A Critical Analysis of South Korea's ODA Projects for Gender Equality*

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Abstract

In light of the internationally recognized twin-track approach to aid for gender equality, this paper critically reviews South Korea's gender-related Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. Building on previous studies, we reveal the three-stage dualism inherent in South Korean gender equality and mainstream agendas in terms of conceptualization, implementation, and impact. Applying this framework to South Korean gender-related aid, the paper analyzes strategies and patterns of gender projects, presenting survey and interview data regarding development workers' perceptions of aid for gender equality. The scope of this analysis is limited to gender-related aid projects by the Korea International Cooperation Agency. The major challenges to gender mainstreaming in South Korea's aid efforts are twofold. First, South Korea's gender-related ODA projects fail to take into account the substantive aspect of the conceptualization of gender mainstreaming, contravening the international trend of adopting a twin-track approach. Second, they fall short in terms of both institutional and operational inputs in implementation, analyzing the impact of gender mainstreaming based simply on the number of female beneficiaries rather than on changes in women's status or decision-making power.

Introduction

Since joining the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2010, South Korea (hereafter Korea) has pursued efforts to integrate gender equality into its overseas development programs in line with the overall trends of the international community. Korea's Framework Act on International Development Cooperation has from its very inception included the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality (Article 3-1) among its goals for development cooperation activities, indicating the intention to conform to international standards in development cooperation. However, no gender equality and/or women's empowerment agenda has been included in the two subsequently established five-year plans for development cooperation, and the Korean government has yet to introduce a comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy in development cooperation. Compared to the average among OECD DAC nations (30%), the proportion of aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment within Korea's aid efforts remains fairly low, at 12% as of 2017 (OECD, 2017).[1]

Korea currently operates a dual system of grants and loan aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) supervises grant aid, the implementing agency of which is the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) supervises concessional loans executed via the Korea Exim Bank's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF). MFA and MOSF are expected to coordinate under the supervision of the Committee for International Development Cooperation (CIDC). Apart from these two main ministries, over 40 government entities are engaged in Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. Including 11 local governments, a total of 43 government agencies applied for funding from the 2018 ODA budget (Joint Ministries, 2017). Consequently, fragmentation in ODA governance structure has been a long-standing problem in reforming development cooperation in Korea. Of the total aid budget of Korea, KOICA, the country's major grant aid organization, takes up only 27%. The EDCF of the Korea Exim Bank, the country's major loan-based aid provider, amounts

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[1] This is the 2014-2015 average of aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment reported to the OECD DAC Members' Creditor Reporting System database (2014 USD million).

to 36%, but compared to KOICA, there have been no equivalent efforts to mainstream gender in their projects (Song & Kim, 2013).

It is crucial to include gender analysis in infrastructure projects, as women and men are differently affected by their (lack of) access to adequate infrastructure. The problem is that there are no comprehensive guidelines for including gender analysis in infrastructure projects, many of which operate through concessional loans. In other words, there is no "control tower" for Korea's gender-related development cooperation, and KOICA alone has been pursuing gender-related aid since the mid-1990s. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) has its own ODA budget, but this amounts to a mere 0.2% of the total aid budget. Among the four projects operated by MOGEF, the contribution to UN Women is the largest (84%), leaving only a small budget for actual aid projects (Joint Ministries, 2017). Considering this context, the current study limits its scope of analysis to KOICA's strategy and activities regarding gender equality and related perceptions among KOICA and other aid organization employees.

This paper reviews the status of Korean gender-related aid in an era of sustainable development goals (SDGs). According to previous studies, Korea is a frequent provider of gender-related aid under the rubric of "gender mainstreaming projects."[2] However, such aid may be more accurately classified as general ODA to which the category of "women" has been merely appended. Given the circumstances in developing countries, which are often in desperate need of women's empowerment, it has been argued that Korea should further expand projects targeting women (Kim, 2015). Regarding the challenges to gender mainstreaming and the gap between institutions and its implementation, building on previous studies, we advance a three-stage dualist framework highlighting the status of Korean gender-related aid activities (Meier & Celis, 2011; Moser & Moser, 2005; Van Eerdewijk, 2014; Walby, 2005). We apply this framework to Korean gender-related aid by analyzing documents pertaining to strategies and patterns of gender-related aid, interviews with KOICA employees and experts in development fields, and survey results on the perceptions of gender-related aid among employees at aid organizations.[3]

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[2] The official KOICA term in Korean is *Seong juryuhwa sibeom saeop*, which literally translates as "pilot projects of gender mainstreaming."

[3] The survey was conducted with employees of KOICA and development-oriented NGOs be-

The current study is limited in two ways. First, data are restricted to those compiled as of late 2015 by the EDCF ODA monitoring system.[4] Second, as noted above, the analysis of the status of Korean gender-related aid is restricted to KOICA activities. However, this second limitation is an actual reflection of the reality of Korea's gender-related aid, since KOICA activities essentially represent the country's gender-related aid efforts.

