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RCUES, Mumbai
Enabling better cities...

Urban Environ Vision

An Information Bulletin



RCUES
Mumbai

**Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies
All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai**

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Urban Environ Vision aims to take its readers through offline training programmes of RCUES, Mumbai while providing encouragement and knowledge to its participants and displays the efforts undertaken by RCUES, Mumbai.



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01

Regional Specialized Training Program on Women and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

10th - 11th June, 2024, Daman, UT

Key Highlight

The key highlight of the training program was that the participants were informed of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their crucial significance in the context of women's upliftment and skill development.

BACKGROUND

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone and everywhere. Women's empowerment is crucial in achieving these objectives as it is integral to sustainable development. In India, women face numerous barriers such as socio-economic challenges, discrimination, violence, cultural limitations, and limited access to education, healthcare, and nutrition. A collaborative approach involving governments, civil society, and the private sector is essential to overcome these obstacles. They must create an enabling environment that promotes women's potential and advance their progress as the fulfillment of the SDGs.

It is imperative to address these challenges through targeted policies, educational programs, and empowerment initiatives. This will ensure that women in India not only participate but also benefit from sustainable development, thereby enriching society. In line with this, the Regional Centre for Urban &

Environmental Studies (RCUES) of All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), Mumbai conducted a Regional Specialized Training Program on 'Women and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' which is supported by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI).

KEY OBJECTIVE

The key objective was to empower women as key stakeholders in sustainable development and utilize their potential to advance progress towards achieving the SDGs.

PARTICIPATION

49 participants comprising Project Managers, Community Mobilizers, Program Coordinators, Presidents and Secretaries of the City Level Federation (CLF), Members of Area Level Federations (ALFs), NGO Coordinators, Executive Members, and NGO Representatives from various Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of Gujarat and UTs attended the training program.



Participants during the training program.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai, graciously welcomed the dignitaries on the dais and all the participants. In her address, she highlighted the structured nature of training programs of RCUES, Mumbai which benefits the ULBs across India. Following this,



Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

Ms. Ansari provided a comprehensive introduction to the training program, outlining its primary objectives. Subsequently, Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director-General, AIILSG shared valuable insights into the role of the RCUES, Mumbai and expounded on the fundamental goals of the regional training program.

INAUGURATION



Dr. Sanjam Singh, Executive Officer, Daman Municipal Council inaugurated the training programme by lighting the lamp, (L to R) Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai, Ms. Sonal Bhandari, Former President, Daman Municipal Council, Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG.

The training program was inaugurated by Dr. Sanjam Singh, Executive Officer, Daman Municipal Council (DMC), and Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG in the presence of Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer, and Ms. Yashashree D. Rane, Junior Research Officer of RCUES, AIILSG Mumbai. During the inaugural session, Dr. Sanjam Singh emphasized the crucial role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and the importance of the training for women representatives. He highlighted the pivotal role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in promoting community development and advancing economic



Dr. Sanjam Singh, Executive Officer, Daman Municipal Council (DMC) addressing the participants.

empowerment for women, particularly through the 'Sylvan Didi' project spearheaded by DMC.

Dr. Phatak, in his address, explained the integral role of RCUES, and AIILSG, Mumbai in providing such training programs. He elaborated on the aim behind the training, which is to equip women representatives with the necessary skills and knowledge to lead effectively in their communities.



Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

He underscored the significance of these programs in creating a sustainable and inclusive urban development framework. The inaugural session set a positive tone for the event, inspiring participants to actively engage and benefit from the training.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The session on 'Women & Sustainable Development Goals - Challenges for Women in Sustainable Development' was delivered by Ms. Poornima Nair, Director, Health & Disability, Apnalaya, Mumbai. Emphasizing the pivotal role of women in sustainable development and the multifaceted challenges they face, she underscored the critical intersection of gender equality and sustainable development. Ms. Nair detailed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting how each goal addresses specific aspects of women's empowerment and societal advancement, from eliminating poverty and hunger to ensuring quality education and decent work.

