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Study on strategies to improve the effectiveness of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment

Gawon Chung, Seungah Hong, Nanjue Kim, Sujin Kim, Jihye Sung

Korean Women's Development Institute

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Ⅰ. Background and Issues

○ Prior studies related to a family-friendly community emphasized the importance of community infrastructure and services and the safety of the community where responsibilities of family care are shared and the leisure and cultural life of families are supported. In the previous studies, the family-friendly community was defined as an environment where work and family life is harmonized through support for family functions.

○ However, there was a criticism that the existing policy for the creation of a family-friendly community didn't take into consideration family diversity and the various needs of family members as individuals because the policy limited its targets to specific types of families such as families with their child(ren), resulting in narrowing the scope of the policy to support for family care and reproduction.

○ Against that backdrop, this study has been conducted to identify elements comprising a family-friendly community from the perspective of community residents with an aim to present a direction for the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment, ways to improve the Survey on the Creation of a Family-friendly Social Environment, and roles of central and local governments to create a family-friendly community.

Ⅱ. Results

1. Current status of policies and projects related to the creation of a family-friendly social environment

○ The Women-Friendly City Project started in 2009 to closely connect gender equality policies with urban infrastructure, thereby enabling urban infrastructure to contribute to women's empowerment. As of 2018, 87 Women-Friendly cities were designated, serving as a project platform to implement gender equality policies at a community level. Until now, the project has focused on improving the women-friendly environment of local communities. However, it is needed to present policy goals and projects for gender equality in more specific ways.

○ The Women-Friendly City Project is in charge of projects related to the representation, economic activities, care and safety of women, and especially provides support for both men and women to share the responsibility of care in the community. The project endeavors to create a safe social environment in terms of mobility and settlement of family members, which overlaps with the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment.

○ The Urban Regeneration Project has been actively conducted since 2013 when related laws were enacted for the purposes of local development and urban regeneration as well as promotion of local communities. The project is pursuing a multi-dimensional vision to regenerate economically withered regions to reduce regional imbalance, but also to improve the life quality and capacity of local residents. As an 'inclusive city' has been recently emerging as a new urban agenda, the focus of the project is placed on the spatial, human and sociocultural inclusiveness of cities.

○ The Urban Regeneration Project aims to build a economic, cultural and social community at a local level with an emphasis on spatial, human and sociocultural inclusiveness. It corresponds to the direction of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment which strengthens the social culture and capital of the community and prevents single-person households being excluded from the policy target.

○ An Age-Friendly City is defined as an urban environment highly accessible to and inclusive of older people and encourages active aging. The concept was conceived in 2006 when the WHO called for global efforts to create an age-friendly community. To assess the level of age-friendliness of cities, the WHO presents eight domains summarising factors of the urban environment which are outdoor spaces & buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect & social inclusion, civic participation & employment, communication & information, and community support & health service. As of 2018, 760 communities participated in the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities & Communities including Seoul

special city, Busan metropolitan city and Jeju special autonomous city.

◯ The Child-Friendly City Initiative is a UNICEF-led initiative, beginning from the resolution passed during the 1996 UN Conference of Human Settlements. As of 2019, 34 cities in Korea have hold Child-Friendly City recognition. It is important to ensure that children and diverse members in the community participate in the process building a child-friendly city. Results of diagnosis and assessment on the level of child-friendliness of communities from the perspective of children should be incorporated into concerned policies.

◯ Both the age-friendly city and the child-friendly city projects encourage the results of diagnosis and assessment on the level of friendliness from the perspective of diverse members in the community with focus on social participation and inclusion of the elderly and children to be incorporated into concerned policies, which implies that opinions of local residents can be included in the Survey on the Creation of a Family-Friendly Social Environment and in the development of an implementation plan at the level of lower-level local governments.

2. Survey results

◯ The household types of respondents (a total of 1,000 persons) are broken down into 400 households rearing an elementary school child(ren) and below; 400 households of elderly aged 65 and above; and 200 households of single-person in their 30s or 40s. The gender ratio of respondents is 24.7% male and 75.3% female.