Framework: A Three-Stage Dualism between Gender Equality and the Mainstream Agenda

This paper reviews Korean gender-related aid in terms of the three-stage dualism inherent in gender equality and mainstream agendas. Based on the literature review, it presents the three dualisms—corresponding to conceptualization, implementation, and impact—embedded in the so-called twin-track strategy of gender targeting and mainstreaming. Before elucidating this framework, however, it is necessary to briefly introduce the "twin-track" approach of targeting and mainstreaming gender equality in the field of international development. The twin-track approach is an internationally recognized strategy for pursuing gender equality, and the three-stage dualism devised in this paper suggests an analytical framework for assessing application and implementation of the twin-track strategy.

Twin-Track Approach

The Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome explains the twin-track approach with the following statement:

> Programme support to enhance women's opportunities, potentials and activities needs to have a dual focus: on the one hand, programmes aimed at meeting the basic as well as the specific

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tween June 26 and July 7, 2017. A total of 169 responses were collected. Interviews were conducted with employees at KOICA headquarters (five people), its overseas offices (three people), and at development-oriented NGOs (three people).

4 The EDCF ODA monitoring system (http://oda.edcfkorea.go.kr/). This was accessed by the research team Kim, Chang, Kim and Lee (2015), who were able to obtain information on programs in operation until 2019. The system is closed to those responsible for government ODA programs.

needs of women for capacity-building, organizational development and empowerment, and on the other, gender mainstreaming in all programme formulation and implementation activities (UN Women, 2014a, p. 236).

The SDGs provide another typical example of the twin-track approach. Compared to the MDGs, the SDGs address a broader transformative agenda and are considered to have been reached through political consensus among countries of both the global North and South rather than through closed discussions among selected bureaucrats (Fukuda-Parr, 2016). Regarding the goal of gender, a consensus was reached that gender equality should be included as both a stand-alone and mainstreamed goal across all other agendas (Razavi, 2016); hence a *twin-track* approach. In addition to Goal 5 explicitly pertaining to *gender equality*, a gender-sensitive perspective is also reflected in goals related to poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), water and sanitation (SDG 6), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), inequality (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), climate change (SDG 13), and partnership (SDG 17) (UN Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC], 2016).

A report by the Gender and Development Network also emphasizes the twin-track approach of combining a standalone goal on gender equality with mainstreaming as "the best way forward" (Smee & Woodroffe, 2013, p. 3). The report notes that, despite a general consensus on the need to promote gender equality, there is much less agreement with respect to operationalization. It suggests a standalone goal for gender equality that reflects the priorities of the poorest and most marginalized women and girls, as well as an effort to mainstream gender equality by developing gender-sensitive indicators. It also recommends that these indicators be based not simply on the availability of data, but on the need for transformative indicators that reflect "a lasting change in the power and choices" of women (Smee & Woodroffe, 2013, p. 4).

UN Women also reports that the majority of development institutions have adopted a "multi-track" or "dual-track" strategy, other terms for a twin-track strategy, combining "gender-targeted" (UN Women's term for a standalone goal) and "gender-integrated" (UN Women's term for mainstreaming efforts) interventions (UN Women, 2014b, p. 17). This organization also asserts that gender-targeted activities and gender-integrated ef-

forts are complementary; when they become separated, the legitimization of women-targeted projects is weakened and gender mainstreaming becomes a hollow bureaucratic exercise (UN Women, 2014b).

Overall, as Smee and Woodroffe (2013) argue, the twin-track approach, calling for political commitment, resources, and national ownership, is necessary to address the perennial structural inequalities women and girls face. Without a standalone goal related to gender equality, gender mainstreaming risks becoming marginalized, leading to fragmented initiatives that have little impact in challenging the fundamental causes of gender inequality.

The Framework

Although in practice gender mainstreaming is one part of a twin-track approach, in theory gender mainstreaming itself involves two different frames of reference, namely, gender equality and the mainstream, and is therefore a "contested process" at the crossroads of multiple tensions and dilemmas in feminist theory and practice (Walby, 2005, p. 321). These tensions not only refer to the intersectionality of gender, race, and class, but also gender and its relationship with democracy and human rights discourse, among other things (Walby, 2005). With reference to previous research, this section presents the framework of three-stage dualism with respect to gender equality and mainstream agendas (Table 1). The use of this framework highlights the status of Korea's gender-related aid and suggests a future direction for its gender-related ODA. For Korea to truly implement a twin-track approach targeting and mainstreaming gender equality, it needs to overcome the dualism of its mainstream and gender equality agendas. Pursuing only one of these agendas at the expense of the other could result in either the marginalization of gender equality goals or gender equality at an abstract level without the necessary discussion regarding the means to achieve it.

Table 1

Dualism of the Gender Equality and the Mainstream Agendas

	Dualism	
Conceptualization	Procedural	Substantive
Implementation	Institutional	Operational
Impact	Presence	Influence

Adapted from Meier and Celis (2011), Moser and Moser (2005), Van Eerdewijk (2014), and Walby (2005).

The UN ECOSOC defines gender mainstreaming in the following manner:

> The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (UN ECOSOC, 1997)

Despite the groundbreaking adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, gender mainstreaming has been criticized for its lack of trans-formative outcomes. One of the reasons for this is the dualism inherent in its conceptualization. Although there is a general consensus among femi-nist scholars that gender mainstreaming aims at the substantive goal of gen-der equality, exactly what such a goal entails procedurally remains unclear. Often the definition has been left to policy actors themselves, and what little guidelines there are for implementation—data collection, target setting, monitoring, and evaluation—have been criticized as too reductive (Meier & Celis, 2011). However, there is a fine line between substantive and proce-dural gender mainstreaming; these two can in fact be "combined" (Meier & Celis, 2011, p. 476). There is evidence that the procedural phase of gen-der mainstreaming, in which policy monitoring and evaluation are laid out as goals in themselves, can later form the basis for launching a substantive gender mainstreaming (Meier & Celis, 2011).

