender Theme Group and the International Development Partners' Group (IDPG) partnered to develop a pledge promoting gender parity and diversity in public dialogues. The EU and GIZ are committed to calling for diverse panels, especially those events where the programme is invited to speak or is organising itself. The EU has now come up with a reporting format to monitor such events where GRAPE has been actively reporting.

Ongoing and Planned Measures for GESI Mainstreaming

Some measures below have been identified to ensure mainstreaming GESI approaches in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation in the GRAPE Programme. Wherever needed, care responsibilities have been considered by the programme to ensure the participation of men and women.

Field of Action: "Economic Governance"

Objective: Strengthening the capacities of the targeted local stakeholders in municipal and provincial economic development governance

- Organise trainings to prepare women to make their voices heard and to have a say in decision-making processes with the municipality.
- Include climate resilient agriculture-related issues faced by women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups in strategies, joint goals, plans, and policies by inviting GESI interest groups to dialogues and workshops.

Field of action: "Action Research"

Objective: Strengthening action research and the production of knowledge products to foster climate-smart, water-efficient production and marketing approaches (ICIMOD)

- Carry out action research on efficient approaches to reduce the workload of women.
- Ensure the participation of youth, women, and other vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, in the process of action research.

Field of action: "Roll-Out"

Objective: Increasing the application of climate-resilient, water-efficient production and marketing approaches through the capacity development of value chain actors and co-funding of replication measures

- Engage associations like the National Federation of the Disabled in value chain assessment workshops to identify the challenges faced by people with disabilities and identify measures for inclusion.
- Select people from the DAGs as beneficiaries for capacity development and the implementation of climate resilient agriculture measures.
- Promote technologies that reduce the workload of women.

Field of action: "Up-Scaling"

Objective: Improving the dissemination of instruments and best practices for sustainable and climate resilient economic development on provincial and national levels

- Identify different formats to meaningfully support various groups like women, youth, PWDs, and DAGs in enhancing knowledge and sharing approaches.
- Produce knowledge products and events in various local languages to ensure the DAGs can be reached effectively.

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