

Knowledge Sharing on Korea's Development in Women's Policies

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## Women Resource Development Institutions and Projects in Korea

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**Women Resource Development Institutions and Projects in Korea**

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Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) is a government-affiliated think-tank under the Prime Minister's Office of South Korea. It has contributed to realizing gender equality, improving women's social participation and welfare and advancing family life and state through comprehensive researches on women's policies.

# Foreword

South Korea has transformed itself from being an aid recipient to an aid donor since achieving an unprecedented economic growth in the last five decades. Such growth was not confined to economics spheres only, but also apparent in social spheres. Women's advancement was one of the areas which witnessed a dramatic transformation.

While there have been efforts to share Korea's development experience through means of Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) spearheaded by South Korea's Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and Development Experience Exchange Partnership (DEEP) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there hasn't yet been an initiative with a comprehensive approach to share women's advancement experiences. The current study is the first of its kind to compile case analyses of women's development in various areas of the South Korean society.

"Women Resource Development Institutions and Projects in Korea" is an essential part of KWDI's multi-year ODA project entitled "Strengthening Gender Equality Policy Infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific Region". This is a project aimed at establishing political and social infrastructure for gender-equal policy in the Asia-Pacific region. By promulgating these research findings through means of policy consultation, workshops and international conferences, KWDI hopes Korea's development experience in relation to gender equality will be beneficial to its partner countries. Moreover, KWDI hopes that this knowledge-sharing will foster potential gender-related ODA projects that the South Korean government can collaborate and cooperate on with its partner countries to promote gender equality in the region.

I hope the concerted efforts made by KWDI and partner countries will bring substantive and positive changes in the lives of women in Asia.

**Myung-Sun Lee, Ph.D.**

President

Korean Women's Development Institute

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# I. Introduction

South Korea is a country where women's average educational level is very high but considering their educational level, women's participation in economic activity is rather low. In the country, a lot of women quit their jobs when they have babies and raise them after marriage. As a result, there are a great number of women whose careers are interrupted (hereinafter called "career-interrupted women") and for this reason economic activity participation rate of highly-educated women who graduated from college is low. Even when women, particularly highly-educated women who left the labor market want to return to the labor market, there is a great shortage of quality jobs that would accommodate them. This situation may not only leave their individual potential untapped but also failure to make sufficient use of female resources at the national level may become an obstacle to national development. As such, the Korean government has made constant efforts to actively develop and use women's human resources.

Korea's representative female resources development institutions include the Women's Centers, the Women Resources Development Centers, and Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, just to name a few. First of all, the Women's Center was founded to promote enlightenment and welfare for women in the early 1900s when Korean women's status was very low. This center gradually expanded its functions to social education. Since the 2000s, the centers have strengthened their vocational education function as well. Next, the Women Resources Development Center began in the 1990s as a vocational training and employment support institution to facilitate women's participation in economic activity. Together with the Women's Centers, the Women Resources Development Centers have positioned themselves as Korea's leading female resources development institution. Focusing on the Women's Centers and the Women Resources Development Centers, this paper aims to examine the background to the establishment of Korea's women resources development institutions, their developments, major projects and programs, and achievements and implications of female resources development through these institutions.

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## 1. Women's Centers

The Women's Centers are Korea's oldest women resources development institution. As local community welfare centers have originated from "women centers," the Women's Centers have historical significance as the beginning of Korea's community welfare institutions (Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 3). The Women's Centers have developed while diversifying its purposes and functions as an educational and cultural welfare institution which provide education, counseling, and protection services for women. Then, as an emphasis began to be placed on the importance of female resources development policies, the Women's Centers have strengthened its vocational training function. The Master Plan for Female Resources Development (2006-2010), which was established in 2006, set the Women's Centers, the Women Resources Development Centers, and the Women Farmers' Centers as main infrastructure for developing women's potential human resources and reinforced the vocational training functions of these institutions (Related Ministries, 2006: 63-64).

### A. Developments of the Women's Centers

Korea's first institution in the form of the Women's Center was "Banyeolbang." This center was established in Wonju in 1906 by Mary Knowles, an American missionary, to teach the Bible and Korean script for women. Methodist Church in the United States afterward expanded this center to found "Bohye Women Center" in 1926. Also, in 1921, the Church established "Taehwa Women Center," predecessor to the current Taehwa Christian Community Welfare Center in Seoul. In 1922, "Goryeo Women Center" was established in Kaesung; "Women Center" in Chuncheon; and "Women's Welfare Center" at the Salvation Army Korea Territory (Gyeong-hyeon Nam, 1978; Soon-deok Ahn, 1985; Il-seop Choi et al., 1996; Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 15).