At the implementation stage, a similar dualist tension exists. A decade after the Beijing Platform for Action, Moser and Moser (2005) reviewed the gender mainstreaming policies of 14 international development institutions or organ-izations and found that all bilaterals, IFIs, the UN System, and NGOs re-viewed had put in place a "dual strategy of mainstreaming gender combined with targeted actions for gender equality" (Moser & Moser, 2005, p. 12).[5] Of the nine components, this was the only one that recorded a 100% coverage

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[5] The 14 institutions are DFID, CIDA, Sida, IDB, ADB, WB, UNIFEM, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNDP, Action Aid, Oxfam GB, Hivos, and ACORD.

rate. However, there was mixed evidence regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. Categorizing implementation into institutional and operational inputs, the authors reveal that, in fact, assessments of implementation have generally focused on the former, involving elements such as internal responsibility, organizational culture, resistance, mechanisms for accountability, and gender training. While institutional settings remain important, in order to drive further the goal of gender mainstreaming, assessments of operational aspects of gender mainstreaming, including outcomes and impacts of gender equality, are required. Setting up appropriate indicators for effective, consistent, and systematic monitoring and evaluation is essential.

Van Eerdewijk (2014) also considers the paradox arising from the generally acknowledged importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, on the one hand, and the weak implementation of and significant resistance to gender mainstreaming on the other. Similar to Walby (2005), she refers to the procedural and substantive dimensions of gender mainstreaming. Employing a practice perspective, she observes two disconnects contributing to the erosion of gender mainstreaming during implementation. The first is the disconnection between different policy levels within agencies: individual staff implement gender targets and assessments, two gender mainstreaming instruments. Policy at the mid-level, on the other hand, is formulated by bridging organizational objectives and the decisions made by individual staff without explicit reference to these instruments. The second disconnect is between the administrative handling of projects and programs and staff members' conceptual decisions. Since gender targets and assessments mainly affect the administrative aspects of implementation, the commitment and gender competence of individual staff determines whether these are dealt with in an in-depth manner (Van Eerdewijk, 2014). Therefore, since staff members are not free agents but embedded in the gendered structures and hierarchies of an organization, it is important not to individualize the responsibility for mainstreaming.

As with the tension between conceptualization and implementation, one may raise a similar question regarding the impact of gender mainstreaming. Does it emphasize the mere presence of women, or does it include the terms of their participation and the real influence they have in, for instance, decision-making? In other words, does women's presence have significant meaning for the impact of mainstreaming? Due to a lack of appropriate indicators, the impact of development interventions remains largely

unknown. Rather than measuring impact, indicators tend simply to focus on counting the number of female beneficiaries or participants (Moser & Moser, 2005). Addressing the substantive aspects of gender mainstreaming and recovering the political dimension of this aim would ensure an actual transformation in terms of women's influence throughout the cycle of implementation.

Dualism in Korea's Gender Equality ODA

This section applies the three-stage dualism framework to the realities of Korean gender-related aid by analyzing KOICA documents, interviews, and survey results. With respect to documents, we review KOICA's strategies for gender equality and the specifics of its gender ODA program, including program type and project duration. For the interviews, we spoke with KOICA employees at its headquarters and overseas divisions, other Korean NGO employees, and specialists in development cooperation. Finally, we conducted a survey to discern perceptions regarding gender projects among KOICA and other Korean NGO employees. We include other develop-ment NGOs in the analysis since KOICA usually commissions other NGOs for its ODA projects and many other projects are implemented through the public–private cooperation provided by a KOICA matching fund. A total of 169 persons responded to the survey: 99 from government organizations (96 from KOICA and three from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family)[6] (58.6%), 4 from research institutes (2.4%), 61 from NGOs (36.1%), and 5 from other groups (3.0%).[7]

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[6] The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family operates one or two ODA projects, and in effect one person per project is assigned.

[7] The positions of the respondents were working-level staff (89 persons, 52.7%), mid-level manag-ers (71 persons, 42.0%), high-level managers (eight persons, 4.7%), and other (one person, 0.6 %). Although there are 32 ministries and public organizations engaged in ODA projects, the survey was limited to employees at KOICA and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. Respondents consisted of 66 males and 103 females. The proportion of those having partici-pated in gender projects was 39% of the total: 29 of 66 males (43.9%) and 37 of 103 females (35.9%). In terms of the period of working in international development, over 50% of those with ten years or more in the field had experience of participating in one or more gender projects.

Conceptualization

KOICA dealt with gender equality for the first time in its ODA mid-term strategy (2008−2010), which specified focused support for women, particularly in education and health (Kim, Lee, Yang, Kim, Youn & Kim, 2011). However, it was only in 2010 when KOICA established its Mid-term Strategy for Gender Equality Phase 1 (2011−2015), creating a full-fledged gender equality strategy. With regard to gender mainstreaming, KOICA adopted the twin-track approach conventional among multilateral organizations, including the OECD DAC and UN groups, to promote gender both as an independent and a cross-cutting issue (KOICA, 2011).

