

## Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Gender Equality Focused Aid

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze gender mainstreaming and gender equality focused aid to enhance the empowerment of women in the global community. Gender mainstreaming was introduced as an important tool to achieve gender equality at the World Conference on Women in 1995, yet it still has not been well recognized. This paper hypothesizes that gender equality focused aid would tend to be given at suboptimal levels if aid donor countries promote gender mainstreaming policy for themselves. In particular, this study examined the Japanese foreign aid policy-making structure and concluded that Japan should utilize knowledge of gender specialists and make efforts on empowerment of women in foreign aid organizations in order to put more emphasis on the gender mainstreaming perspectives in its foreign aid policy.

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**Keywords** : gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, gender equality focused aid, foreign aid policy, Japan's ODA

### I Introduction

Women play a vital role in social and economic activities in the world, yet women often do not obtain equal opportunities and fair treatment, when compared to men, especially in developing countries. Currently, women account for about 70 percent of the 1.1 billion people who live on less than one US dollar a day in the world. Moreover, globally, two-third of those who are illiterate, are women, and 60 percent of children who do not have access to elementary education are girls (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Thus, there is serious gender inequality in the world.

Empowering women to exercise their capabilities in various economic and social functions is indispensable for sustainable economic development. To that end, gender equality focused aid for developing countries has been encouraged through international organizations such as the

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United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, gender equality focused aid programs still need expansion and improvement according to a study conducted by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. What incentives could effectively promote more gender equality focused aid? When and how do donor countries change gender equality aid policies? This study aims to answer those questions and thereby contribute to improve empowerment of women in the global community. First, this study will provide an overview of gender mainstreaming policy and gender equality focused aid. Second, it will test the hypothesis of women's empowerment measures and gender equality focused aid. Third, Japanese foreign aid and gender mainstreaming policy will be investigated through white papers and interviews as a case study.

## II Gender Mainstreaming Policy

Since the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995, gender equality has been recognized as a vital development objective. The 1995 Human Development Report stated that "Development, if not engendered, is endangered" (UNDP, 1995). The World Bank defined gender equality in terms of equality under the law, equality of opportunity, rewards, and resources, and equality of voice to influence and contribute to the development process (World Bank, 2001, pp. 2-3). Although women were focused on as a target group for development aid before the conference in 1995, gender equality was not treated as one of the most significant issues in development. Gender mainstreaming was advocated as a tool to advance gender quality. Therefore, gender mainstreaming was adopted in the Beijing Platform for Action: "...Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively"(OECD, 1999, p. 15). The UN Economic and Social Council (UN, 1997, p. 28), then, defined gender mainstreaming as:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and 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.

Thus, "Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a means to the goal of gender equality" (Waal, 2006, p. 209).

Waal also compared the definitions of gender mainstreaming in order to operationalize the concept. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined gender mainstreaming in terms of transformation reflected in all policy, program, administrative, and financial activities, and in its organizational procedures. On the other hand, the European Council defined gender mainstreaming in development cooperation as the systematic integration of the respective situations, priorities, and needs of women and men into all policies, with a view to promoting equality between women and men; and mobilizing all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, the respective situations of women and men in implementing and monitoring (Waal, 2006, p. 211).

After gender mainstreaming was recognized as an important concept, how has gender mainstreaming policy been implemented? The World Bank, for example, acted in the forefront of this issue after some of its personnel attended the UN Conference on Women in Beijing. World Bank President James Wolfensohn set up an External Gender Consultative Group of 14 women's movement activists to consult regularly with top Bank management officials on gender initiatives. He also required Bank staff to create regional gender action plans, annual reports on progress about gender issues in development. In addition, Wolfensohn launched gender flagship projects on girls' education and women's development, and included gender equality in the Bank's internal institutional reform process (True, 2003, p. 381).

According to Kusakabe, various approaches<sup>1</sup> to gender mainstreaming have been developed and implemented in the last few decades. Appointing gender focal point person among staff; conducting training in gender sensitivity and gender analytical skills; developing gender policies and methods of gender-responsive planning; and carrying out gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, through identifying gender indicators, collecting gender-disaggregated data, and gender budget analysis (Kusakabe, 2005, p. 46). The approaches are common practices, especially, conducting gender trainings and appointing gender focal points among government officials in both developing and developed countries. Yet the level of implementation of gender mainstreaming has been different and uneven among global, regional, and national governments (Walby, 2005, p. 454).

