

Report

on

Learning and Experience sharing meeting on the Capacity Building activities conducted under NVF Project

Background

Learning and Experience sharing meeting on the capacity building activities conducted under NVF was organized by Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) on May 20, 2022 through virtual platform. The main objective of the meeting was to know lesson learnt, key issues and experiences of each country while conducting capacity building activities under NVF project.

Total of 23 representatives from South Asian countries which includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri-lanka participated in the virtual meeting.

Meeting Details

The meeting was facilitated by **Ms. Snehelatha Mekala, the Regional Coordinator of FANSA**. Similarly, **the Regional Convenor of FANSA, Ms. Lajana Manandhar** formally started the meeting with her welcome remarks highlighting the meeting agenda.

She said that she was pleased to invite **3 Resource Persons (Mr. Kabir Aryal, Ms. Soodha Shrestha, Mr. Prakash Amatya)** from Nepal who have been working in WASH sector for long decades. In addition to this, she gave brief introduction of resource persons and welcome them in the meeting. She further added, the objective of inviting resource person to provide their inputs, feedbacks, ideas on how FANSA should be moving ahead to hear the unheard, to promote marginalized communities and vulnerable groups in mainstream development activities.

Mr. Prodip Roy, Bangladesh

Activities on Climate Resilience WASH Solutions

- Conducted Dialogue and training in 8 divisional part of Bangladesh with different communities (especially with sanitation workers and women)
- CSOs, WASH Actors, community leaders, LGI (union parishad), service providers participated the dialogue/training.

Key Learnings

- It has increased the knowledge of participants particularly on climate resilience WASH solutions considering the geographical location.
- We have established relationship between community, stakeholders and service providers.
- Participant are known about the tools and technique on climate resilience WASH.
- Participants to make an action plan to disseminate the learning to the community.

Activities on Raising the voices of the people with disability

- Person with disabilities, CSOs, community leaders, CBO leaders, service providers participated the training.

Key Learnings

- Persons with disabilities and other stakeholders have known about the rights of disabled persons especially on water and sanitation.
- Persons with disabled people know where they claim their rights and how they get their benefits and who are responsible to ensure the benefits to them.
- Stakeholders including CSOs, community leaders, service providers are sensitized to ensure the rights to the person with disabilities.
- It has also created a way to advocate with govt., service providers both GO and NGOs including donors.

Activities on Building women leadership at the local level

- CSO, community women leaders, LGI (union parishad), CBO leaders, service providers were the participants of the events.

Key Learnings

- Through the activities it enhanced the knowledge of the participants specially on building women leadership at local level.
- Through the capacity building activities they have identified the gaps, limitations of the women, and also barriers to building the women leadership at local level.
- It has equipped the participants raising awareness to the community people and mobilized them to get out of the obstacle.
- Finally it has made them confident to access the decision-making process at family, society and all levels.

Key Issues

- As poor people do not have availability of sanitation services so their sanitation is not improved.
- Lack of land in slum areas to maintain sanitation.

Way forward

- As per plan, Bangladesh has completed most of the activities except a dialogue (it will be held tomorrow at Dhaka city and a national influencing meeting (virtual), it will be held after the comeback of Mr. Joseph).

Bhutan

Activities on protecting the rights of Sanitation workers

- As municipalities have less capacity enhancement programs for sanitation workers so this project gave us an opportunity to work with 25 municipal sanitation workers, sensitized and trained them on how to manage WASH in facilities, promote WASH programs.
- Worked with 9 CSO representatives focusing how CSOs can coordinate and collaborate among CSOs among WASH programs. In-line discussion was made on a common forum to promote WASH and sharing information on WASH-related activities.
- Education and awareness program in communities among WASH workers.

Activities on Climate Resilience WASH solution

- Discussion with CSOs on management of water resources, enhance water supply in WASH facilities.

Activities on Building women's leadership at the local level

- Worked with 14 local women leaders to sensitize on importance of WASH program and discussed how women as a leader can mainstream WASH program in their local government plan.

Key Learnings

- Many sanitation issues in municipal level can be learnt from sanitation workers as they have experience in this field.
- A lot of CSOs are working in 100% ODF free program initiated by Government aiming to achieve by June 2022. This shows government is serious on making Bhutan ODF free country.
- Pulling of the resources from CSOs to make bigger WASH related programs.
- Climate proof WASH infrastructure are found to be important in lot of program because water facilities are getting degraded and being damaged very fast.

Way forward

- Planning to have policy influencing meeting.

India

Activities

- Two day consultant meeting was conducted at New Delhi; all the state partners were invited, state leaders and government others actors- debate on what is happening in the WASH sector in India that have helped to identify real issues.
- Discussed on WASH Governance issues, SACOSAN commitments and roles of each states, how the issues can be taken from grass root level.

Key Learnings

- Discussion helped to understand critical issues on WASH sector of country based on which the strategies for implementation of NYF activities was developed.
- BCC tool have comprehend different form of disability and deformity, so that everybody are included in communities.
- Programs were conducted through good partnership with the government.
- The training program benefitted to smaller CSOs, community based organization.