In the same year, KOICA also began in earnest to establish strategies and guidelines for implementing ODA projects focused on gender equality. These include the KOICA Gender Mainstreaming ODA Policies (Huh, Kang, Jeong, Jeong, & Lee, 2010), KOICA Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming (Oh & Kim, 2011), and KOICA Measures for Development Cooperation Programs in Support of Gender Equality (Oh, 2013). More recently, KOICA developed a gender toolkit (KOICA, 2014) aimed at supporting its employees in the integration of gender issues into the planning of aid programs. To implement these policies, KOICA created a position in 2009 specifically pertaining to gender issues. Guidelines for this position were issued in 2010 in order to promote gender mainstreaming across all of its ODA programs.

The developments at KOICA proceeding since 2010 raised expectations that the proportion of gender-related aid within the organization's ODA programs would increase. However, a peer review by the OECD DAC and reviews by Korean civic society organizations were less than favorable regarding KOICA's activities during the Phase 1 period (2011−2015). Pointing out that Korea had failed to mainstream the issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, the environment, and climate change in its development programs, the 2012 OECD DAC peer review recommended that KOICA integrate these issues into its overall strategic scheme, including plans and guidelines (Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation [KCOC] & Korea Civil Society Forum on International Development Cooperation [KoFID], 2013). While the OECD DAC's 2015 mid-term review positively evaluated KOICA's efforts to implement its recommendations, Korean civil society remained unimpressed

by the aid organization's performance. Although the government was implementing 21 out of 28 recommendations, it failed to include in its strategy the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues: gender equality, women's empowerment, the environment, and climate change (ODA Watch & Re-shaping Development Institute [ReDI], 2015).

Recently, in alignment with the SDGs, KOICA established its Mid-term Strategy for Gender Equality Phase 2 (2016‒2020). Presenting a vision of society characterized by gender equality and women's dignity, this strategy consists of economic empowerment for gender equality, social prominence for gender equality, and basic rights for gender equality (KOICA, 2017). While Phase 1 focused on creating an overall system to introduce a gender perspective into KOICA's operations and activities, Phase 2 aims to strengthen the foundation for promoting gender mainstreaming and actively develop gender programs and a pertinent model. The new Mid-term Strategy also introduced a performance framework with indicators based on six goals. However, it has failed to stipulate how to apply the framework to program planning and evaluation. Also, its performance indicators were simply borrowed from the UN ECOSOC (2016) and may be difficult to apply in a Korean context (KOICA, 2017, p. 161).[8]

Although KOICA's intentions toward gender-related aid have manifested in a number of its policies over the past ten years, the recently announced Mid-term Strategy Phase 2 (2016‒2020) failed to adopt the twin-track approach universally applied in the international community for gender-related aid programs. Regarding why the Phase 2 strategy failed to adopt the twin-track approach, one KOICA employee stated, "Our gender projects will be mainstreaming-focused rather than women-specific" (Mid-level manager, October 17, 2017). According to another, "Since KOICA has its own areas of focus, it's hard to develop projects targeting just women. We do

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[8] According to KOICA's roadmap for implementation, the 2017 plan includes establishing a pool of performance indicators for gender equality and a foundation for gender-segregated statistics; establishing a standard for and identifying model cases of gender-related aid; and conducting gender awareness education for KOICA employees. The 2018 plan includes reviewing the status of gender-segregated statistics and the status of gender-sensitive performance indicators. The 2019 plan includes reviewing the status of progress in gender equality goals by region, country, field, and type. Finally, the 2020 plan includes evaluating the performance outcomes in terms of the three goals stated in the strategy for gender equality and establishing a Mid-term Strategy for Gender Equality Phase 3 (2021‒2025).

try to consider gender in all our projects" (Employee 1 at an overseas office, September 12, 2017).

Interviews demonstrated that, rather than viewing gender as both a stand-alone and cross-cutting issue within the frame of the twin-track strategy, KOICA employees perceived gender projects either as projects targeting women or gender mainstreaming projects. This is interesting since it contrasts with their understanding of the SDGs: "The SDGs align with everything [⋯]. Our rural development program includes various SDGs such as poverty, hunger, and gender [⋯] KOICA's new Mid-term Strategy has 5 main pillars, 10 issues and strategies and related indicators [⋯]. Our Strategy aligns with the SDGs" (Employee 1 at an overseas office, September 12, 2017).

Although it appears that the organization has fully adopted the new SDG framework, it is doubtful whether it is applying it with respect to the goal of gender equality, since SDGs in fact embrace a twin-track approach to gender equality. Our survey also confirmed such dualism. To examine how development workers perceive the relationship between sectoral goals and gender, respondents were asked to choose the goals they believe to be related to gender equality among the 16 SDGs other than SDG 5 (gender equality). Over 50% of respondents selected SDG 4 (education, 87%), SDG 3 (health, 77.5%), SDG 8 (decent work, 72.8%), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities, 68.6%). Other goals referenced included SDG 6 (clean water, 47.9%), SDG 1 (poverty, 47.3%), SDG 2 (zero hunger, 47.3%), SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions, 44.4%), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities, 42.0%) (see Appendix).

