

Gender and Development

Clarifying Gender Responsive 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, women are far more likely to be placed in socially, politically, and economically disadvantaged positions compared to men. As such, the UN Millennium Development Goals and its successive agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has outlined gender equality and the empowerment of

women as an important goal.

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

● Overview of the Issue

Gender mainstreaming aims to achieve “gender equality and women’s empowerment”¹ in all fields of society.

In societies where gender inequality exists, there is the possibility of having a different effect on men and women in seemingly “neutral” development policies, measures, or projects. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate the view of gender equality into each of the stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all development policies, programs and projects, in consideration of the issues and needs resulting from the difference in the societal roles of men and women and their power relationship. This process is called “gender mainstreaming,” aimed to achieve the empowerment of women in the community and gender equality.

Generally, the fixed roles and responsibilities of men and women in a society tend to be subconsciously specified according to the sense of value, culture, tradition, and custom of the people in the region. That is to say, various kinds of policies, systems and organizations are also subject to the subconscious determination. In addition, regardless of whether it is in advanced or developing countries, the conventional wisdom and social system in the modern world are likely to be formed based on a male perspective. Thus, the philosophy of gender that has been shaped in a male-dominated society and culture features the unequal power contained in gender relationships. In light of the gaps and power relationships among men and women, it is essential to support national machinery, such as national agencies, mechanisms, and organizations striving for gender equality, including the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, to ensure that the policies and systems in partner countries adopt a gender responsive perspective.

In most cases, however, statistics, data, and indices are not tabulated according to gender. This problem also poses an obstacle to understanding the differences in the social status of men and women and the issues and needs related to the difference. If a philosophy of gender is introduced to the policy-making process or institution-building without fully comprehending the society in a target region, it may in fact produce negative results for women, such as exacerbating gender disparity. Therefore, it is

critical to collect and comprehensively analyze fundamental data needed for plans and projects by region, gender, age, ethnicity, and religious affiliation, and to develop human resources that have this perspective and can reflect the results in policies and systems.

It is important to promote women’s empowerment as part of efforts to advance gender mainstreaming. At the same time, it is also essential to make efforts to change the consciousness and actions of men, decision makers and those who have social influence in the community (e.g., administrative officials, educators, politicians, and religious leaders).

● JICA Activities

For many years, JICA has developed a basic strategy for implementing gender-responsive assistance projects and has made clear the issues to put priority on. JICA has also established an organizational framework for gender mainstreaming.

JICA has actually extended cooperation to create policies and systems and strengthen organizational capacity for promoting gender equality in Cambodia, Nigeria and other countries. To promote the empowerment of women, JICA provides support in wide-ranging areas, including education for women, improving maternal and child health, and supporting female entrepreneurs.

Moreover, efforts are made in various fields to ensure that the perspective of gender is reflected in the results and actions that should be achieved through projects.

For projects in areas affected by conflicts in Afghanistan, Mindanao, and Sudan, JICA is actively engaged in improving women’s livelihoods by conducting preferential hiring of women who have lost their husbands in battle and providing women with vocational trainings. The number of female entrepreneurs is increasing in developing countries, but to respond to the fact that their access to productive resources, such as funds and land, is limited in comparison with men’s, JICA invites government

1. According to the “DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation” 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.”

officers who are in charge of supporting female entrepreneurs along with female entrepreneurs in African countries to Japan to introduce support activities for female entrepreneurs as well as assisting in building networks with Japanese female entrepreneurs. JICA also takes initiatives in Cambodia, including hosting workshops on economic empowerment of women.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need to address gender-based violence, including human trafficking as a new issue in gender and development. Human trafficking is 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. JICA helps to strengthen organizations and human resources that are involved in countermeasures against human trafficking in Thailand, Myanmar, and Viet Nam. JICA also held a workshop in Turkey for female Afghan police officers to enhance their capabilities to cope with crimes that include violence against women [→ see the Case Study on page 41].

Case Study **Kenya: Project on Enhancing Gender Responsive Extension Services in Kenya**

Increasing Agricultural Production through Women's Empowerment

In Kenya, JICA reviews the division of roles and decision making power between men and women in agriculture to promote gender-responsive extension services.

Development of a Gender Mainstreaming Package with the SHEP Approach as a Reference

In Kenya, 70% to 80% of agricultural work is done by women. However, women have limited access to land, agricultural materials, agricultural techniques, markets, and so on and their productivity is supposed to be about 20% to 30% lower compared to that of male farmers. Women are responsible for most housework and child rearing in addition to agricultural productive activities, and the heavy burden results in their lower agricultural productivity. Furthermore, it is common for men to control

income that is earned by selling agricultural products and make domestic decisions, which leads to a trend of low work motivation among women.

Under such circumstances, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF) of Kenya places great importance on women's roles in agriculture and promotes gender equality and women's empowerment under the vision, "Equal opportunity for men and women is ensured for the purpose of increasing agricultural productivity."

JICA has engaged itself in gender-responsive activities through support to smallholder

horticulture farmers, including the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP) that lasted from 2006 to 2009.

In the beginning, the project identified issues relating to the roles and decision making power between men and women in agriculture in the pilot areas. The result revealed that, for example, women had very limited opportunities to attend various types of training despite the fact that they were engaged in farming activities, so the project promoted women's attendance at training sessions. Waste of money and duplication of spending due to separate management of incomes by husbands and wives were also identified, and family budgeting training was introduced to encourage husbands and wives to manage budgets together.

Moreover, the project took initiatives to ensure continuity of gender responsive agricultural extension services, including provision of trainings on gender to extension officers and related staff of agricultural offices, and support for women's participation in farmer groups. The terminal evaluation verified that these activities contributed to income improvement of farmer households by changing husband-and-wife relationships in farming families from those for managers and unpaid workers to those for co-managers for farming.

Project on Enhancing Gender Responsive Extension Services in Kenya, which started in 2014 based on the preceding cooperation, has been developing a Gender Mainstreaming Package, a series of guidelines and training materials describing how to mainstream gender in support for smallholder farmer, with the gender mainstreaming approach introduced in SHEP as a reference. The project assists MoALF to strengthen its capacity to promote gender responsive agricultural extension services in a rich variety of Kenyan agricultural divisions, including rice cultivation, dairy farming, and cassava cultivation in addition to horticulture.



A discussion with a group of farmers for a gender analysis study in Teso South Subcounty in Busia County