○ 40.9% of the respondents perceive their living community to be a local government area; 28.5% of the respondents, district(town); and 22.5% of the respondents, a place where a daily life is actually maintained. It is found that the ratio of single-person households who perceive their living community to be a place where a daily life is actually maintained is fairly high at 45.0%.

① **Elements comprising a family-friendly social environment**

○ It is identified that overall, households, regardless of their types, perceive the safety, comfort, convenient transportation and good medical environment of communities to be important. Then, child-rearing households value a good educational environment and an environment where family members can enjoy leisure; elderly households, sufficient convenience facilities and an environment where responsibilities of family care can be shared; and single-person households, an environment with no negative stereotype and discrimination.

〈Table 1〉 Important elements of a family-friendly social environment 〈Priority 1+2+3〉

(Unit: %)

		No. respondents	Safe environment	Convenient transportation	Comfortable environment	Good medical environment	Good educational environment	Sufficient convenience facilities	Environment without negative stereotype and discrimination	Environment where families can enjoy leisure	Environment where individuals can get rest or leisure	Environment enabling to get support when family conflict or problem occurs	Environment enabling to share family care
	Total	1000	66.5	53.0	39.4	39.2	23.2	19.9	10.7	13.7	8.8	9.8	15.8
Gender	Male	247	64.4	55.5	43.7	41.7	13.8	15.4	15.0	16.2	10.5	9.3	14.6
	Female	753	67.2	52.2	38.0	38.4	26.3	21.4	9.3	12.9	8.2	10.0	16.2
Household Type	Child-rearing	400	70.0	49.3	38.5	25.5	44.5	16.3	10.5	16.0	5.3	8.5	15.8
	Elderly	400	60.0	54.5	38.0	56.8	8.0	21.0	7.5	13.0	10.0	12.0	19.3
	Single-person	200	72.5	57.5	44.0	31.5	11.0	25.0	17.5	10.5	13.5	8.0	9.0

◯ In general, the ratios of child-rearing households scoring very important are high for each element. The ratios of single-person households scoring very important for 'Safe community environment', 'Environment without negative stereotype and discrimination', and 'Environment where individuals can get leisure' are slightly different when compared to child-rearing households. It implies that single-person households place high value on the three elements.

◯ The level of importance scored for each element and factor is converted into 100 point scale. The average of the converted scores of the factors related to respect of babies & children, elderlies and single-person households at convenience facilities, medical institutions, public facilities, etc. is higher than that of the factors related to infrastructure and services for care, leisure and emotional support. It confirms that community residents think highly of an environment without negative stereotype, hatred and discrimination due to traits of individuals or family types when it comes to the creation of a family-friendly community.
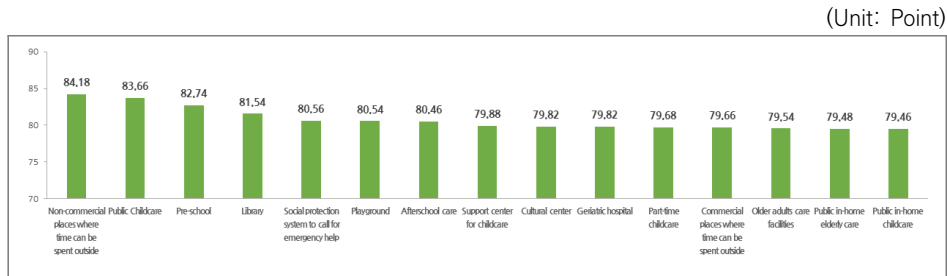
〈Table 2〉 Factors valued by single-person households

(Unit: %)

		Single-person households						Total					
		Not import ant	← Importance →				Very Import ant	Not import ant	← Importance →				Very Import ant
Safety	Safety from crime	0.5	1.5	5.5	11.0	20.5	**61.0**	0.4	0.9	3.8	7.3	34.6	53.0
	Safety from sexual violence	0.5	2.0	7.5	10.5	19.0	**60.5**	0.7	1.3	4.5	7.7	33.9	51.9
	Police help when needed	1.0	2.5	7.5	16.0	20.0	**53.0**	0.2	1.1	3.8	9.5	39.6	45.8
Conveni ence	Convenient public transportation	0.5	2.5	5.5	15.0	22.5	**54.0**	0.4	1.1	2.8	9.9	40.7	45.1
Comfort	Regulation on non-smoking areas	4.0	8.0	13.0	17.0	23.5	**34.5**	1.4	3.0	6.8	13.5	44.4	30.9
	Good waste separation	3.0	4.0	6.0	22.0	27.0	**38.0**	1.0	1.6	4.2	10.6	52.1	30.5
Social capital	No feeling of threat from neighbors	1.0	1.5	4.5	11.0	30.0	**52.0**	0.5	0.9	2.4	8.4	41.4	46.4