A total of eleven goals (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, and 17) include gender in the SDG indicators. Notably, respondents even associated with gender those goals having no official gender indicators, specifically SDG 14 (life below water, 11%) and SDG 15 (life on land, 11%). But what is most significant is that the majority of respondents who reported that gender was irrelevant to their tasks reacted positively to most of the statements acknowledging the relations between gender and the SDGs. This seems to indicate that while the respondents understand that gender is related to a wide range of areas, they fail or do not intend to integrate it into their own tasks. If the concept of an SDG is properly understood, gender mainstreaming and targeting cannot be considered as two separate parts where one can be chosen over the other.

In addition, the division of roles between KOICA headquarters and its overseas offices was unclear in terms of when and by whom a gender perspective should be applied. As one employee stated, "Whether or not to integrate a gender perspective is heavily affected by the person in charge at the headquarters or field office. A gender perspective and awareness of gender issues among employees are important" (Employee 1 at headquarters, October 17, 2017). According to another interviewee, "[In order to develop a gender project] you need to include gender in your project proposal, but it is not generally considered unless headquarters particularly directs gender be included" (Employee 2 at an overseas office, September 12, 2017).

Overall, KOICA strategies and guidelines demonstrate fulfillment of the procedural dimension of gender equality and mainstream agendas to a certain extent. However, incoherent responses among headquarter and overseas offices and other survey results indicate that there is room for much more to overcome dualism pertaining to procedural and substantive conceptualizations of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Implementation

Dualism with regard to conceptualization carries on to the implementation stage. Our survey included questions regarding the opportunities development workers have to reflect gender in their work. Through interviews, we discovered multiple factors prompting employees to reflect gender issues in projects: 27% referenced "gender equality required at the organizational level," 26.4% "interest in gender equality issues," 20.9% "projects closely related to gender equality," and 14.2% "being specifically tasked with developing a gender project" (Table 2).[9] Factors preventing employees from reflecting gender issues in projects were as follows: 44.8% stated, "I am interested in gender equality but my tasks are unrelated," 19.4% "I am interested in gender equality but do not have the authority to reflect it in projects," and 16.4% "I am interested in gender equality but do not know how to reflect it in projects" (Table 3).

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[9] It should be noted that respondents gave multiple answers to this question.

Table 2

Factors Prompting Employees to Reflect Gender Issues in Projects

Statement	Responses (%)
Reflecting gender equality required at organizational level	27.0
Interest in gender equality issues	26.4
Project closely related to gender equality	20.9
Being specifically tasked with developing gender project	14.2
Being in charge of a gender project	8.1
Other	3.4
Total	100

Source. Authors

Table 3

Factors Preventing Employees from Reflecting Gender Issues in Projects

Statement	Responses (%)
I am interested in gender equality but my tasks are unrelated	44.8
I am interested in gender equality but do not have the authority to reflect it in projects	19.4
I am interested in gender equality but do not know how to reflect it in projects	16.4
I have little interest in gender equality issues	9.0
I tried to reflect it in my project, but failed to do so since it did not accord with organizational strategy	6.0
Other	4.4
Total	100

Source. Authors

According to Table 3, 35.8% of respondents either do not know how or do not have the authority to reflect gender issues in their projects.[10] These responses confirm the assertion in the literature reviewed above that responsibility to address gender must not be individualized. The remainder

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[10] Similar responses were found in Kim, Chang, Kim and Lee (2015): Regarding reasons for not having integrated the issue of gender equality into projects, 52.5% responded "I'm interested in gender equality, but my tasks are not related to the issue," 14.8% "I don't know how," and 13.1% "I don't have the authority" (Kim et al., 2015, p. 40).

of this section examines how ODA program type and duration supports gender equality.

Program type.

Korean ODA programs supporting gender equality began with an invitation-based training program on women and health in 1996 (Table 4). From then until 2011, the government provided a total of 61 such training programs related to women's policy (Kim et al., 2011). These programs, which took place before the introduction of KOICA's Mid-term Strategy, included female leadership, IT, and competence-building training for women's human rights and empowerment. This is not to say that KOICA's gender-related aid initiative was disproportionately concentrated on training programs, since invitation-based training programs take up a large proportion of Korea's overall development and cooperation efforts; it simply means that longer-term ODA projects implemented in recipient countries only began to appear from 2011 onward. Upon joining the OECD DAC, Korea was required to develop more diverse aid programs, including public ¬private cooperation programs. KOICA began conducting programs for gender equality based on its Mid-term Strategy for Gender Equality.

Table 4

KOICA's Invitation-based Training Programs for Gender Equality

Year	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015	Total
Number	4	11	33	39	87

Source. Kim et al. (2011), pp. 61–63.

