



KOICA Briefing Paper

The Impact of KOICA's Projects on Gender Equality: How to Strengthen Project Implementation

2018. 9

The Impact of KOICA's Projects on Gender Equality: How to Strengthen Project Implementation

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Executive Summary²⁾

I. Introduction

Background of Research

Achieving gender equality, one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as MDGs) set by the UN followed by the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as SDGs), requires much more accountability of the donor society at the global level. This may have an impact on aid effectiveness since the final outcomes and impacts can differ from the first design of the projects, due to gender differentiation in the context of community.

At the national level, it has been over a decade since Korea joined the OECD DAC and became officially recognised as a donor country transformed from a recipient country. At the very first DAC Peer Review in 2012, Korea was advised to include strategies that lead to mainstreaming gender equality as well as empowering women. Ever since, Korea has made various efforts such as setting up strategies and institutions. As a result, Korea received positive comments in 2017; especially being recognised for the efforts made by KOICA and other agencies.

Since 2010, KOICA has retained a gender specialist at the company level and in 2011, established the guideline of gender mainstreaming reflecting gender analysis and perspective in the development project. Also, there have been various efforts made for gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality. Based on these efforts, KOICA has been recognised by other institutions as a leading development

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2) The full report is available via <http://lib.koica.go.kr/> (written in Korean)

agency bringing gender equality into practice in Korea. However, there is no evidence on how these principles have been followed based on the guidelines and strategies put into practice in KOICA's projects. Difficulties between gender policies and implementation of such policies have often been mentioned through previous literature.

It is still questionable if KOICA's various efforts made for achieving gender equality at the policy, institutional and organisational level have been uniformly realised. This is especially problematic due to 'cross-cutting' issues, defined as mainstreaming gender equality into all different sector projects, e.g. education, health, public governance, and agricultural development.

Purpose of Research

This research has been initiated to find answers for the question as to what extent KOICA has implemented gender equality and how to fill the gaps between rhetoric policy dialogues and actual implementation based on the project cycle. The key research questions are firstly 'how to' strengthen project implementation that mainstreams gender aspects and 'why' this is so important to KOICA.

Research Scope

The research consists of a total of seven sections. Followed by the introduction, firstly, Section 2 reviews the overall concept of achieving gender equality and gender mainstreaming in terms of KOICA's policies and institutions as well as implementation of the SDGs. Section 3 explores the way to implement gender equality in projects and the policy aspects that support such implementation, from the cases of GIZ and JICA. Section 4 reviews KOICA's project cases applied with gender equality aspects and based on the results of in-depth individual interviews and company-wide survey, the section analyses the level of gender equality currently achieved by the projects. Undertaking a field study on KOICA's project sites applied with gender equality aspects, Section 5 presents the results of Focus Group Interviews (hereinafter referred to as FGI) and Participatory Observations. Section 6 analyses how gender equality aspects are applied in various development projects and suggests implications from the analysis accordingly. For the analysis,

Gender–Justice Conceptual Framework, Intersectionality Analysis, and SDGs Indicators³⁾ were used as analytical tools. Section 7 provides conclusions as well as recommendations for the successful achievement of gender equality and gender mainstreaming on KOICA's projects from the perspective of both the company and the project level. The research concludes by proposing how to practice such suggestions that have been derived throughout the study.

II. Theoretical Background

Gender Equality and Implementation of SDGs

Previous studies on gender equality in the context of development cooperation have been led by the work of the Korean Women's Development Institute (hereinafter referred to as KWDI) at policy and academic levels. Such research has implications on how to analyse and evaluate the current status of gender aspects in the development projects concluded by various organisations. However, there has been no research by KOICA themselves to analyse projects they have undertaken, focusing on three main pillars, project cycle, project implementer and project outcome within the same organisation.

On the other hand, there has been various research conducted on the establishment of SDGs and the implication of gender equality (SDG 5) and cross-cutting goals having influence on 10 other goals. KWDI has very recently published a research paper on such analysis. In addition, several working papers including the analysis of the first draft of the SDGs, data availabilities of the SDGs, and analysis of SDG 5 were already studied by KOICA. However, how those goals are turned into practice at the project implementation level has not been researched within the organisation.

