



EVALUATION BRIEF



RAISING AWARENESS OF GENDER EQUALITY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Context of the Project

“The Global Gender Gap Report” published by the World Economic Forum shows lower ranks on gender equality of Japan at 111th out of 144 countries in 2016 (121st out of 153 countries in 2019). It is an urgent task for Japan to move beyond a top-down government approach to the greater involvement in and ownership of efforts to promote gender equality in Japanese society at all level.

Against this backdrop of Japan, and in view of the youth’s potential to transform gender relations in the broader society, the UN Women, with the support of Shiseido Company Ltd. (Shiseido), launched an advocacy and capacity development project, ‘Raising Awareness of Gender Equality among Young People,’ in Japan in April 2017.

Overview of the Project

This project focused on young people to transform gender relations in Japan and aimed at raising their awareness of gender equality and develop their capacities to act as “agents of change”. As such, the target beneficiaries were students of high schools and universities in Japan. The project also targeted employees of Shiseido and the general public.

The following main activities were conducted.

For High School Students: A gender equality awareness-raising program consisted of two parts; a workshop on gender awareness raising; video presentation submissions of the students’ proposals as a result of their group study. Selected schools were invited to present at the event ‘HeForShe Engaging Youth to Achieve a Society Where Everyone Shines,’ held at the

United Nations University (UNU). Seventy high schools and 1,349 students nationwide participated in the program over 3 years.

For University Students: Several workshops were held at three universities in 2017 and a student-led proposal-based event were held at four universities. The total number of participants of the campus events in 2019 was approximately 380, consisting of university students and the general public.

For Shiseido Employees: A HeForShe corporate web page was created, and Shiseido staff provided HeForShe in-house seminars to Shiseido employees in 2017-2019. In 2020, the HeForShe programme manager from UN Women Headquarters was invited in Japan to give a lecture.

For General Audience: A public event, ‘HeForShe Plus ONE!,’ was held in 2019 for the launch of the HeForShe Japanese website, and about 200 people attended.

Overview of the Evaluation

Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), the external evaluator team, carried out the evaluation of the project, in accordance with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UN Women’s guidelines. The team used the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender equality & human rights from the guidelines. An explicit emphasis was placed on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in the evaluation focus and process.

Important Findings

RELEVANCE: HIGH

Raising awareness of gender equality in Japan met the needs of young women and men and Shiseido. Also, the project strategy was aligned with the UN Women's strategy and international normative frameworks.

EFFECTIVENESS: RELATIVELY HIGH

Especially, the awareness raising and capacity development of girls in high schools were effective, though the capacity development of boys in high schools and university students was somewhat limited. HeForShe provided a platform for male engagement among Shiseido employees and the general public.

EFFICIENCY: MEDIUM

In JFY 2017, the project management structure was weak, without appropriate allocation of staff by UN Women. From the mid-point in 2018, UN Women JLO began to play the role of the main organizer of the activities.

SUSTAINABILITY: RELATIVELY HIGH

Shiseido has a strong commitment to realizing the gender-equal society, and the company will use the knowledge from the project for future initiatives. Girls who participated in the project are motivated and will build their career, using their experiences from this project. Although teachers are willing to continue their awareness-raising programs, they do not have mechanisms in their schools to invite gender experts and provide similar incentives to motivate students.

BOX 1

HeForShe Solidarity Movement by UN Women

In 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson launched the HeForShe solidarity movement. Acknowledging that women and girls alone cannot reverse gender inequalities, HeForShe created a platform on which men and boys can become partners engaged to achieve gender equality. In 2016, HeForShe renewed the concept to enable greater involvement for everyone regardless of gender identity.

Through this project, the HeForShe Japanese website was developed and HeForShe was further promoted in Japan.

“When asked questions, students carried out research extensively, and I often learned from them.”

(Interview with a teacher from participating school)

The UN Women JLO will continue its effort to advocate gender equality, but on a small scale.

Gender Equality and Human Rights: RELATIVELY HIGH

The implementers of the project listened to the voices of beneficiaries to design the awareness-raising program. The project rolled out to local cities to include areas where intervention needs were high. However, boy's participation was limited.