According to Kim et al. (2015), who analyzed ODA programs for gender equality by area based on the 2015 data submitted by the Korean government to the OECD DAC, the numbers of programs by category were greatly expanded over a relatively short period of time: education (59), health (41), population and reproductive health (14), clean water and sanitation (12), public administration and civil society (15), agriculture/fishery/forestry (25), banking and financial services (2), other social infrastructure and services (2), and other (environment, rural development, etc.) (8). Popular areas for gender-related aid included education, health, agri-

culture/fishery/forestry, and public administration and civil society. With respect to the gender-reflective SDGs, these programs reflected goals closely related to gender equality (SDG 5), poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), clean water and hygiene (SDG 6), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and reduction of inequalities (SDG 10).

When categorizing Korea's gender-related aid (2011−2019) by gender marker, the majority pertained to gender mainstreaming projects, i.e., 126 gender mainstreaming projects (gender-integrated projects or gender marker score 1) (71%) compared to 52 projects targeting women (gender standalone projects or gender marker score 2) (29%) (Table 5).[11] Gender projects instituted by international organizations exhibit similar proportions of gender marker score 1 and 2 projects. While UN organizations are more actively engaged in score 2 projects, other international organizations are more involved in score 1 projects (Kim, 2015). In total, 178 gender-related aid projects were reported as of 2015, which accounted for 6.99% of total projects (Kim et al., 2015).

Categorization of projects into gender markers 1 and 2 might suggest Korea's gender-related aid followed a twin-track approach to a certain degree. However, the proportion of gender-related aid projects is still very limited in size. If a twin-track approach or SDG framework is applied, then there should be no project without a gender dimension. Although this is not the place to discuss OECD DAC gender markers in detail, understanding of gender markers often differ from country to country and also among development workers who report to the CRS. In other words, OECD DAC gender markers could serve to disguise the dualism of Korea's gender-related aid activities.

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[11] Gender markers refer to OECD DAC classification. Gender marker score 2 refers to an activity targeting gender equality as a "principal" objective. Gender marker score 1 is given when an activity targets gender equality as a "significant" objective (OECD, 2017).

Table 5
Classification of KOICA's Gender-Related Aid Projects (2011-2019) by Gender Marker

	Principal (2) projects targeting women	Significant (1) gender integration projects	Total
Education	15	44	59
Health	20	35	55
Clean water and sanitation	1	11	12
Agriculture/fishery/forestry	5	20	25
Public administration and civil society	7	8	15
Banking and financial services	2	0	2
Other social infrastructure and services	0	2	2
Other (environment, rural development, etc.)	2	6	8
Total	52	126	178

Note. Data as of 2015. Unit is number of projects. *Source.* The EDCF ODA Monitoring System, http://oda.edcfkorea.go.kr/ (Accessed on September 15, 2015); Kim et al., 2015, pp. 150‑159.

Project duration.

We also examined duration for a total of 178 projects (Table 6). Four to five years was most prevalent (51.7%), followed by three years (27.6%), six years or longer (14.2%), and one to two years (6.2%). Short-term projects spanning one to two years were mostly invitation-based training, while long-term projects of six years or more were commonly those with follow-up projects. The proportion of these two types is relatively small (Table 6).

Table 6
Project Duration of Korea's Gender ODA Projects (2011-2019)

Project duration (years)	1-2	3	4-5	6 or more	Total
Proportion of projects (%)	6.2	27.6	51.7	14.2	100

Source. Authors

The issue is that even though the length of time required for different gender projects to produce results varies—say, the time required for the construction of a hospital versus the remodeling of a school—all projects are designed based on the same timeframe, regardless of area. Regarding this situation, one employee at a development NGO pointed to the rigid

National Assembly audit system and bureaucracy:

> The period for Korean projects is usually three to four years, or
> five years at the most. If you want to plan a project that lasts
> more than five years, you need to explain the reason why to the
> National Assembly with supporting documents. Projects that take
> more than five years tend to be suspected of having encountered
> problems—like there's something wrong with them. Due to our
> experience of development here in this country, long-lasting
> projects are perceived negatively. (Employee 1 at the Korea NGO
> Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC),
> October 16, 2017)

One of the reasons that Korea's development projects are dis-
proportionately focused on short-term outcomes is because the government
considers ODA projects to be a facet of its diplomatic activities. In other
words, the Korean government uses international aid as a means to build
relationships with a number of countries rather than attempting to produce
results within a single country through long-term projects. According to a
study on the motivations underlying Korea's development efforts (Kim,
Kim, Kim, Kim & Kim, 2016, p. 81), 54.2% of KOICA projects stem
from requests from aid coordination agencies and 21.2% from requests
from recipient governments. For ODA projects conducted by Korean gov-
ernment ministries, the most common reason for selecting a specific project
is a request from the recipient government (35%), followed by continuation
of a ministry's international cooperation and policy coordination activities
(34%). This indicates that Korean development projects are based on politi-
cal networking with recipient countries, which functions as a structural limi-
tation for conducting long-term projects focused on a single country. This
issue is particularly critical in gender-related projects, since changes in per-
ceptions and behaviors that amount to progress in gender equality take
time and require long-term strategies. Another issue is that, if selection of
gender-related projects is left to recipient countries' requests, there is even
less chance they will be initiated at all, since gender often ends up a low
priority for many developing countries.

Earlier on, we mentioned the institutional inputs of implementation in-
cluding internal responsibility, mechanisms for accountability, and gender

training as well as operational inputs of implementation such as setting up appropriate indicators for systematic monitoring and evaluation. While KOICA operates various gender-related aid activities, it seems that it still lacks both the institutional and operational inputs of implementation to advance the twin-track approach. This paper suggests that, in future, Korea embrace both aspects to avoid dualism.

