

Gender Mainstreaming

Clarifying Gender-Based Development Issues, Needs and Impacts



Of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), relevant goals are shown in color.

Gender can be defined within social and cultural contexts, and can refer to the roles of men and women as well as their mutual relationship. On a global basis, females are far more likely to be placed in socially, politically and economically disadvantaged positions than men. As such, one of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations is “gender equality and the empowerment of women.”

JICA promotes “gender mainstreaming,” a comprehensive approach to incorporate the perspective of gender in all stages of planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all policies, programs and projects to clarify gender-based development issues, needs and the impacts.

Overview of Issue

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve “gender equality”^{*1} in all fields of society. It is a process of identifying men’s and women’s development issues and needs, as well as the impact on men and women of development policies, programs and projects, at each of the stages of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, on the premise that the formulation processes and impacts of development policies, programs and projects are not neutral but affect men and women differently.

Gender is often unconsciously constructed based on the mentality, culture, traditions and customs of a country and therefore also affects various policies, systems and organizations. Consequently, it is essential to support national machinery (national agencies, mechanisms and organizations striving for gender equality) such as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to ensure that the policies and systems in partner countries adopt a gender-based perspective.

In most cases, however, statistics, data and indices are not tabulated according to gender. If a philosophy of gender is introduced without fully comprehending the society in a target region, it may in fact produce negative results such as exacerbating gender disparity. It is critical to collect and comprehensively analyze fundamental data needed for plans and projects by gender, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation, and to develop human resources who have this perspective.

Although it is important to promote women’s empowerment as part of efforts to advance gender mainstreaming, focusing solely on women may not achieve the desired results. This also requires changing the consciousness of men, decision-makers and socially influential people such as administrative officials, educators, politicians and religious leaders. In other words, it is necessary to reform the social structure and systems surrounding women. It is essential to review areas and projects that at first glance may appear not to require a gender perspective and provide support based on the different roles of men and women. For example, one form of support would be

developing agricultural equipment that is easy for women to use since they are responsible for the majority of agricultural work. Another example would be encouraging the participation of women in water quality control organizations.

JICA Activities

For many years, JICA has considered the importance of gender issues and developed a basic strategy for implementing gender-responsive projects. JICA has also established an organizational framework for gender mainstreaming.

Actual assistance includes strengthening organizational capacity and creating policies and systems for gender equality in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nepal by supporting national machinery. To promote the empowerment of women, JICA provides support in wide-ranging areas. JICA works to activate women’s centers in Nigeria, nurture entrepreneurs, particularly women, in poverty-stricken areas of Honduras, and improve education for women in Yemen.

Moreover, efforts are made to ensure that the perspective of gender is reflected in the results and actions in various fields. In the forestry industry in India, in addition to simply employing women, additional support was provided to increase their income so that women don’t have to cut young trees to get firewood; they can purchase alternative fuel instead. Under the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP) in Kenya, JICA focused on the role that women play in agricultural activities. The project secured the equal participation from both men and women in all types of farming activities, and conducts educational activities for men and women about gender related issues.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the

^{*1} According to the “DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-Operation” issued by the OECD Department of Assistance Committee (DAC), “Gender equality does not mean that men and women need to become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment is not based on a single model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means, and work in partnership to achieve it. Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy to achieve gender equality.”

need to address new issues in gender and development, such as trafficking in persons and other forms of gender-based violence. Trafficking in persons is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights that inflicts severe emotional and physical suffering on the victims, who are mainly women and children, but include men as well. It calls for prompt and appropriate response from a humanitarian perspective, as well as from the perspective of putting a stop to international organized crime. In 2009, JICA started a project in Thailand to strengthen the capacity of organizations and staff to combat trafficking in persons [See the Case Study].

In Nicaragua, serious crime problems are increasing, and young people account for a large share of both criminals and victims. Domestic violence and sexual abuse are also increasing. These social risks for young people face in this country have become an enormous problem. To reduce these social risks, the project has now been working on developing an integrated service mechanism for social risk prevention and attention that effectively responds to the needs of communities and families. The preventive measures are aimed at improving family relationships and rebuilding regional societies.

“Attention,” which is the other measure, is for responding to problems that have already occurred in communities and families. To deal with the social risks that threaten women and children, the project will formulate a training plan and conduct a survey in the communities with gender perspectives.



A local official provides advice on the registration of child's birth in the community

Case Study

Measures against Trafficking in Persons—Region-Wide Cooperation in the Mekong Region

Activities in Thailand and Other Mekong Region Countries

Trafficking in persons has been a serious problem in Thailand since the 1980s because of the country's rapid economic growth and the globalization of information. JICA and the government of Thailand have been jointly implementing the Project on Strengthening of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) for Protection of Trafficked Persons in Thailand since March 2009.

Thailand is an origin, destination and transit country for human trafficking. As an origin country, Thai people are trafficked to Japan, Middle-East, Europe and other areas. As a destination country, people from the neighboring countries are being trafficked to Thailand. As a transit country, people pass through Thailand on the way to neighboring countries. The government of Thailand established the legal framework required for comprehensive measures, such as national policies and a plan to combat trafficking in persons in 2003, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was enacted in 2008.

To combat trafficking in persons, it is necessary to use a comprehensive approach composed of four dimensions: policy, prevention, prosecution and protection. The project focuses on protection and reintegration of trafficked persons and aims to strengthen multi-disciplinary team (MDT) functions, which consist of various related agencies and NGOs, coordinated by the Thai government's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Ongoing activities include holding workshops and classes, developing operational guidelines to

strengthen the MDT's functions, formulating plans to assist victims, and nurturing case managers. In addition, the project provides support for the activities of peer groups, which consist of victims. Based on the information received through the peer group support activities, MDTs strengthen their efforts to supply services from the perspective of victims.

In conjunction with moves to achieve the integration of the ASEAN region, there are worries about growth in the number of victims of trafficking in persons as integration increases movements of people in this region.

JICA is also helping with support to enhance the network in ASEAN countries and strengthen capacities of related personnel who are associated with the problem of trafficking in persons. In February 2012, the Third Mekong Regional Workshop took place in Bangkok. About 90 people from Japan, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia attended this event to discuss ways to share information and work more closely together to combat trafficking in persons. Furthermore, with the cooperation of Thailand's Chiang Mai University, JICA's third-

country training program Capacity Building on the Return, Repatriation and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons has been implemented in order to develop networks in the Mekong region.

JICA will launch two new projects in 2012 to reinforce regional measures to combat trafficking in persons in the Mekong region, based on the experience in Thailand. In Myanmar, the project will enhance the capacity of social workers for protecting victims of trafficking in persons and providing self-reliant support. In Viet Nam, JICA is providing assistance to set up a hotline to help prevent trafficking in persons and support the victims. Also, due to the complexity of issues of human trafficking, knowledge and lessons learned from these JICA projects in the region will be shared through a network within the Mekong region. These efforts will lead to strengthening overall capacities of the Mekong region.



Individuals who have received vocational training at shelters