3) Analysis by SDGs indicators on three projects is included in the full report

Development on Gender Equality at KOICA

The 'Gender Equality' agenda has been selected as the first phase of 'KOICA's Midterm Strategy' and subsequently, the second phase (2016–2020); this demonstrates that the Gender Equality Agenda has been consistently emphasised. Given that KOICA is obliged to accomplish the SDGs as an executing agency by operating diverse development projects, it also has a long-term and consistent obligation to achieve 'Gender Equality' that has been set as a stand-alone goal (SDG 5) as well as cross-cutting throughout the SDGs. Consequently, it has become more crucial than ever to establish grounds for measuring the performance by conducting empirical studies on how KOICA has implemented the guidelines for achieving gender equality in its projects.

III. Foreign Donor Agencies: Policy and Implementation

GIZ

In order for actual implementation, GIZ well recognises that employees of the organisation must realise the importance of taking responsibilities in carrying out the project. Therefore, Gender Focal Points (hereinafter referred to as GFP) play a central role in the GIZ. Despite such effort, there were opinions raised that this is not sufficient enough. As a result, GIZ came up with a systematic approach by introducing the Safeguarding Gender Management System (hereinafter, SGMS). This implies that gender analysis can be implemented in a systematic way. This approach was delivered to top management and continuous feedback on the system is still ongoing.

While the compulsory accountability system may detract from the motivations of employees in terms of their attributes, GIZ has made several attempts to recognise that if a culture recognizing the necessity of achieving gender equality is established, there is a sense of acceptance by employees. Specifically, GIZ continued to recognise the role and importance of GFP to top executives and set up a separate gender page on the GIZ website. Gender Competition Week is held every two years

as an incentive, and a place to share gender-related issues, best practices, and new ideas through excellent awards and annual Gender Weeks. The best practices have been motivated by the chance at winning a prize at the event, and the relevant amount of prize money is paid back for the gender-related activity after receiving the prize money of 5,000 Euro.

Unless gender analysis is enforced, it is difficult to develop how to apply the perspective of gender equality into projects. GIZ is an organisation that must comply with the obligations imposed on OECD DAC countries in the OECD gender marker and should be reflected in all stages of policy, strategy and implementation. Therefore, GIZ has been striving to apply the gender perspective to all development projects and programmes. If a project is classified as gender marker '0,' the person in charge of the project must justify why the marker is '0' instead of '1' or '2' (gender marker '0' is not a gender perspective project).

JICA

Every project in JICA has to be categorised under 1) Gender Focused project; 2) Gender Considered project; or 3) project other than 1 or 2. All the projects are screened by the gender and poverty reduction team where people under those teams must complete training to increase Gender Sensitivity and Poverty Sensitivity.

In JICA, a guideline requiring a social specialist who advises on social phenomena and problems to join the investigation team when conducting project investigation including the preliminary survey has been established and is in operation. Most of the experts are Japanese consultants, and the headquarters dispatches them to project sites to visit with project experts. Their main roles include analysing the socio-cultural influence and gender situation of the community during an investigation. Therefore, from the planning stage of the project, not only technical advice but also advice on social phenomenon is reflected together to provide a basis for gender mainstreaming projects to be further developed.

Gender-related resources are exchanged between the headquarters and the field office. For example, a gender expert was dispatched from JICA headquarters to the El Salvador office. This was done at the request of ISDEMU, a women's development department in El Salvador. As of April 2018, Gender Specialists have been working

with El Salvador ISDEMU to develop capacity building programmes for government departments and local residents. Although ISDEMU is in charge of technical advice on gender mainstreaming to other gender units in other ministries, they asked the UN WOMEN and JICA for advice on how to apply them in practice. As another example, according to a meeting with the staff of the Senegal office, it is confirmed that the gender related work is not designated to the office although it is operating the GFP mechanism.

IV. Current Status of KOICA's Implementation of Gender Equality

Achieving gender equality as cross-cutting is neither bound to be reflected in the project cycle nor required to collect gender-segregated data for further reference. Such weakness is becoming more problematic at the project evaluation stage. Ever since KOICA was transferred to a subsidiary agency of the government in 2016, the gender equality component for the management evaluation has also been excluded from the mandatory indicator. Therefore, the gender equality component is no longer required to be a priority.

Gender Equality: Awareness of Employees

Given that one of three components that affect the improvement of gender equality is project implementers (awareness of project implementers), 23 in-depth interviews with them, who are in charge of project implementation, were first conducted. As a result of analysis, the following characteristics were found: 1) in the project cycle, planning is the most important stage to reflect gender aspects; 2) opinions were varied from defining 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender equality' in KOICA's projects to suggesting better ways to reflect gender equality into project implementation; 3) it is necessary to provide staff with guidelines that are more intuitive and specific. Linking such guidelines to the performance of individuals/department is also suggested.