❍ The result of the survey shows that 71.8% of the respondents perceive safety of the community to be very important in creating a family-friendly social environment, which is the highest among the environmental factors. In particular, the importance of safety scored by single-person households is very high relative to other environmental factors. The ratio of the respondents who perceive 'Safety from crime' such as violence and robbery, 'Safety from sexual violence', 'Police help when needed' (which are factors related to the safety of the community) to be very important is highest among single-person households.

❍ The ratio of the respondents scoring very important for 'no feeling of threat from neighbors' (which is a factor related to social capital of the community) is also highest among single-person households. It proves that single-person households' level of anxiety and concern over safety is serious.
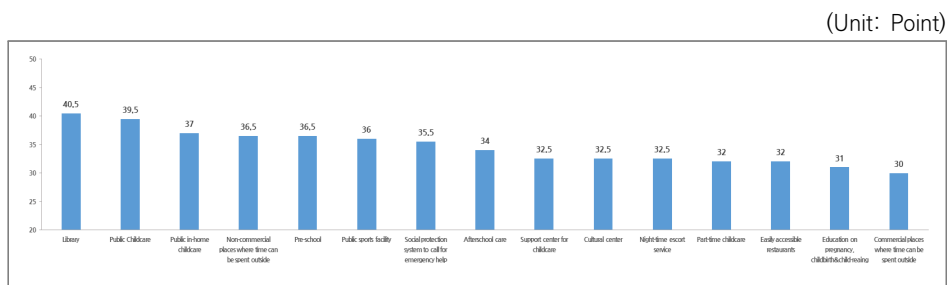
② **Needs for policy support for a family-friendly social environment**

❍ The level of necessity perceived by the respondents for facilities and services for the creation of a family-friendly social environment (which include services provided by the government, commercial facilities & services, and facilities & services which are not universal yet) is scored and then converted into 100 point scale. The average of the converted scores is highest for non-commercial places where times can be spent outside (84.18) which is followed by public childcare (83.66), pre-school (82.74), library (81.54), social protection system to call for emergency help (80.56), playground (80.54) after-school care (80.46), and support center for childcare (79.88) in sequential order.

(Unit: Point)

[Figure 1] Needs for policy support

❍ It is shown that facilities and services related to child and elderly care are generally scored high and some factors not related to child and elderly care also receive high score such as cultural center (79.82), commercial places where time can be spent outside (79.66), easily available restaurants (78.82), public sports facility (78.74), and education on pregnant, childbirth & child-rearing (78.10).

❍ Among them, the perceived necessity of non-commercial places where time can be spent outside, library, social protection system to ask for emergency help, public in-home elderly care, and education on pregnancy, childbirth & child-rearing are newly identified in this survey.

(Unit: Point)

[Figure 2] Single-person households' needs for policy support

○ A comprehensive look at the survey results of single-person households indicates that single-person households have grave anxiety and concern over safety and think of emotional support very important. Those factors can be offset by social capital in the community such as neighbors to call for help, belonging to a community with common interest, and resource sharing, communication & exchange with neighbors. However single-person households perceive them to be less important.

○ In addition, single-person households have a high need for community infrastructure for spending time alone such as library, non-commercial places where time can be spent outside, and public sports facility. So, in sum, it is necessary to expand social capital in the community, to consider libraries and public sports facility as a policy contact to provide emotional support, and to set up a social protection system to call for emergency help to meet the needs of single-person households.

○ The analytical result of this survey shows that the ratio of very necessary and the average of the converted score of the level of importance of elements and factors of a family-friendly community are higher among females than males.