Impact

In terms of impact, survey participants were also asked for their judgments regarding the results of gender projects. While there was no difference between men and women in terms of the rate of positive evaluation, those with experience of gender projects tended to see the results more positively ($p < .05$) (Table 7). Among respondents with experience of gender projects, 42.5% considered them to be productive or very productive, while only 21.4% of those without experience shared the same view.

Table 7
Perception of the Outcomes of Gender Projects Depending on Experience with Gender Projects

	With experience	Without experience	Total
Not productive at all	1 (1.5)	3 (2.9)	4 (2.4)
Rarely productive	19 (28.8)	36 (35.0)	55 (32.5)
Somewhat productive	14 (21.2)	34 (33.0)	48 (28.4)
Productive	24 (36.4)	22 (21.4)	46 (27.2)
Very productive	4 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.4)
Don't know	4 (6.1)	8 (7.8)	12 (7.1)
Total	66 (100.0)	103 (100.0)	169 (100.0)

Note. Unit is persons (%). $\chi^2 = 12.507$ / $df = 5$ / $p = .028$.
Source. Authors.

When viewed in terms of duration of working in the field of international development, the rate of positive perception was as high as 70.6% among those with 20 years or more of work experience. This is in strong contrast to the 20−30% rate among those who had worked in the field for less than 20 years. This higher positive evaluation among those with longer work experience in the field may be attributable to the fact that gender

projects take time before producing results.

Meanwhile, those who gave a negative answer regarding the outcomes of Korea's gender projects (34.9%) were asked to provide the reasons for this response (Table 8). The most prevalent answer was "lack of understanding of gender projects among Korean ODA experts or project participants" (33.1%), followed by "Korean government's lack of commitment to gender projects" (20.3%), and "insufficient number of Korean gender projects to evaluate their impact" (15.3%). Other reasons included the low level of gender equality in recipient countries and a lack of interest in gender projects among the public officials of those countries (Table 8).[12] It is noteworthy that a great number of respondents considered the reason for their negative evaluations to exist in Korea rather than in recipient countries.

Table 8
Reasons for Negatively Evaluating the Outcomes of Gender-related Aid Projects

Statement	N (%)
Lack of understanding of gender projects among Korean ODA experts or project participants	39 (33.1)
Korean government's lack of commitment to gender projects	24 (20.3)
Insufficient number of Korean gender projects to evaluate their impact	18 (15.3)
Relatively low level of gender equality in recipient countries	14 (11.9)
Lack of interest in gender projects among public officials in recipient countries	12 (10.2)
Lack of government organizations or NGOs promoting gender projects in recipient countries	9 (7.6)
Other	2 (1.7)
Total	118 (100.0)

Note. Unit is responses (%). *Source.* Authors.

Regarding how to improve the outcomes of Korea's development and gender projects, respondents suggested the following: "integrating a gender perspective at the preparatory research stage" (40.8%), "expanding the participation of women in the project implementation stage" (21.9%), and "promoting awareness of gender issues among development workers" (16.6%). Examining these answers in terms of the experience of participat-

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12 It should be noted that respondents gave multiple answers to this question.

ing in gender projects, the suggestion "integrating a gender perspective into the preparatory research stage" was significantly high among the group with experience (54.5%). There is no doubt that the preliminary research and planning stage is critical, a fact reaffirmed in the interviews, as the following statements demonstrate.

> In order to ensure its implementation, gender should be included in the planning stage. When you implement a project in the field, you often get unintended consequences related to gender. For example, the beneficiary feedback on our clean water project included the fact that women were able to save time on laundry and on collecting water for the family, and also that sanitation was improved by being able to use hot water at home. If gender is not considered in the planning stage, this kind of feedback gets lost in the outcome assessment. (Employee 1 at KCOC, October 16, 2017)

> The level of activity among female leaders, in other words, the female members of the Village Development Committee, in rural development projects is included as a factor in evaluation. It is not clearly included as an indicator. However, this is not linked to the outcome of the overall project because it wasn't included in the Project Design Matrix (PDM) in the first place. (Employee 1 at KOICA's overseas office, September 12, 2017)

These comments reflect the awareness of most respondents that both integrating a gender perspective into the preliminary research and Project Concept Paper (PCP) stages and raising awareness of gender issues among development workers could improve project outcomes. In other words, these respondents understand that gender needs to be integrated across all fields of international development. According to previous studies, the availability of appropriate indicators was crucial in measuring impact; simply counting the number of women would merely emphasize their presence rather than their meaningful participation or influence. Considering the overall perceptions of gender and the manner of evaluating project outcomes among development workers, the fundamental problems with Korea's gender projects seem to be that, while mid-term strategies for gen-