Second, a system-based survey for all employees was performed. In total, 164 out of 719 employees participated in the survey between July 24 and August 5, 2018. This shows a participation rate of approximately 23%. As a result of the survey, the following characteristics were found: 1) more than 50% of staffs agreed that gender aspects are well reflected in KOICA's projects; 2) many projects can be enhanced by mainstreaming gender from the project planning stage in particular; 3) there are certain sectors that staff feel difficulty to reflect gender aspects into projects (e.g. energy, water, transportation), easy to reflect (e.g. education and health), important to reflect (e.g. education and health).

Implications from the survey are as follows. Firstly, those who participated in the survey perceived that gender aspects are well reflected into the projects, which is contrary to the responses from the project implementers. Secondly, despite such positive recognition, there is distinctive gap between sectors easy to adopt gender and sectors not easy to adopt gender. In particular, it seems to be correlated to each employee's interest in a particular sector.

V. Case Studies on KOICA's Projects

Background

Three case studies for cross-country analysis on development projects undertaken by KOICA are analysed with two main purposes. Based on analysis of the recurrent gender inequality at different project sites, first, we have attempted to apply the universal gender principles. Second, upon recognition of the different types of inequality observed by each site-visit, possible recommendations to be applied are derived. In order to accomplish these goals, three cases representing different regions, sectors and levels of the gender equality index are studied. The cross-case study analysis method is adopted to increase external validity. Also, since the aim of the research is to determine 'why' gender inequality still persists and 'how to' eliminate or lessen the gender inequality, the case study method is preferred.

KOICA executes development projects based on a governmental strategy named

'Country Partnership Strategy' (hereinafter referred to as CPS) where each priority partner country strives to maximise synergy effects and to improve ODA effectiveness through strategic concentration. Senegal and Myanmar satisfy the above criteria.

Apart from the above criteria, El Salvador case was selected even though it is neither a CPS country nor a main development sector. The main reason for the selection is its public governance sector which is known to be 'Gender Neutral.' In addition, one of the authors in charge of the project has newly decided to reflect gender aspects in the project, starting from 2019, it seems likely to be a thought-provoking case and can be well exemplified to see the project's progress compared to previous cases.

Conceptual Framework

Given the aim of research focusing on the project implementation, it proved necessary to conceptualise a framework that shows the beneficiaries' diverse socio-economic influences, which may variously intersect or collide. In order to do so, 'Gender-Justice conceptual framework' is adopted to analyse case studies. The rationale behind is firstly, it focuses more on how framework works in the implementation stage rather than at the policy level. Secondly, rebalancing gender inequality through development projects will not be unitary, but manifold; fuelling even more interest in gender equality, systematically exploring what drives gender issues into practice, thus being even more crucial. The three-layers of systemic approaches, therefore, are defined.

Gender-justice conceptual framework represents the three aspects of gender-justice key concepts: 1) Representation, 2) Recognition, and 3) Redistribution.

- a. **Representation:** increasing the participation of women in accessing resources
- b. **Recognition:** recognizing the barriers faced by women to increase participation and recognizing specific problems such as sexual- and gender-based violence
- c. **Redistribution:** planned rebalancing of the distribution of power and resources between men and women (World Bank and Nordic Fund⁴⁾, 2013:10)

4) World Bank and the Nordic Trust Fund (2013). "Report of Gender and Human Rights-Based Approaches in Development," Washington DC: World Bank

Intersectionality Analysis

Since gender inequality is easily derived from the inequality of the community where other sociocultural settings have influence over such inequalities, it is important to consider other factors which can bring about different forms of inequalities, e.g. race, age, ethnicity and so on. Therefore, rebalancing such inequalities by merely increasing the number of women would be inadequate; it is necessary to observe the overall inequality level of the project sites where there may be unequal power relationships transpiring due to social and cultural norms.