Conclusion

Conclusion 1: Raising awareness of gender equality targeting youth in Japan is a very important initiative in solving gender inequality in Japanese society.

The need of gender equality and women's empowerment in Japan is high, and the awareness-raising program has contributed to raising awareness of gender equality among high school students and deepening their understanding. The project made the assessments and reflected the voice of students from the early stage until it grew to meet their needs. It is important to continue raising their awareness in Japan to strengthen the sustainability of the positive effects from this project.

Conclusion 2: Rather than approaching high school students directly, it was effective to strategically build a capacity development model that involved high schools and teachers for their supports.

The capacity development model developed in this project was effective for high school students to become "change agents". In particular, female students' problem-solving, presentation, and teamwork skills were enhanced. In final evaluation, multiple cases of gender advocacy activities by female students have been confirmed. Because the project leveraged the educational environment of the high schools for the project implementation, students, with the help of teachers, were able to secure time to research on gender issues and propose their own solutions.

Conclusion 3: Collaboration with a company, such as Shiseido, can greatly enhance synergy in promoting gender equality.

Shiseido's collaboration as a donor and participation in workshops as a lecturer provided an opportunity for the youth in Japan to get to know one of the Japan's leading companies is actively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Shiseido has been able to realize a more comprehensive approach to gender equality by targeting the youth, with whom the company had previously had little contact. Going forward, it is hoped that Shiseido will utilize the good practices of this project for advancing their initiatives in Japan.

Conclusion 4: Given the uniqueness of the Liaison Office, it is difficult to immediately set up a management system and start a project in response to a sudden offer from the business sector.

Since the UN Women JLO has no mandate to carry out projects, the office does not have an appropriate project management system and personnel to implement projects in their regular activities. But, since this project was the first business collaboration project for UN Women JLO, It provided a variety of lessons on collaboration with companies.

Main Recommendations

The evaluator team recommends UN Women using the new networks effectively for further advocacy of gender equality in Japan. Through this project, many high school students, university students, Shiseido employees, and members of the general public learned about UN Women and gender equality. UN Women should cherish and utilize the network of the new 'fans' and maintain the connection by inviting them to participate in upcoming events and activities in 2020 to further deepen their understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment and motivate them to take action. Also, concerning project management, we recommend that the UN Women JLO, the HQs, and the regional office of Asia and the Pacific consult and develop a clear and common understanding of the business partnership schemes or other forms of business collaboration options that can be implemented in Japan. Then, if there are similar opportunities in the future, JLO consults closely with the HQs and consider the business case of the project.

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BOX 2

Actions by High School Students

The participated high school students researched gender issues at group study and proposed solutions and their action plans. The students proposed a variety of concepts, such as 'Gender *Karuta* (Japanese playing cards),' a gender-neutral picture book to educate children, and a sanitary product made of eco-friendly materials for helping girls in developing countries to attend schools. Some students have continued their activities as 'agents of change' towards gender equality and women's empowerment, which the project expected.

This project confirmed the importance and effectiveness of raising awareness of young Japanese women and men at an early stage. The evaluator team recommends Shiseido continuing to take on leadership as a Japanese company to inspire young generations and to promote their innovative actions towards a gender-equal society.

Lessons Learned

The evaluator team drew some useful lessons based on the evaluation results for other projects that are aimed at strengthening the capacity of young women and men for promoting gender equality.

Lesson 1: Target high school students and recognize high school teachers as important partners.

The strong support and enthusiasm of teachers were drivers for high school students to absorb new knowledge and conduct innovative activities.

Lesson 2: Develop a mechanism to ensure motivation for active participation.

An effective mechanism, which drives students to explore issues and challenge difficulties that they face, amplifies the effectiveness of capacity development.

Lesson 3: Identify key stakeholders at an early stage and establish a consultation and cooperation mechanism for creating synergy and attaining sustainability.

Establishing a consultation and cooperation mechanism with related institutions helps increase the commitments of the institutions to the project. Also, it will help set an exit strategy, such as internalization of the project achievements in their institutional systems.