In order to improve gender mainstreaming policy, how should gender mainstreaming policy be evaluated? Waal developed gender mainstreaming indicators such as parity, equality, equity, empowerment, and transformation to evaluate gender mainstreaming policy.

[G]ender mainstreaming can be evaluated in terms of parity (equal representation and participation of women and men); equality (equal access, control, opportunities, rewards, and benefits for women and men); equity (the ratio of participation, access, opportunities,

rewards, and benefits according to needs/concerns of women and men, women's empowerment and transformation of gender relations); empowerment (cognitive, behavioural, and affective changes to increase levels of equality and empowerment of women in relation to men); translation (transforming the gender order; changing existing distribution of resources and responsibilities to create balanced gender relations). Transformation involves meeting gendered needs in such a way to challenge unequal gender power relations and to contribute to empowerment of non-dominant individuals or groups of women and men. Transformed gender relations reflect parity, equality, equity, and empowerment, benefiting both men and women and men separately (Waal, 2006, p. 12).

Waal's evaluation method is valuable, but it might be difficult to use among various countries because her empowerment and transformation indicators include subjective items. Although Waal attempted to evaluate gender mainstreaming policy in South Africa, the evaluation was not comprehensive so that it was unclear how the evaluation method actually works.

Many issues regarding gender mainstreaming policy have already been raised by practitioners and scholars. Issues included the lack of commitment to gender issues by top management because that is why the point person has little influence, lack of resources, and difficulties in implementation of gender policies (Kusakabe, 2005, 46). The effectiveness of gender training is also called into question by the case of Sweden because around one-third of the commissions who took gender training had a gender equality perspective, one-third had given reasons for not including a gender perspective in their work and the remaining third had totally ignored gender (Sainsbury & Bergqvist, 2009, p. 222). However, gender-biased existing cultural beliefs, values, norms and practices could be one of the biggest obstacles that hinder implementing of gender mainstreaming policies (Kusakabe, 2005; Waal, 2006).

### III Gender Equality focused Aid

Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>2</sup> members also made commitments to increase gender equality focused aid because investment in gender equality and women's empowerment was realized as an essential project for sustainable economic, social and political development in partner countries. Gender equality focused aid is aid that intends to advance gender equality and women's empowerment or reduce discrimination and inequalities based on sex (DAC, 2010).

According to DAC, gender equality may be either the principal objective or a significant objective of a given aid project which is considered a gender equality focused aid objective. Examples of projects for which gender equality is a principal objective are legal literacy for women and girls; female networks against gender violence; a social safety net project which

focuses specially on assisting women and girls as a particularly disadvantaged group in a society; capacity building of Ministries of Finance and Planning to incorporate gender equality objectives in national poverty reduction or comparable strategies.

On the other hand, examples of projects for which gender equality is significant objectives could be an activity which has as its principal objectives to provide drinking water to a district or communities while at the same time ensuring that women and girls have safe and easy access to the facilities; a social safety net project which focuses on the community as a whole and ensures that women and girls benefit equally with men and boys (DAC, 2010).

The average bilateral ODA focused on gender equality in 2007–2008 was 15.2 billion US dollars. As Table 1 shows, 13 of 20 donor countries increased their ratio of gender equality focused aid to total sector-allocable aid from 2007 to 2008. Yet, there is still a need to increase gender focused aid. It is important to add a note that France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, and the United States did not report on the gender equality aid in 2007 because it was explained that

**Table 1** Aid in Support of Gender Equality 2007-2008 (unit: USD million)

Country	2007 Gender equality focused aid		2008 Gender equality focused aid	
	Principal objective	Significant objective	Principal objective	Significant objective
Australia	26	194	262	932
Austria	19	34	10	91
Belgium	47	268	37	495
Canada	55	51	51	744
Denmark	41	382	78	545
Finland	9	94	17	400
France	-	-	56	571
Germany	176	2498	259	1257
Greece	2	73	2	129
Ireland	14	35	15	197
Italy	-	-	19	193
Japan	16	1265	64	833
Luxembourg	-	-	6	52
Netherlands	91	19	452	390
New Zealand	4	129	15	144
Norway	220	467	307	511
Spain	226	273	252	662
Sweden	218	804	173	1093
Switzerland	90	29	222	33
United Kingdom	403	774	91	1601

Note: The United States and Portugal are excluded since they did not participate in this survey.