Maldives

Activities

- Conducted Policy influencing meetings among CSOs (CSOs from areas of Climate), Urban planning, housing regulations, agriculture relating to food security and water security, with Ministry of Climate Change and Technology
- Individual meetings to build networks and establish contacts
- Multi stakeholder institutional building lobbying to get water utilities to join SWA network.

Key Learnings

- CSOs have expressed their willingness to preparedness to initiate a WASH library to facilitated related research, organize seminars and conferences relating to issues raised in infrastructure project EIAs, non-compliance with the Environmental regulation requiring environmental monitory during the operational phases of projects.
- The Ministry of Environment is once again very keen to reorganize and revitalize the CSO WASH coordinating committee. A discussion and accountability platform will be created upon return of the State Minister from SMM, to hold bi-monthly meetings.
- Communities are realizing that public WASH infrastructure does not address universal WASH access (LNOB). This was dramatized in the recent social housing project which resulted in sums and solid waste pile ups.

Way Forward

- We are planning a Clubhouse awareness event on WASH rights with 5 panel members: lawyer, urban planner, climate specialist, water and sanitation specialist, irrigation system designer

Nepal

Activities

1. Training on Capacity Enhancement of CSO's & Vulnerable communities (Local Dialogues) and training on right to WASH to CSO's and marginalized community leaders was conducted in following thematic areas;
 - Climate resilience WASH Solutions: It was conducted in Makawanpur targeting people living in slums and homeless, women, adolescent girls and women. There were total 31 participants (19F12M). The training was led by RADO-Nepal.
 - Protecting the rights of sanitation workers: conducted in Kathmandu targeting sanitation workers, cleaners of public toilets, informal sectors, sanitation workers from valley and other regions. There were total 30 participants (15F, 15M). The training was led by Lumanti Support Group for Shelter.
 - Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities: also conducted in Kathmandu targeting women leaders of cooperatives. Total 28 participants (2M, 26F) and was led by Community Women Forum (CWF).
2. Assessed and prepared a report on SACOSAN 7 commitments and planning to submit the assessment report to government.
3. Conducted Policy influencing's meeting for achievement of SDG 6 (Government level commitment for WASH) at national, provincial and local level;
 - National level (Kathmandu)
 - Provincial level (Province 1 Biratnagar)
 - Local level (Province 1 Barachhetra Municipality)
4. Media mobilizing activities are ongoing.

Issues with recommendations on Climate resilience WASH Solutions

- Water source depletion is the major issue of community so there should be proper study for adaptation/ mitigation measure at local level in the coming days.
- Deforestation is being the major cause for the source depletion.
- Women work burden is added due to water source depletion.

- Awareness campaign and training on WASH and climate change should be given targeting women and men in the community.
- Inclusive WASH plan need to develop in local level government to address the WASH and change issues.

Issues with recommendations from sanitation workers/waste collectors

- No equal wages among sanitation workers
- No insurance and medical treatment
- No identity in the society
- Need of personal safety, hygiene materials and WASH facility in working station.
- Regular health checkup of the sanitation workers
- Government must take care of the children (on health and education) of the sanitation workers.
- Certification mechanism with training from authorized organization to sanitation workers for dignified job

Issues with recommendations- Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities

- Most of the saving and credit cooperatives have the practices of saving and providing loan to their members but for loan amount of around 100 thousand individual have to keep collateral (land) so people without land and living in the slums have to face the issues.
- Most of the saving and credit cooperatives don't have the specific mechanism to provide loan in low interest for ultra-poor and marginalized group so access of WASH service in urban poor is challenging.
- Collaborate and demonstrate community saving and credit cooperatives supporting for LNOBs groups for access to finance to improve WASH services.

Key Learnings

- Government and WASH agencies major priority should be given to water supply schemes and service functional throughout their design life. Furthermore, providing safe water and sanitation is the topmost priority for the government and WASH stakeholders for the access of water and sanitation at marginalized communities.
- Enabling and empowering local CBOs, citizen network to demand their rights to safe WASH services
- Advocate Municipalities to assume devolved mandate by preparing local policies and putting in place a dedicated institutional arrangement through the establishment of a functional Municipality WASH Unit.
- Budget advocacy for equitable water and sanitation in annual resource allocation to reach unreached
- Develop standard training material/guideline/manual

Pakistan

Activities on Building Women Leadership at the local level

- 20 participants representing from potential women groups, leaders and CSOs members on building women leadership at the local level.

- They are aware of their WASH rights and empowered to demand their rights at the national and regional level.

Activities on Climate Resilience WASH solution

- Training conducted for 20 participate male and female activist and CSOs in Punjab. Enhanced their capacity as well as aware about their WASH rights and are empower to demand the rights at national and regional level through networking and advocacy.
- Capacity enhancement of CSOs and vulnerable communities through local dialogues- first capacity enhancement dialogue was conducted at provincial level for 20 representative from relevant LNOB communities and concerned CSOs.