○ The survey finding supports that females are more sensitive to the importance and necessity of a family-friendly social environment than males, therefore, it is essential to create a family-friendly social environment where family functions mainly performed by females such as social reproduction, care and emotional support can be shared at a community level, and to provide support to ensure that family functions are shared by family members in a more equal manner.

❍ It is worth to note that the ratio of females scoring very important for factors related to safety of the community (excluding one out of six factors) is generally 7 to 9% higher than males. In particular, the ratio scoring very important for 'the police gives help at any time needed' shows the largest gender difference with 48.5% by females and 37.7% by males.

❍ The ratio scoring very important for 'there are neighbors to call for help' show the second largest gender difference with 43.2% by females and 31.6% by males. Besides, the gender difference in the converted score of the level of importance of 'resource sharing and exchange with neighbors are active', and 'communications and exchange between neighbors are active' is also significant with four points. As a result, the role of females as a main actor in networking with neighbors in the community is identified with a need to support and strengthen networking with neighbors to create a family-friendly social environment.

Ⅲ. Policy Recommendations

1. Policy directions

❍ Expand the concept of family-friendliness and the target of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment.

- The concept of family-friendliness should go beyond supporting balance between family and work and sharing family care at a community level, and include an environment enabling to share family functions in a more equal manner.

- The concept of family-friendliness should be redefined such that it considers the possibility of change in the needs and phases of the family life cycle, not thinking of the family as a static entity.

- It is suggested to include single-person households in the policy for family-friendliness.

- The concept of family-friendliness should be expanded to mainstream family diversity into the existing policy and to make a policy response to fast-growing single-person households in a timely manner.

- It is necessary to seek an alternative approach to support family members as individuals in the family and single-person households even in the family-friendliness policy, when considering the trend that the value of an individual as a family member is taking precedence over family centerism in the family community.

○ Expand the scope of a family-friendly social environment

- Recognition and respect of sociocultural difference and consensus on consideration should be included in the scope of a family-friendly social environment to eliminate negative stereotype, hatred and discrimination due to the traits of an individual and family types.

- It is important to identify the status of how families including single-person households use and consume various services and infrastructure composed of a community environment.

- It is needed to assess how residents feel about each element and factor of a family-friendly social environment in terms of 3As (Appropriateness, Acceptability, Accessibility) and to improve

administrative & service infrastructure based on the results of the assessment.

❍ Set specific goals for the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment

- The existing goals for the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment are to strengthen the care function of the community, promote the leisure & cultural life of families, and to improve the comfort and safety of the community. In this study, it is suggested to add a new goal for the policy which is to 'promote social inclusion and communication within the community.

- Attention should be paid to the effects of the community's social culture and social capital (social solidarity and network) on the life quality of residents and the importance of social inclusion and communication between neighbors and between generations within the community.

- It is important to secure non-commercial places for residents in the community.

❍ Build a link with related policies and projects

- The policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment should be differentiated from and linked with related policies and projects such as Women-Friendly City, Urban Regeneration Project, Age-Friendly City, and Child-Friendly City, and a system for implementation should be put into efficient operation to make it happen.

2. Improvement of Survey of the Creation of Family-Friendly Social Environment

❍ Direction for the survey

- The survey in the future should include assessment of what specific efforts are made to create a family-friendly social environment at the level of lower-level local governments.

- The performance of projects where regional characteristics of each lower-level local government and policy needs of residents are incorporated should be collected and assessed so that the existing way to collect local cases regarding the creation of a family-friendly social environment in the survey report can be expanded.

❍ Family-friendliness evaluation of community infrastructure and services

- A survey of community residents should be continuously conducted, as is the case with 4th Survey of the Creation of a Family-friendly Social Environment.

- It is, however, judged that it is not time- and budget-efficient to conduct a nationwide survey of community residents as part of the Survey of the Creation of Family-friendly Social Environment conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). It is recommended that the structure and questionnaires of the survey of community residents of each lower-level local government should be prepared through the MOGEF's survey and the survey of local residents should be conducted by a lower-level local government.