In her second session, 'Government Interventions to Address Issues and Challenges of Women and Girl Child Development,' Ms. Nair mentioned various government schemes designed to



Ms. Poornima Nair, Director, Health & Disability, Apnalaya, Mumbai addressing the participants.

uplift women and girls. She meticulously explained the impact of programs such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, and the One Stop Centre Scheme. These initiatives aim to provide comprehensive support, from healthcare and education to protection against violence, making use of economic opportunities, and ensuring a holistic approach to women's development.

During the group exercise, Ms. Nair engaged participants in selecting one major challenge faced by women in sustainable development and deriving practical solutions. This interactive segment fostered a collaborative environment, where participants brainstormed and shared innovative strategies to overcome these challenges. One notable activity involved the participants selecting a government scheme or program and explaining its role and benefits, thereby deepening their understanding of available resources and how they can be effectively utilized. Participants also shared their personal experiences; despite the adversities they faced Many women spoke of their resilience and determination to continue working and contributing to their communities. This session not only provided valuable knowledge but also created a supportive space for participants to connect and learn from each other's experiences.

Overall, Ms. Nair's sessions were instrumental in highlighting the essential link between women's empowerment and sustainable development, encouraging participants to leverage government interventions and their collective strength to drive meaningful change.

The session on 'Gender Mainstreaming in Governance- Women's Participation in Sustainable Development' was delivered by Dr. Ajit Mokal, Gender Expert, Mumbai who provided insightful perspectives on integrating gender

considerations into governance structures. Dr. Mokal emphasized the importance of understanding the distinction between sex and gender and how cultural and societal factors shape gender roles and expectations. He highlighted that gender mainstreaming involves assessing the implications of any planned action on both women and men to ensure that both benefit equally, and that inequality is not perpetuated.

Dr. Mokal discussed the role of various institutions, such as social, cultural, political, legal, and educational systems, in either perpetuating or challenging gender biases. He underscored the need for good governance practices that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to gender needs. According to Dr. Mokal, gender-responsive governance is



Dr. Ajit Mokal, Gender Expert, Mumbai, addressing the participants.

crucial for achieving sustainable development, as it ensures that the needs and interests of women are adequately represented and addressed in policy-making and implementation processes.

In the group exercise on "Inclusive and Equitable Sustainable Development - Women & SDGs," participants engaged in activities designed to illustrate the interconnectedness of

women's empowerment and sustainable development, involving one such activity. Each team then shared its views on how women's empowerment contributes to sustainable development and how collaborative efforts can enhance gender equality and sustainability outcomes.

Participants discussed the barriers women face in accessing resources and opportunities and discussed various strategies to overcome these challenges. The exercise highlighted the importance of community engagement and collective action in promoting gender equality and sustainable development. During the exercise, women shared their personal experiences of facing family pressure, household abuse, and mistreatment by in-laws. Despite these challenges, they highlighted their resilience and determination to continue working towards their goals. The exercise emphasized the importance of community support and collective action in addressing these issues and promoting gender equality. By fostering a deeper understanding of these issues, the session aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to advocate for and implement gender-responsive policies and practices in their respective fields.

The session on 'Women-Related Laws, with a special focus on Violence Against Women and Girls', was delivered by Prof. Nisha Parekh, Principal of Haveli Institute of Legal Studies and Research, Silvassa, UT. Prof. Parekh provided an insightful overview of the legal frameworks protecting women's rights, emphasizing the right to freedom from violence. She highlighted key legislations such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, and the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act. These laws are instrumental in safeguarding women against various forms of abuse and ensuring their rights to safety and dignity.



Prof. Nisha Parekh, Principal of Haveli Institute of Legal Studies and Research, Silvassa, UT addressing the participants.

In her detailed exposition, Prof. Parekh discussed the challenges in enforcing these laws and the societal attitudes that often hinder women's access to justice. She stressed the importance of awareness and education in empowering women to exercise their legal rights. The session also covered the POCSO Act, which addresses sexual offenses against children, and the amendments in the IPC for stricter punishments for crimes like rape and acid attacks. Prof. Parekh's session was a crucial component of the training program, equipping participants with knowledge on legal recourse and the importance of a supportive legal environment for women's empowerment and protection.