Source: Based on OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) 2010, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality (2007–2008)*.

their gender equality coverage was too low. The United States and Portugal still incorporate with this survey in 2008.

In addition, it has been also difficult to measure the progress in gender equality focused aid for the DAC members. *Aid Activities in Support of Gender Equality: 1999–2003* said that the United States, France, Ireland, and Luxembourg submitted incomplete data for the important survey. The United States only accounted for 72 percent of the unknown aid data on gender equality (DAC, 2007, p.15). Most of those countries blamed their decentralized aid agencies for missing “Gender equality marker data”(DAC, 2007, p. 15).

Although it suffered from incomplete data, *Aid Activities in Support of Gender Equality* included the following major conclusions:

- Between 1999 and 2003, the total bilateral sector-allocable ODA among DAC members amounted 17.2 billion US dollars, while the bilateral ODA focused on gender equality amounted 3.1 US billion dollars.
- Two-thirds of aid focused on support for gender equality and empowerment of women was in the social sectors, especially basic education and basic health (including population and reproductive health).
- About one-half of aid to basic education and basic health targeted gender-specific concerns. A tenth of aid in these sectors was for the main purpose of promoting gender equality.
- While several DAC members are implementing a mainstreaming strategy, several others promote gender equality through a relatively small number of activities targeted to women and girls (DAC, 2007).

Overall, three critical observations should be made with the *Aid Activities* survey. First, although the ratio of gender equality focused aid has increased by 33 percent in 2008 from the average 18 percent between 1999 and 2003, it still needs to grow to be over 70 percent. Since major donor countries such as the United States and France are not included in the survey, the real ratio of gender equality focused aid to the total bilateral ODA must be lower than 10 percent. Second, since two-thirds of bilateral aid still goes to the social sectors, other important sectors such as the transportation, communication, and energy infrastructures did not receive enough aid to bring positive benefits for women by improving access to markets, schools, and health services. Third, although gender mainstreaming is recognized as a vital concept, it is difficult to implement mainstreaming strategies because the level of gender equality varies among states.

#### IV Gender Focused Aid and Women Empowerment in Donor Countries

Gender equality focused aid still needs expansion and improvement according to a study conducted by DAC. What can increase the volume of gender equality focused aid? What incentives could effectively promote more gender equality aid? When and how do donor countries change gender equality aid policies?

This study has a hypothesis to test gender issues rather as a human rights issue. If a nation has a lower gender empowerment measure, then it tends to provide less gender equality focused aid. Gender inequality and exploitation exists in most societies, including economically advanced and educated nations. The hypothesis states that aid donor countries cannot provide sufficient assistance for gender equality problems in developing countries if donors do not hold good measures for women's empowerment in their own societies. To organize funds and projects to support and encourage women in developing countries efficiently, women in donor nations should be more involved in the policy process, including the decision making and implementation stages. Ideas and viewpoints from women are necessary to offer women greater opportunities in developing countries. This study examines what happens if the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in donor countries improves. A larger GEM should translate into the gender equality aid increases because gender equality problems can be recognized easily in donor countries. Gender Empowerment Measure defined by UNDP is as follows:

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), is a measure of agency. It evaluates progress in advancing women's standing in political and economic forums. It examines the extent to which women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making.

For the hypothesis, this study uses quantitative methods to examine the relationship between the GEM of donor countries and gender equality focused aid. In particular, this study compares Data from the *Analysis of Aid in Support of Gender Equality* and GEM in UNDP Human Development Index. The ratio of gender aid on Table 2 indicates percentage of sector allocable aid. However, donor countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland) did not screen all allocable aid. Thus, their amount of gender equality focused aid could vary.