der equality are in place, a gender perspective is not reflected in the pre-
liminary planning stage, items presumed to be gender indicators are not
clearly classified as gender indicators, and the outcomes of gender projects
are estimated simply based on the number of female participants.
Eliminating this dualism in Korea's gender-related aid requires an improved
understanding of gender projects to integrate gender into the planning stage
with appropriate indicators. With relevant guidelines already in place, the
key task remains of how to operationalize them to obtain real impact.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed how the internationally recognized twin-track
approach for gender-related aid is universally adopted among OECD DAC
member nations. It has also pointed out how gender has both stand-alone
and gender integration goals within the framework of the SDGs. Korean
gender-related aid was analyzed in view of the three-stage dualism inherent
in its gender equality and mainstreaming agenda. By dissecting the status
of Korea's gender-related development assistance in three stages, it was
shown that the Korean case is another example of dualism in gender-re-
lated development due to confusion in conceptualization, according with
the results of previous studies. In terms of implementation, our analysis il-
lustrated that Korea lacks both institutional and operational inputs. In
terms of impact, this framework, which emphasizes influence over presence
in order to overcome dualism, may be used as a guideline for the future
direction of Korea's gender-related ODA.

Based on this paper's analysis, the following problems have been
identified. First, Korea fails to understand the substantive aspect of the
conceptualization of gender mainstreaming. Development workers lacked
awareness of the twin-track approach as a fundamental strategy for achiev-
ing gender equality in development cooperation. Instead, they seemed to in
fact be working against the twin-track approach. KOICA employees stated
that the Mid-term Strategy Phase 2 was established in accordance with the
SDGs, but their projects were concentrating only on gender mainstreaming
without considering the importance of targeting gender equality and wom-
en's empowerment as a standalone goal. This is ironic considering that the
SDGs are based on a global consensus regarding the twin-track strategy.
Furthermore, in the international community gender mainstreaming auto-

matically encompasses the twin-track strategy. The fact that the term is used to refer simply to gender-integrated projects among Korean development workers also indicates that the concept of gender mainstreaming is not fully understood.

Second, Korea lacks both institutional and operational inputs in regard to project implementation. This deficiency is directly reflected in the evaluation of the impact of gender mainstreaming, which is measured simply by the number of female participants or beneficiaries rather than by changes in women's status or decision-making power.

Third, development workers seem to lack a sense of accountability for gender issues. They are aware that gender is related to diverse areas, but fail to integrate it into their projects or to take ownership of it in their work. Gender mainstreaming should mean that a gender perspective is integrated into general projects; however, gender was rarely included within KOICA projects. In addition, project durations are indiscriminately determined whether corresponding to gender or general projects.

Fourth, in combination with the lack of a clear division of roles in terms of responsibility and authority for gender equality policy, one may observe the evaporation of gender equality policy within the organization: the strategy or guidelines for gender mainstreaming established by KOICA headquarters are often not applied in overseas offices. Since KOICA rotates its employees between headquarters and overseas offices, those working in overseas offices have likely had experience working at headquarters. It is curious that those who seem to have been aware of the strategy while working at headquarters appear to overlook it once in an overseas office.

To integrate gender mainstreaming into ODA projects, it is important to link procedural gender mainstreaming with substantive gender mainstreaming. For this, expertise is the key, as a number of researchers emphasize. Expertise is not something that is automatically generated through procedures such as monitoring or evaluation, but it is a key factor in successfully operating those tools (Meier & Celis, 2011, p. 473). Regarding the development of gender mainstreaming in the European Union, for instance, Woodward (2004) emphasizes the significance of a "velvet triangle": feminist bureaucrats, trusted academics, and organized voices in the women's movement. In the SDG era, Korea needs to re-examine the importance of expertise and ensure that it leads to substantive results. While it is true that KOICA is a leader in gender-related aid within

the country's fragmented aid structure, we found an extensive gap between policy on paper and related awareness among working-level employees, indicating severe dualism.

How can this dualism be overcome? Affecting working-level staff requires commitment by higher-level decision makers. In addition, expertise among working-level employees should be enhanced through competence training. Structural or institutional obstacles that hinder the implementation of gender-related aid can be removed through government commitment. The lack of a "control tower" for coordinating gender projects is another challenge that needs to be addressed at the government level.

The establishment of a strategy for gender-related aid and its implementation is a task that the Korean government has yet to complete within the SDG framework. We hope that Korea's gender-related aid efforts can progress by using the findings of this study regarding the patterns and perceptions of previous projects as a stepping-stone. Finally, advancement of gender equality and mainstream agendas in development cooperation cannot be discussed separately from improving domestic policies. As Korea undergoes the painful turmoil of resisting patriarchal societal norms, we also seek changes in its practice of international development cooperation. While this paper has not discussed patriarchal resistance in depth, it would be interesting to analyze in further studies how such organizational culture and resistance affect the advancement of the twin-track approach targeting and mainstreaming gender in Korea's development cooperation.

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Appendix

Perceived Relevance between SDGs and Gender and Goal Priority in Projects

Goal	Content	Relevance
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	80 (47.3)
2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	80 (47.3)
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	131 (77.5)
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	147 (87.0)
5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Excluded
6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	81 (47.9)
7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	52 (30.8)
8	Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all	123 (72.8)
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation	42 (24.9)
10	Reduce inequality within and among countries	116 (68.6)
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable	71 (42.0)
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	62 (36.7)
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	32 (18.9)
14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development	20 (11.8)
15	Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests; combat desertification; and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	19 (11.2)
16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all	75 (44.4)
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	32 (18.9)

Note. Unit is persons (%).

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