On the second day, Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai, delivered an impactful session on 'Teamwork & Leadership in Effective Performance Services'. She underscored the significance of teamwork in accomplishing organizational goals and emphasized the essential leadership attributes required to promote a cooperative work atmosphere. Through engaging discussions and real-world examples, Ms. Ansari demonstrated how strong



Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

leadership and effective cooperation can greatly improve service delivery and overall effectiveness in urban development initiatives. The training session offered valuable knowledge and practical strategies for creating solid, effective teams dedicated to providing excellent service.



Participants engaged in group exercise.

The RCUES team of the AIILSG conducted a group exercise on 'Interlinking Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development'. Various engaging activities, such as cutting



Participants engaged in group activity.

paper and creating chains using minimal resources were undertaken to emphasize resourcefulness and creativity. Each team was then asked to share its views on women's empowerment, discussing how they could individually and collectively support and collaborate. This exercise highlighted the importance of sustainability and efficient resource use.

SUMMING UP

The training program was concluded with a Vote of Thanks from Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer, RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai, following the feedback and Q&A session. She acknowledged the teamwork involved in making this program effective and thanked the trainers for their insightful sessions as well as the participants for their enthusiastic participation.

GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM



Section

02

Regional Specialized Training Program on Importance of Soft Skills in Effective Performance Services

27th June, 2024, Nanded, Maharashtra

Key Highlight

The program's key highlight was the combination of group play activities and group exercises, followed by technical sessions. These activities aimed to emphasize the importance of soft skills in enhancing performance and effectiveness across various sectors for building strong relationships, fostering teamwork, and navigating complex work environments.

BACKGROUND

In today's dynamic work environment, technical expertise alone is insufficient for career growth. Soft skills are crucial in enhancing performance and effectiveness across various sectors, including service industries. Soft skills, often referred to as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," have become indispensable. The importance of soft skills in professional life is effectively utilized. They are the driving force behind effective collaboration, positive work relationships, and the ability to navigate complex workplace scenarios by enhancing intangible qualities like effective communication, teamwork & collaboration, emotional intelligence, adaptability, leadership development, etc.

The Indian government has launched several urban development missions aimed at creating cohesive and resilient cities. These initiatives address environmental, social, and economic challenges while improving the overall

quality of life for urban residents. Soft skills are the invisible threads that weave together successful urban development. For officials of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), enhancing these skills, such as effective communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and leadership is crucial for achieving mission objectives and fostering cohesive, resilient urban communities.

Considering this background, the Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies (RCUES) of All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), Mumbai organized a Regional Specialized Training Program on 'Importance of Soft Skills in Effective Performance Services' on 27 June 2024 at Nanded, Maharashtra. This training program was supported by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI).

KEY OBJECTIVE

The key objective was to equip participants with the essential soft skills needed to enhance their performance at the workplace.

PARTICIPATION



Participants during the training program.

In all 71 participants including DAY-NULM Functionaries- City Mission Managers (CMMs), Assistant Project Officers (APOs), Project Managers (PMs), Community Organizers, Offers from Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM), Chairpersons/Secretaries of City Level Federations (CLFs) & Area Level Federations (ALFs), Representatives of NGOs & CBOs/SHGs. attended this training program.

INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer (SRO), RCUES, AILSG Mumbai, extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries on the dais and all the participants. She introduced the Chief Guest, Dr. Maheshkumar Doiphode, Municipal Commissioner of Nanded Waghala City Municipal Corporation (NWCMC), and another distinguished guest, Mr. Karbhari Divekar,



Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, RCUES, AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

Assistant Municipal Commissioner (AMC), NWCMC. Mrs. Ansari then provided an overview of the training program, emphasizing its broad coverage and key objective.