**Table 2** Gender Empowerment Measure (2009) and Gender Focused Aid (2008)

Country	Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)	Ratio of Gender Aid (%)	Country	Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)	Ratio of Gender Aid (%)
Sweden	0.909	79	Switzerland	0.779	39
Norway	0.906	30	United Kingdom	0.79	33
Finland	0.902	41	France	0.779	43
Denmark	0.896	61	United States	0.767	–
Netherlands	0.882	21	Portugal	0.753	–
Belgium	0.874	57	Austria	0.744	24
Australia	0.87	47	Italy	0.741	22
Germany	0.852	56	Ireland	0.722	34
New Zealand	0.841	73	Greece	0.677	58
Spain	0.835	30	Japan	0.567	7
Canada	0.83	39	Luxembourg	–	57

Source: Based on OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) 2010, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality (2007–2008)* and UNDP, *Human Development Report 2010*.

Notes: Luxembourg did not have the GEM sufficient data (2009).

The United States and Portugal did not participate in 2008 Gender equality focused aid survey.

Recommendations for the aforementioned Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 included “Initiating specific measures targeted to acquiring a short-term threshold of 30 percent for women in national decision-making positions, with a long-term aim of 50 percent.” Women in 10 donor countries in Table 2 hold more than 30 percent of parliamentary seats. Yet, long-standing liberal democratic countries such as the United States and United Kingdom do not show the same high political participation for women.

Sweden, Australia, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, and New Zealand are relatively highly ranked in the both tables. About 50 percent of their total aid was focused for gender equality. These six countries also have high gender empowerment measures. Although the correlation ( $\gamma=0.49086$ ) between GEM and gender equality focused aid is not strong due to a few exceptions (Finland, Norway, Netherlands, and Spain), if a nation has a higher gender empowerment measure, then it tends to give more gender equality aid. On the other hand, Japan was an example of a country that has a low gender empowerment measure (57<sup>th</sup> in 2009 GEM), and also provides the lowest ratio of gender equality focused aid (7%) to the total amount.

## V Gender Mainstreaming and Japanese Foreign Aid

As the previous section shows, the ratio of Japanese gender equality focused aid was lower than most DAC members. Also, Japan was ranked very low in the women empowerment measures among industrialized nations. What could improve the poor gender statistics in Japan?



Has Japan made efforts to improve its aid for gender equality as one of the largest aid donor? This section examines the ODA legal frameworks, organizations and policies to analyze gender mainstreaming in Japanese ODA.

## **1 Japanese Foreign Aid**

The volume of Japan's ODA increased dramatically in the 1980s compared to other major ODA donors. In 1989, the total volume of Japan's ODA became the largest in the world. Between 1989 and 2000, Japan was the largest foreign aid donor in all years except in 1990. Over fifty years, Japan has provided aid to 185 countries and regions, and the total amount of aid reached approximately 242.1 billion US dollars in 2005 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The quality of ODA was improved after Japan became an emerging foreign aid leader in the world. The rationale, objectives, philosophy, and motives for Japanese ODA were under serious scrutiny, and criticized by the Japanese public and the international community due to relative ambiguity of the purpose. Therefore, in 1992, the Japanese government adopted the Official Development Assistance Charter to articulate Japan's principles with regards to its foreign aid giving. The four important factors to be considered for the provision of aid are "1) pursuit in tandem of environmental conservation and development; 2) avoidance of any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts; 3) trends in the recipient countries' military expenditures, their development and production of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, and export and import of arms, etc., and; 5) efforts to promote and introduce a market-oriented economy, and the situation regarding securing basic human rights and freedoms in the recipient country" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999, p. 69). Since the ODA Charter of 1992 was adopted, Japan actively provided foreign aid to Mongolia, Vietnam, and the Republic of South Africa to support the consolidation of democracy and a market economic system. When India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests, Japan suspended assistance to them. Thus, Japan began to use its foreign aid for foreign policy tools.