VI. Analysis

1) Gender-justice Conceptual Framework

Representation

- a. Senegal: It is necessary to consider women not only as beneficiaries but also participants who can express their needs for the projects. This can be well exemplified in the water tower project in Belly Namary as all community members were passionate about supporting the project regardless of gender. This positive atmosphere in the village can lead to designing subsequent projects. It was proven through the field survey conducted two years after the project completion that an increase in free time for women and children did not necessarily led to receiving education or obtaining opportunities to earn more income. Based on such observation, it is strongly recommended to listen to the voices of women by providing them with opportunities to participate.
- b. El Salvador: Given that the project has not been initiated yet, it seems necessary to be flexible in the project design which can address and advocate a higher participation rate of women in the project. Providing training courses specialised in 'how to respond to gender based violence' or 'how to strengthen the ability of female police officers' can be good examples. Also, due to the huge discrepancy of the number of male and female participants in the training, a quota needs to be implemented.

- c. Myanmar: In the case of income generation, which is part of the project component, designation of a women chairperson is mandatory. According to interviews, the person receiving loans in households is also found to be the women. If this information was revealed to the project implementer, additional microfinance training programmes could have conducted. In this way, it would be possible to measure the quantitative effect of changes in the level of income increase of women and the financial management ability of households in the future and be able to link the results.

Recognition

- a. Senegal: Even though the project itself was recognised as a flagship project to be very successful on the gender perspective, no single component had been identified, thus was not counted as an important gender mainstreaming project. The second phase of the project, therefore, has reflected various gender sensitive components by recognising the importance of gender analysis.
- b. El Salvador: If there is no recognition of gender discrimination at the project site, the public governance sector, known to be gender neutral, can be biased by favouring men over women. For phase 1 and 2, both projects did not include any gender aspects in the projects and hence, there was hardly any women participating in the training. However, based on the FGIs and women officers who brought the gender violence issue to light within the organisation, gender inequality aspects had already been recognised. These barriers can be eliminated as the project progresses, thereby leading to the evaluation of the project from the gender perspective.
- c. Myanmar: When visiting several project sites in rural villages most of the villagers preparing the food including meals were women. Males tend to eat first and then the females eat separately. According to the interviews, the income generation through childcare, housework, and domestic handicrafts is usually classified as a role for women, and it is confirmed that many roles including for construction work and leadership roles, are taken by men. However, the differentiation of the roles of men and women did not negatively

affect women's education or to express their opinions. Particularly, one of the project components (income generation) showed that women lead the project and participate in leadership positions, thus the traditional gender role and project role differ.

Redistribution

- a. Senegal: Although the first phase of the water supply project was successful, there was no indicator on the amount of benefit women obtained from the project, and thus was not reflected in the project. Based on the prior project, the second phase included an indicator of 'improving women's quality of life.' Therefore, there is room for conducting the gender impact assessment by analysing and quantifying the benefits of women, e.g. how to utilise the time decreased from fetching water in the water sector as an importance cross-cutting issue.
- b. El Salvador: In the first and second phase of the projects, women were simply classified as one of the vulnerable groups being benefited by the installation of CCTVs. However, there has been improvement by recognizing women as not only project beneficiaries but also participants in the project site. In this regard, the outcome can be analysed by reflecting the needs of women when remodelling the centre and training women as gender based anti-violence professionals. Based on obtaining gender segregated data, impact assessment can also be conducted after project completion.
- c. Myanmar: The chair of the income generation committee was designated as a woman to ensure that the voices of women in 110 villages are reflected. Most of the members who came to receive loans from the home were women, which resulted in funds being redistributed mostly to women. In addition, most women responded that they had financial assets in the household, and men had agreed with women through a mixed interview. It was difficult for women to borrow money before the project was implemented due to the structure in which it was nearly impossible to receive a loan without providing collateral. However, at present, it is possible to receive a loan without collateral through the project. Since the redistribution of resources alone will result in the

realisation of gender mainstreaming in the financial capabilities of the household, it will be possible to link the before and after ratio of female income generation with the performance of the project.