Activities on protecting the rights of Sanitation workers

- Second training conducted in Punjab at provincial level capacity enhancement dialogue was organized for 20 representatives from relevant LNOB communities, concerned CSOs and sanitation workers.
- Consultant was hired who conducted detail assessment for provinces to assist existing gaps and progress, implementing SASCOSAN commitments, status of sanitations in terms of reaching most marginalized communities. The report has been shared to policy maker and CSOs.
- Policy influencing meeting for attaining the SDG 6 at provincial level: consultation meeting was conducted at the national level and the assessment report findings was shared to sensitized the decision maker, policy makers and to ensure implementation of commitment.

Srilanka

Due to the curfew all the country, postponed the three dialogue for upcoming week. Despite of this, some activities are conducted;

- Visited disabilities group communities and found they are struggling to get basics sanitation infrastructure facilities. Most of them are suffering poverty, family member do not have adequate income to provide necessary resources.
- Completed training on WASH rights for marginalized communities.
- SACOSAN assessment is ongoing.
- Distributed basic sanitation matters to sanitation workers during COVID and want to continue it to enhance their capacity.

After learning being shared by all the participants, resource persons shared their insightful thoughts.

Brief on the inputs shared by resource persons

Ms. Soodha Shrestha (Resource Person, UN Habitat) - highlighted three areas; **Inclusive access to water and sanitation in policies, Information System and Regulation.**

She shares that in Nepal they have been focusing on assessing the current policies whether it really speaks of sanitation services or only water supply. Similarly, advocating on equal priority of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in policies. She says, to reach the unreached people, policies should focus on those community people who really need those services. Furthermore, shares how government services are unfair as in richer communities government is providing free services of

sewerage and drainage, but the poor communities are paying more and are struggling more to have access to those services.

Another area she highlighted was information system at city level where it is disaggregated to all the aspects of the communities so that municipal authorities or the support system can have the evidence based plan.

Likewise, she emphasize the importance of regulatory system of developed policies. Regulatory framework and regulatory mandate is very vital issue that we need to address because when we talk about in the context of Nepal there are lots of policies and services mandated to the local government but when it comes to regulating there is no define protocol who is accountable to mandate those services. Further she adds, need of capacity enhancement of local government in terms of strengthening institution.

Lastly, she shared UN habitat have developed **Climate Proofing Tool Kit** which is guiding the whole project cycle to look from the climate lens.

Mr. Prakash Amatya (Resource Person): he talks on **Protecting the rights of Sanitation Workers**

He shares his opportunity to closely understand the public toilets interventions while visiting the Dhaka. He says that most of the country's' policy makers, investors are more interested in the infrastructure and technology. Infrastructure has been limelight and interest of the interventions. In line with this he adds, sanitation workers are always in shadow due to caste based system like sanitation tasks has been specified to certain communities. If we look at their livelihood, income, why they are not able to overcome their situation all relates to level of education, exposure and the guiding policies, regulation and laws which led them access to the finance, health and medical facilities and access to their rights.

Furthermore, he says that the labor law have failed to in cooperate the sanitation workers as equal as other worker. They simply need dignity of their work that is missing in whole picture how we can work together to give them dignity. He adds, it's not about having interaction and capacity building workshop or providing them some safety equipment but the overall mindset or intervention need to be changed to uplift livelihood of sanitation workers. And also, he says sanitation needs to be looked as **3D- Dirty, Disgusting and Dangerous**.

Lastly, he says it's time to act, to come forward and look into the perspective of these sanitation worker so how their habitat can be enhanced, how their education level could be further strengthen and how their access to finance along with medical can be more sensitized.

Mr. Kabir Das Rajbhandari (Resource Person):

He starts saying that before we bring CSOs together, first we all need to understand what are the existing gaps from the multidimensional sector, if we look at current NVF interventions we look at all these 5 key themes we need to identify the gaps so that we could accelerate the realization of these gaps from different interventions; may be from the policy interventions, from financing aspects, resources allocations, barriers from service sides or from user own perspective to get access to finance for getting the services or reaching the services. We need to understand the strategies to enhance their capacity just not by orienting them, also by making them in well position. He emphasize how crucial to have monitoring mechanism to improve the services.

He also highlighted establishment of information system to provide baseline for research, studies and to identify the gaps. And, MIS mechanism helped to generate evidence this is help us to

exercise the local resources including, financial resources, capacity resources to a more different dimension that can lead to result oriented services or actions. Further, he says that Planning mechanisms are not just essential for advocating the issues but also help to achieve the targets and commitments. In addition to, shares **3 different dimension of resource allocation** i.e. **allocation, dispersion and utilization**. He says it need to look from inclusive perspective.

Lastly, he says that monitoring mechanism is not just the responsibility of central but also the responsibility of community side.

Closing remarks

Ms. Lajana Manandhar, Regional Convenor FANSA, delivered the closing remarks thaking all the participants for presenting motivational, inspirational presentation. She said, it was a good opportunity for herself to learn about the activities all the convenors' were carrying out despite of limited fund and time constraint. Lastly, she also thanks 3 resource person for making themselves available on short notice and providing their valuable inputs in the meeting.

The workshop was concluded with the vote of thanks from **Dr. Snehalata Mekala, Regional Coordinator of FANSA**.