INAUGURATION



Dr. Maheshkumar Doiphode, Municipal Commissioner of NWCMC inaugurated the training programme by lighting the lamp. (L to R) Ms. Maleka Ansari, SRO, RCUES, AILSG, Mumbai, Dr. Ajit Salvi, Deputy Chief Engineer, Sewerage Operations (SO), Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Mr. Karbhari Divekar, AMC, NWCMC, Mr. Aman Goharia, Training Coordinator, Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action (SNEHA) Mumbai.

The training program was inaugurated by Dr. Maheshkumar Doiphode, Municipal Commissioner of NWCMC, with the presence of Mr. Karbhari Divekar, AMC, NWCMC. In his inaugural address, Dr. Doiphode underscored the vital role of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in effectively delivering services through the implementation of various national missions and programs sponsored by both State and Central Governments. He emphasized the significance of developing soft skills to enhance effectiveness at the grassroots level. Dr. Doiphode also commended the DAY-NULM for its comprehensive approach to supporting the poor and vulnerable segments of society. He concluded his speech by extending his best wishes for the success of the one-day training program.



Dr. Maheshkumar Doiphode, Municipal Commissioner of NWCMC addressing the participants.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The first insightful session on 'Overview of the Importance of Soft Skills in the Workplace' was conducted by Dr. Ajit Salvi, Deputy Chief Engineer, Sewerage Operations (SO), Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). His insights underscored how these essential skills contribute to professional growth and organizational success. He focused on collaboration and communication by stating that it plays a

pivotal role in fostering effective collaboration and seamless communication among team members. They create a positive work environment where ideas flow freely. Further, he advocated adaptability and teamwork by elaborating that it empowers individuals to adapt to dynamic work settings by enhancing teamwork, promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives.



Dr. Ajit Salvi, Deputy Chief Engineer, Sewerage Operations (SO), Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) addressing the participants.

Dr. Salvi highlighted the importance of soft skills, including empathy, resilience, compassion, and adaptability. To enhance these skills, various exercises can be beneficial including practicing active listening techniques, engaging in role-playing scenarios, and participating in small group discussions can foster better communication and collaboration in the workplace. These efforts contribute to creating an emotionally intelligent work environment, ultimately benefiting both individuals and organizations. In conclusion, Dr. Salvi emphasized that for organizations striving for excellence, investing in these skills remains essential.

In his subsequent presentation on 'Assessing and Developing Soft Skills,' Dr. Salvi emphasized that soft skills are not fixed traits; rather, they can be cultivated and refined over time. Investing in their development pays off not only in personal satisfaction but also in professional growth.



Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, RCUES, AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

Ms. Maleka Ansari, SRO, RCUES, AILSG, Mumbai discussed 'Tools for Developing Essential Skills and Fostering Teamwork' by organizing game activities on teamwork and leadership development. In her presentation, Ms. Ansari emphasized practical approaches to enhance teamwork and leadership. She encouraged participants to engage in role-playing exercises that could simulate challenging workplace scenarios, such as conflict resolution, decision-making, or beneficiary interactions. By stepping into different roles, individuals develop empathy, communication skills, and adaptability. She pointed towards teamwork which requires collaboration, solving puzzles, and thinking critically under time pressure. This experience fosters teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication. She stated that each member's unique skills contribute to the team's success.

Ms. Ansari introduced leadership simulation games. These involve scenarios where participants take on leadership roles, make strategic decisions, and manage resources. Through these games, individuals learn about delegation, accountability, and motivating their team. While concluding, she concentrated participants' attention that these interactive activities not only build essential skills but also create a positive and engaging learning environment.

successful and to effectively engage the community, the integration of soft skills is crucial. He highlighted the importance of communication skills, noting that they enable urban planners to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively to diverse stakeholders, including residents, government agencies, and contractors.



Mr. Aman Goharia, Training Coordinator, Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action (SNEHA) Mumbai addressing the participants.

Mr. Aman Goharia, Training Coordinator, Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action (SNEHA) Mumbai discussed 'Prioritizing Soft Skills for Effective Implementation of Urban Development Missions'. He briefly explained the initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM - U 2.0), DAY-NULM, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation - (AMRUT 2.0), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-U) etc., aim to deliver need-based services across areas like health, education, water supply, sanitation, housing, labour, skill development, women & child development, social justice, and minority development. For these initiatives to be This clarity is essential for garnering support and ensuring mutual understanding. He also underscored the critical role of teamwork, as urban development projects often involve multidisciplinary teams where collaboration fosters the integration of various perspectives and expertise.