## **2 Gender Mainstreaming in the ODA Charter and the Mid-Term Policy on ODA**

In 2003, the ODA Charter was revised with the "Aim of enhancing the strategic value, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency of ODA. The revision had the aim of encouraging wide public participation and of deepening the understanding of Japanese ODA policies both within Japan and abroad."<sup>3</sup> This recent revision also paid attention to gender equality in the Basic Policies (3) Assurance of Fairness:

In particular, the perspective of gender equality is important. Japan will make further efforts to improve the status of women, giving full consideration to the active participation

of women in development, and to ensuring that women reap benefits from development.<sup>4</sup>

In 2005, Japan presented the Mid-Term Policy on ODA to ensure implementation of the ODA Charter. The Policy addressed that gender equality, as one of priority issues, by stating that the perspective of gender is important for Japan's ODA practice.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Japanese ODA Charter and the Mid-Term Policy mentioned about women and gender equality as an essential matter, it was relatively late to take action on gender issues. Also, gender mainstreaming should have been addressed in the Charter and the Mid-Term Policy since the concept of gender mainstreaming was introduced at the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

### **3 Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD)**

To take a leadership role in the foreign aid regime, Japan introduced the Women in Development (WID) Initiative in 1995, and Gender and Development (GAD) in 2005. Japan's Initiative on WID was announced at the Forth Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. This initiative addressed the importance of women in development and the three priority areas; "education," "health," and "economic and social participation." More specifically, the Initiative set targets as:

#### **Education**

- (1) Closing the gender gap in school education for 6-11-year-old children by 2005
- (2) Providing universal education for all 6-11-year-old girls as well as boys by 2010

#### **Health**

- (1) Reducing maternal mortality below 200 per 100,000 childbirths by 2010 in all countries and regions
- (2) Reducing infant mortality below 35 per 1000 by 2015 in all countries and regions<sup>6</sup>

For the economic and social participation area, Japan pledged to "Support enhancement of job skills, training and learning opportunities for women to acquire relevant skills, improvement of their working environment, and establishment of a legal and institutional framework for women's full participation."<sup>7</sup> As a follow-up to Beijing, Japan founded the Japanese Women-in Development Fund (JWIDF) with initial funding of 1 million US dollars (DAC, 1997). Until 2002, the JWIDF were accumulated to 12.5 million US dollars that supported 50 projects (UNDP, 2003). However, the JWIDF was integrated to Partnership Fund with other development fund in 2003.<sup>8</sup> According to the DAC research, 12 of 27 aid organizations had already started gender mainstreaming policy by 1995, and even more, 5 of the 12 organizations started before 1984. Thus, the Japan's WID initiative was not exactly "initiative" on gender

issues in the global community (DAC, 2007, p. 18).

Ten years after the Initiative on WID, Japan announced the Initiative on Gender and Development (GAD) at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of UN Commission on the Status of Women. This initiative emphasized the concept of gender mainstreaming in Japanese foreign aid policy, and promised to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The basic principles of Japanese GAD initiative are as follows:

- Importance of paying due attention to gender - equality stated in the ODA Charter and the Mid-Term Policy
- Revision of the "Initiative on WID," whose targets might be taken to be rather limited implication, as "only for women" or "only for the three priority areas: education, health and economic and social participation"
- Importance of the integration of gender perspective into planning of policies and measures that are not focusing on women's benefit as a main purpose
- Importance of understanding differences between women and men in their condition of lives and needs, and considering them in the implementation of ODA
- Enforcing Japan's support for efforts of developing countries toward the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>9</sup>

Although Japan made efforts for gender equality through the WID and the GAD initiatives, Japan could not take a real leadership in DAC as it had failed to present innovative ideas and feasible goals for the WID. First, though Japan provided ambitious goals for gender equality, most targets are not feasible. Second, the concept of gender mainstreaming was introduced at the Beijing conference in 1995. Yet Japan adopted the gender mainstreaming strategy in the GAD initiative, 2005. Japanese initiatives on gender equality were neither well designed nor updated.