2) Intersectionality Analysis

- a. Senegal: The process of perceiving early marriages according to traditional culture, female genital mutilation, and the difference of gender roles within the family and the community should be preceded. It is also necessary to recognise that the project is implemented with the recognition of the community hierarchy according to the interaction with those who play a central role in the progress of the project. Further efforts should be made to look at the inequality factor. Thus, we can consider the achievement of gender equality attainment that can be gained by positively using this recognition, as well as follow-up projects to develop gender equality.
- b. El Salvador: It is necessary to recognise that a culture that perceives men's ability and function superior to women based on gender differences is widely spread throughout the society. Therefore, it should be additionally considered whether there are any differences in the ability and position of women in planning and conducting projects. Ultimately, it is recommended that tools be provided to minimise the possibility of discrimination based on an unequal power structure and gender-based violence.
- c. Myanmar: The social hierarchy and corresponding inequalities by gender have not been evident. It was especially true that there were a high proportion of women involved in meetings and they freely expressed their opinions in the presence of men. However, men make up a larger proportion of chairpersons and high-ranking positions than women. It is necessary to further check the inequalities in accordance with the hierarchy and power relationships between communities. This is difficult to grasp from an outsider perspective in a short period of time; therefore, it is necessary to utilise human resources e.g. making volunteers visit villages regularly to monitor the project.

VII. Conclusion

Under the purpose of proposing suggestions on how to strengthen gender equality in KOICA's project implementation, this research has analysed the current status of KOICA's in-company institutions, projects, and perceptions as well as the implementation progress of SDGs. Also, in order to propose suggestions on each project through the case studies, this study conducted field research on three countries for the Water, Governance, and Agricultural Rural Development projects. As described in the introduction, this research aimed to answer three main questions on 'who' has emphasised the importance of achieving gender equality, 'how' such progress has been developed, and 'why' the dialogues on mainstreaming the gender equality matters at every phase of the project cycle. The answers on such questions can be summarised into three aspects as below:

First, from the perspective of 'who', the importance of achievement of gender equality has been formulated not only by international or national dimensions, but also by KOICA's in-company dimension, and the staff were even aware of specific suggestion points. The importance of achieving gender equality has been consistently emphasised within KOICA and it has also been recognised as essential applying it to projects. However, according to the interview by the KOICA staffs who are actually in charge of project implementation, it was found that, among the various project factors, gender equality is rarely considered as a priority factor since it does not directly affect the execution of the project budget.

Second, from the perspective of 'how' to apply the gender equality, most staff answered that the planning phase is the most important to incorporate the gender equality perspective among the project cycle: planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phase. As aforementioned, however, it is also important to consider the following manners in terms of the 'flexible application' of the gender equality aspect on development projects; 1) to understand that applying the gender equality aspect from the project planning phase can be challenging unless it is recognised as a priority beforehand; 2) to notice that applying the gender equality aspect directly at the project site is possible, even if the aspect has been neglected during the project planning phase (this depends on the project); 3) to apply feedback from the mid-term evaluation of the project to the end of the project phase.

Lastly, from the perspective of 'why' gender equality dialogue matters, the answers were driven from case studies and practices of various foreign donor agencies. In short, it was found that regardless of the importance of achieving gender equality, having the difficulties on actual implementation of the matter is a common phenomenon, thus regular and continuous attention and close cooperation are required for gender mainstreaming. The headquarters should motivate the staff by constantly offering training and incentives, and the field offices should foster knowledge sharing among various stakeholders in regards to gender mainstreaming. 'Why' gender mainstreaming dialogue matters can be defined when the environment formulates consensus on the issue.

1) Suggestions: Institutional Level

Given the final purpose of this research is how to strengthen the gender equality of KOICA institutionally as well as on its projects, first, it is to propose short-, mid-, and long-term suggestions for the aspect of institution. All of the suggestions are driven by in-depth interviews, company-wide survey, three research evaluation seminars, and workshop among the researchers. The rationale of such suggestion is because working on the internal mechanism is the most effective way to strengthen KOICA's achievement on gender equality both institutionally and project wise.

2) Suggestions: Project Implementation Level

On the project level, this research narrowed down its focus to Country Program, and proposes suggestions in a Two-Track form. This is again divided into short- and long-term suggestions. In a nutshell, the short-term suggestion is "To utilise the existing Gender Specialist as In-House consultant" and the long-term suggestion is "To activate the Gender Focal Point system."

Short-term Approach: In-house Consultation

According to one project management theory, In-House consultants take an

advisory role or Centres of Excellence (hereinafter referred to as CoE) role. The latter one allows the consultants to participate in a project as a hands-on project implementer once the project faces a problem, and it has been proved to be more effective in regards to solving problems. As the former method, the current practice at KOICA holds a higher possibility of repeating problems, whereas this suggestion proposes to change the 'actor' of problem solving. Applying this to the KOICA case, it would become that the KOICA Gender Specialist directly takes part in the development project with a project implementer as a team to reflect the gender perspective. To be more specific, the Gender Specialist can list the projects that are considered to be important from the gender perspective, be deployed in a project, and co-manage from a certain phase of the project with the project implementer as a team.