- An analysis should be performed of the status of provision of

family-friendly infrastructure and services along with an assessment of how elements of a family-friendly community are provided in the community. At the same time, the level of family-friendliness of community culture and infrastructure & services that families frequently use in the community should be assessed specifically.

3. Roles of Central Government, Local Governments, and Family Centers in Communities

○ Role of central administrative agencies to create a family-friendly social environment

- The Act on the Promotion of Creation of Family-friendly Social Environment should be revised to expand the concept of family-friendliness and the target of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment.

- It is needed to decide on whether to include single-person households in the target of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment or to prevent single-person households being excluded.

- It is essential to discuss and decide on whether to include policy needs for the safety and emotional support of single-person households which are identified in this survey into the Act on the Promotion of Creation of Family-friendly Social Environment, as is the case with Article 20 of the Framework Act on Healthy Homes which stipulates the inclusion of matters regarding the status and policy needs of single-person households by age, gender and region into the national survey of families.

- If the concept of family-friendliness and the target of the policy for the creation of a family-friendly social environment are expanded, they should be included in the basic plan for and the Survey of the Creation of Family-friendly Social Environment. In addition an annual implementation plan for the creation of family-friendly social environment should be prepared and implemented at the level of lower-level local governments.

- In line with the above-mentioned direction for the creation of a family-friendly social environment, a plan for management of family centers should be developed and based on the plan, new projects should be conducted to promote communication and social inclusion between neighbors and between generations in the community.

○ Roles of local governments to create a family-friendly social environment

- As per Article 6 of the Act on the Promotion of Creation of Family-friendly Social Environment, the head of a local government should prepare and implement an annual plan for the creation of a family-friendly social environment under the basic plan. The annual plan should include regional characteristics of a lower-level local government and residents' policy needs regarding a family-friendly social environment in a balanced way.

- It is identified that single-person households have grave anxiety and concern over safety and active response is required to address them at the level of lower-level local governments. Each lower-level local government should prepare a plan for a safe environment as well as a safety inspection at a community level.

- As part of efforts to create a family-friendly social environment, lower-level local governments should improve social perception, thereby preventing hatred and discrimination due to traits of an individual or family types in the community.

- Lower-level local governments should respond to a high need for non-commercial places where time can be spent outside which is identified as a survey result of this study.

- Provision of leisure facilities in the community (that families can use) is used as one of indicators measuring the family-friendliness of communities in the existing Survey on the Creation of a Family-friendly Social Environment. Besides, it is needed to provide infrastructure based on the results of a survey of needs of non-commercial places where families can spend time outside with not much expense conducted at the level of lower-level local governments.

◯ Redefine the role of a family center to create a family-friendly social environment

- Support centers for healthy family & multicultural family have been selected as one of the types of social overhead capital (SOC) related to people's everyday life. The MOGEF is taking steps to convert them into family centers. In addition to existing functions such as family education, consulting, care and co-childcare sharing program, newly organized family centers will provide new functions to support family activities and to promote communication between neighbors and between generations.

- Support customized to the characteristics of each family type including single-person households is mentioned in the MOGEF's

plan for family centers, therefore the family centers are expected to run projects based on common needs and diversity of single-person households in the community and prevent them being socially isolated and disconnected.

- Elderly care is shared at a community level through in-home elderly welfare service, elderly medical welfare facilities, elderly residential welfare facilities. For families who still plan and give elderly care services, to some extent, however, the family centers should provide emotional support and education & guide services.

- The restructured family centers will also perform a new function to improve communication between neighbors and between generations, which is expected to help create a community culture without negative stereotype, discrimination and hatred due to traits of an individual or family types and to establish a network between neighbors (social capital).

- With identified needs of social inclusion of elderly households, the family center should find a new function to expand social capital in the community targeting elderly households which have been out of the focus of the exiting support centers for healthy family & multicultural family. The new service provided by the family center should be differentiated from that provided by existing senior welfare centers.

- The central government should present guidelines for management of family centers. As per the guidelines, a mid-and long-term management plan should be developed by upper-level local governments with consideration of regional situations and implemented by lower-level local governments at a community level.

- The family center located in each lower-level local government should put a system in place to identity facilities and services related to family-friendliness under its jurisdiction and then to link and promote them.