#### **4 Gender Mainstreaming and the ODA Organizations**

Recently, efforts were made to reform Japanese ODA organizations due to demands for coherent ODA policies. In April 2006, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Council was founded in the Cabinet Office to serve as headquarters for the entire ODA policy organizations. The members of the Council included the Prime Minister, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. Next, the International Cooperation Bureau was newly established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 2006. The Bureau was combined with the Global Issues Department and Economic Cooperation Bureau and expanded to play the core role in ODA policy formation and planning among the ODA related ministries and agencies. In October 2008, the ODA organizations for implementation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the

Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) were integrated. The new JICA is in charge of all yen loans, grant loans, and technical assistance to implement coherent ODA policies.

The ODA white paper emphasized that the GAD initiative “sets forth a plan for including the gender perspective in all stages of ODA; that is, policy formation, planning, implementation, and evaluation.”<sup>10</sup> The gender mainstreaming approach requires large trained staffs and specialists who understand critical gender inequality issues, and can design actions to reduce them.

Investment in staffing is an important matter to support gender mainstreaming in aid agencies. Dedicated gender specialists and advisors could design and implement effective projects. Dialogue between donor and partner countries should be held among well-qualified staffs to improve on-going projects. About 30 percent of the International Cooperation Bureau is made up of female officers.<sup>11</sup> The International Cooperation Bureau in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a total of 10 officers<sup>12</sup> assigned to gender issues. Among the 10 officers, a male gender advisor of the Global Issues Cooperation Division is working solely on gender issues. The other 9 officers were in charge of other sectors and gender equality. Since 2005, 87 Japanese embassies have assigned gender advisors, and 4 more embassies plan to place gender advisors in the near future.

In 2007, The JICA named 2 gender advisors to be in charge of grant aid and technical assistance for gender equality projects. Yet the JICA used to have 7 gender advisors in the 1990s.<sup>13</sup> Including overseas officers, 360 officers are assigned to gender issues in the JICA.<sup>14</sup> Yet the number of female gender specialists is still low. According to Yoko Suzuki, a JICA gender specialist, the number of gender specialists in each project has been reduced (approximately from 7 to 3) due to the Japanese ODA budget cuts.

In 2008, the new JICA was expanded with 300 JBIC officers and 800 billion US dollars of the JBIC budget. 2,000 officers are now working at JICA, and the JICA total budget has risen to over one billion US dollars. The number of managers is 34 and 2 of them are female managers (Human Development and International Emergency Aid Development) at the new JICA. The JICA president, Sadako Ogata is only one female member among 12 board members.<sup>15</sup> It can be observed that JICA did not implement gender mainstreaming policy, however, JICA asserted that it set up Gender Equality section that was assigned with gender equality focused aid and gender mainstreaming policy in ODA, and that the Gender Equality section was assigned as a coordinator for promoting gender mainstreaming inside JICA.

*DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation* stated DAC Members' complementary responsibility as “to ensure the mainstreaming of equality considerations in their own processes and products.”(DAC, 1999, p. 8) Although the Japanese government organized legal frameworks for gender equality in development, Japanese ODA institutional conditions need more improvement for promoting gender mainstreaming in

ODA policies.

### **5 Council for Gender Equality and the Basic Law for a Gender-equal-Society**

The Basic Law for a Gender – equal Society was promulgated in June 1999 in Japan. This law provided basic principles for the formation of a gender-equal society, as well as the responsibilities of governments in all levels. In response to the new law, the Council for Gender Equality was established in January 2001.<sup>16</sup> The council became a watchdog for gender mainstreaming in Japanese ODA policies, and offered opinions to the thirteen ODA related ministries and agencies (Tanaka, 2004). For example, suggestions from this council on the WID initiative were taken into consideration in drafting the GAD initiative.<sup>17</sup> It was significant that Japan established a legal framework and a public institution for gender equality. Yet it will take some time for the council to have a strong voice in the ODA practice in the Japanese gender mainstreaming strategy (Tanaka, 2004).

### **6 International Organizations and Gender Mainstreaming Policy in Japan**

How can Japan improve its gender mainstreaming policy? As already mentioned, international organizations such as the UN and DAC have had strong influence on Japan's ODA policy. In 1999, DAC released the following peer review on Japan's foreign aid:

Attention to women in development (WID) gender equality in the Japanese aid system mainly consists of having a small number of women-focused projects. Although the gender focus is slowly being mainstreamed, Japan's weakness in gender analytical capacity/skills mix is a key issue. Gender specialists are insufficient in relation to the challenging goals in the WID Initiative agreed to by Japan. Gender sensitivity still largely depends on individual interest of staff and departments. An overall strategic gender plan openly supported by top management and accompanied by clear incentives and training would ensure that the results of gender analysis are integrated into major projects (DAC, 1999).