He elaborates that effective teamwork not only enhances coordination but can also lead to more innovative and comprehensive solutions. Additionally, he pointed out that problem-solving skills are vital, as urban planners frequently face unforeseen challenges that demand creative and adaptive approaches.

In conclusion, he asserted that by prioritizing soft skills, urban planners can build stronger community relationships, address potential conflicts proactively, and adjust strategies to meet evolving needs, ultimately contributing to more successful and resilient urban development outcomes. He organized various games to convince the importance of soft skill development in planning to implement ground-level projects.

In his next session on 'Soft Skills in Urban Planning,' Mr. Goharia emphasized the critical role of soft skills in navigating the complex dynamics of community development and ensuring successful project execution. Urban planners, he explained, work within multidisciplinary teams and engage with diverse groups, where cooperative efforts enhance innovation and integrate various perspectives. Strong problem-solving skills allow planners to address unexpected challenges creatively and adaptively, ensuring projects stay on track despite obstacles.



Mr. Aman Goharia, Training Coordinator, Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action (SNEHA) Mumbai addressing the participants.



Mr. Sunil Kajolkar, Training Coordinator, Green Earth Echo Tech, Vasai, and Mr. Lemmens Hiren, Regional Manager of Poultry Feed Supplements in Bangalore addressing the participants.

In the concluding remarks, he emphasized that by leveraging soft skills, urban planners can significantly enhance their effectiveness. These skills enable planners to build trust with communities, address conflicts constructively, and adapt strategies to meet evolving needs. This approach not only fosters better relationships with stakeholders but also ensures that urban development projects are more responsive and sustainable. By integrating strong communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, urban planners can drive more successful outcomes and contribute to resilient and dynamic urban environments.

During a joint discussion, Mr. Sunil Kajolkar, Training Coordinator, Green Earth Echo Tech, Vasai, and Mr. Lemmens Hiren, Regional Manager, Poultry Feed Supplements, Bangalore, examined the intersection of 'Soft Skills Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'. They highlighted the role of SDGs in achieving global targets and underscored the importance of soft skills such as effective communication, collaboration, and critical thinking in this context. Mr. Kajolkar emphasized that these skills are crucial for fostering partnerships, driving innovation, and tackling complex, interconnected issues. Mr. Hiren added that developing soft skills is essential for advancing SDGs, as it

enhances the effectiveness of strategies designed to meet these targets. Effective communication and collaboration enable stakeholders to share knowledge and advocate for SDG-related initiatives, while critical thinking and problem-solving skills are vital for crafting and adapting strategies to overcome challenges and seize opportunities.

In conclusion, they advised participants that prioritizing soft skill development can significantly enhance individuals' and organizations' ability to address the dynamic needs associated with the SDGs, ultimately leading to more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable outcomes.

GROUP EXERCISE



Participants engaged in group exercise.

Following the session, participants engaged in a group activity where they were divided into four teams to create action plans focused on developing essential skills and fostering teamwork in the implementation of urban development missions. Each group was tasked with discussing and outlining specific actions they would take to promote effective teamwork and leadership within their respective cities, ensuring that both functionaries and stakeholders were actively involved. Additionally, participants were asked to identify key initiatives for enhancing planning and management at the ULB level. The session concluded with presentations where each group



Presentation of group exercise by participants

shared their key points and proposed strategies. The group with the most comprehensive and impactful action plan was awarded a token of appreciation for their exceptional preparation and presentation.



Participants felicitated for best group work and presentation.

SUMMING UP

After the feedback and Question & Answer session, the training program concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by

Ms. Maleka Ansari, Senior Research Officer at RCUES, AIILSG, Mumbai. She extended her gratitude to both the trainers and participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions throughout the program.

GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM



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