Long-term Approach: Gender Focal Points

The current system of Gender Focal Point (hereinafter referred to as GFP) is required to designate one from each department, however, since KOICA inherently operates a staff rotating system, most GFPs are actual project implementers in their department, or have previous experience in project implementation. Therefore, the research team suggests GFPs to present their own project experience which applies a gender equality perspective, or exemplary case that could contribute to the staffs' perceptual change and internalise the gender perspective. For a motivation measure, it is suggested to hold an awarding contest for GFPs who have presented exemplary project cases by benchmarking the GIZ's Gender Competition. As per the external motivation, we suggest GFPs to receive a citation from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and in the long run to introduce a system that such citation can be reflected in promotion grades as an incentive.

Therefore, the Two-Track suggestion for the KOICA project level can be summarised as such: 1) by activating the current GFP system, it is possible to check the effectiveness of projects which GFPs have directly managed. For this scenario, the Gender Specialists carry out the advisory role under the current system; 2) the Gender Specialists participate in projects as CoE when problems occur, and co-manages the projects with the project implementer – by doing so, the project effectiveness can be tested more directly.

3) Way Forward: Assignment for Achieving Genuine Gender Equality

KOICA field offices, where KOICA's development projects are implemented, take on a significant role to achieve the ultimate meaning of gender-mainstreaming. Since KOICA is a project-based agency, the headquarters can initiate the action to convey it to field offices to strengthen the application of the gender perspective in projects – from this point of view, this research suggests several methods on how the headquarters can support field offices for their better implementation of the gender perspective.

As of 2018, KOICA implements 267 Country Programmes, and it is suggested for the Gender Specialists and GFPs, as the main agents, to categorise the programmes into three levels following the criteria below (Gender Equality Project Marker, tentative name). It applies different criteria from OECD's Gender Equality Policy Marker as the measurement is 'feasible' on how much the projects can apply the gender perspective.

After headquarters categorises each project accordingly and shares it to the field offices, it can be expected that the implementation of gender equality would be strengthened on the field offices' end. For this, after sharing the programme list, headquarters should conduct the following to support field offices further: hiring consulting firm; providing incentives to offices where suggested projects have been applied; and having the headquarter staff visit field offices for analysis. Gender-mainstreaming projects were perceived as development projects which include the gender perspective, however in reality, it usually indicates gender-targeting projects and has been managed separately. Considering such situation, this research derived specific ways on how to mainstream gender in projects by each project phase.

This research intends to be utilised as a basic resource for strengthening KOICA's projects impact on gender equality as well as for developing strategies on the matter. Thus, it aims at providing feasible suggestions from the perspectives of actual project implementers for its practical usage. For this, the research conducted around 20 individual in-depth interviews with project implementers, company-wide survey, and interviews with field office staff using Multiple-case studies. Through such efforts, it tried to reflect practical suggestions of those who are directly

engaged in KOICA's projects, including the project beneficiaries.

However, no matter how specifically the research described the legitimacy of gender equality from the perspective of feasibility, institutional support is imperative for its realisation. For instance, if peculiar gender unequal context is found at a project site, it is required for the project implementers to consider these unique external factors when they try to apply the gender equality perspective. Also, for investigating the fundamental causes, proper training and continuous perception improvements are required.

Eventually, the project implementers should be able to invest a decent amount of time to consider their projects in various ways. Currently, however, it is difficult from them to consider gender unequal factors in their projects as they are required to manage certain numbers of projects in a mechanical fashion. This is in line with the result that the gender equality perspective lags behind the priority order; one of the reasons for this is that the gender equality perspective is not included in the mandatory factor for budget execution nor project implementation.

Despite these limitations, achievement of gender equality will continue to be challenged at the international, national and institutional levels, and the realisation of gender mainstreaming in KOICA's projects and the inclusion of gender equality will also be continuously assessed. This study is cornerstone research to diagnose the current status of achieving gender equality and propose future directions; this kind of effort should be continued to analyse various forms of projects in the future and to elicit research proposals. It is urgent to find and distribute active and concrete examples of best practices. Finally, continuous education and awareness-raising measures should be established from those performing the project to the employees, and ultimately contributing to strengthening the gender equality project in the true sense of KOICA's projects.

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연구자료

연구정보 2018-06-158



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