After this DAC review came out, Japan immediately took action to improve the criticized points. For example, the Japanese ODA reform committee did not have gender specialists or female members at all. But in 2001, three female members joined the second ODA reform committee (the total number of members was 14). In 2002, four female members (about quarter of the total number of members) participated in the ODA comprehensive strategy conference (Gender Equality Bureau, 2003).

In order to implement gender mainstreaming policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held gender training for executive officers in November 2005. A Gender specialist was invited to present a lecture to 60 officers, and the definition of gender equality, gender and development,

and the differences between WID and GAD were explained.<sup>18</sup> The GAD initiative was introduced in 2005, and the initiative finally included gender mainstreaming for Japanese ODA policy. Japan's ODA policy on gender mainstreaming policy had been pressured by international organizations.<sup>19</sup>

## VI Conclusion

This study surveyed gender mainstreaming policy, gender equality focused aid and Japanese ODA policy on gender in development. Although the concept of gender mainstreaming was internationally introduced in 1995, the concept is still not well recognized in the global society. Gender mainstreaming policy has also experienced difficulty to implement due to lack of resources and information, and to existing gender-biased culture and tradition. Gender equality focused aid has been improved, however, it needs more increase in amount and resources to solve various gender problems. Although this study could not prove it statistically, gender equality focused aid could be increased and improved if the GEM of donor countries improved. The DAC report in 2007 stated that 50 percent of DAC members' aid organizations had set up central gender units, and 33 organizations have central gender advisers. However, only 17 organizations have both gender units and advisers. Also, even though there is a gender unit in aid organizations, an average of 5 workers are assigned to the gender units (DAC, 2007). Therefore, "Almost all DAC members have gender equality policies, but only a handful has the staff, budget, and management practice needed to implement these policies. Lip service abounds, practice remains weak."<sup>20</sup> Among DAC members, in particular, Japan is still lagging behind other countries in grappling with gender mainstreaming in its ODA policies, even though its legal frameworks have been well established. Although Japanese government stated "when Japan extends ODA, it has been giving consideration to achieving women's empowerment and gender equality encompassing all stages of women's lives, and actively provided support with focus on women's education, health, economic and social participation, in line with the Japan's Initiative on Women in Development,"<sup>21</sup> this research could not find that the ODA institutional reform, so far, had not have a positive impact on staffing and budgets for Japanese gender equality focused aid. In addition, the ODA budget cuts have brought negative impacts on the gender mainstreaming strategy. Thus, Japanese gender equality focused aid needs to be more improved as well as women's empowerment in the Japanese society.

### Notes

1. Moser Caroline and Annalise Moser also addressed six key components of gender mainstreaming policy: a dual strategy of mainstreaming gender combined with targeted actions for gender equality;

gender analysis; a combined approach to responsibilities, where all staff share responsibility, but are supported by gender specialists; gender training; support to women's decision making and empowerment; monitoring and evaluation. Also they surveyed major development institutions that developed and endorsed gender policy (Moser C. & Moser A. 2005, 12).

2. DAC members (2009) are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ODA Charter 2003. Retrieved from < <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf> >
4. Ibid.
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7. Ibid.
8. Interview with the officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 2, 2007.
9. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Overviews of the Initiative on the GAD. Retrieved from < [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/category/wid/gad\\_o.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/category/wid/gad_o.html) >
10. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *ODA White Paper 2006*. Retrieved from < <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2006/ODA2006/html/honpen/index.htm> >
11. Email interviews with an officer of the International Cooperation Bureau on July 24, 2007.
12. Four male and six female officers. Email interviews with an officer of the International Cooperation Bureau on July 24 2007.
13. Yoko Suzuki, Gender and Development (presented for the Japanese Women Watch meeting, July 18 2007).
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