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As mentioned above, the initial form of the Women's Center was a community welfare center named "yeoja-gwan (women center)" and current local community welfare centers have originated from this women center. Community welfare projects were conducted at women centers for the first time because the centers stressed improvement of women's status at times when their status was very low. The projects were operated and handled by women. Seeing women as the link among children, families and society, women centers started their welfare projects for children and families. In this process, it seems community welfare centers were established in the form of the Women's Centers. Methodist Church in the United States too set the goal of founding the women's centers as solving social problems. It seems the Church viewed women's low status as one of the social problems. Therefore, its programs were concentrated on improvement of women's status through education projects including night school, sewing and cooking classes. In addition, its major projects consisted of child-rearing, child-care, health, family welfare programs (Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 15). However, these privately-run women's welfare centers ceased to exist in around the 1960s or changed their nature to local community welfare centers (Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim, 2010: 2-3).

The first welfare center or center for women was directly established by a local government, "Gyeongsangnamdo Women's Business Center." This center was founded by the provincial government of Gyeongsangnamdo in Busan in 1952, followed by the "Municipal Business Center" which was established by the metropolitan government of Seoul in 1959. At the central government level, the Women's Centers began to establish its centers in large numbers in the 1960s. At that time, the policy related to the Women's Centers was carried out in line with Korea's economic growth policy. Under the aegis of then-First Lady and sponsorship of women's civic groups, the Women's Centers proliferated nationwide in the 1960s. During this period when the women's centers were established and spread across the nation, the main function of the Women's

Centers was to provide comprehensive welfare services for women (Soon-deok Ahn, 1985: 1). In 1962, the Korean government established women's welfare facilities as part of its projects to promote women's self-reliance. As one of the facilities, the Women's Centers began to establish its centers nationwide with a goal to provide vocational guidance for women at large (vocational training and employment placement) and to promote enlightenment of women (lectures to enhance women's basic knowledge and awareness). At that time, the Women's Centers were under the supervision of Women's Welfare Department at the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Women's Welfare Department defined the purposes of operating the Women's Centers and Women's Welfare Centers as "to improve women's qualifications and promote sound homes through education of basic knowledge for women at large, and to develop women's potential, develop side jobs in their daily lives, and contribute to their scientific home management through technical education" (Soon-deok Ahn, 1985: 13). As the Office of the (Second) Minister for Political Affairs was newly established in 1992, the policy on the Women's Centers encountered changes. While pursuing "promotion of women's social education," the Office of the (Second) Minister for Political Affairs highlighted the functions of the Women's Centers as a venue for education to enhance women's social participation. Also, for the policy on the "promotion of women's volunteer services," the Women's Centers were designated as a body for women's volunteer service. Accordingly, the functions of the Women's Centers were divided into welfare and social education functions (Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 32).

In March 1998, when Women's Policy Officer was newly established in the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the responsibilities for promoting women's social education function were transferred from the Office of the (Second) Minister for Political Affairs to the Office of Women's Policy Officer in the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Although duties related to the Women's Centers continued to be undertaken by Women's Welfare Department, its women's social education function was taken over by the Office of Women's Policy Officer. As

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a result, duties related to the Women's Centers were divided into the two departments of the central government. It was therefore concerned that the division of the responsibilities might cause administrative waste, inefficiency and competition in implementing the women's policy. On the other hand, it was expected that the division might serve as an opportunity to develop the Women's Centers (Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 32-33).

However, the government was restructured under the stewardship of the International Monetary Fund from 1998 to 1999, so the Women's Centers underwent a process of reducing its organization together with the women's policy departments (Jeong-ok Kim, Seung-ju Yang & Il-seon Jeong, 1999). This change brought changes in its implementor and operation method. That is, operation of the Women's Centers were commissioned to the private sector. The strengths and weaknesses of direct or commissioned operation of the Women's Centers were pointed out as shown in <Table II-1> (Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim, 2010: 10-14). Until now, there are by far more women's centers that are directly operated by local governments than commissioned to the private sector.

<Table II-1> Strengths and weaknesses of direct or commissioned operation of the Women's Centers

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rich human resources available: welfare public officials, experts with status of public officials, who have accumulated experiences</li> <li>▪ Harmonious operation of administration, facility management, program planning, etc.</li> <li>▪ Easy attainment of cooperation between related institutions</li> <li>▪ Secure status of instructors can ensure faithful class lessons</li> <li>▪ Diverse participation of local women through operation of diversified programs</li> <li>▪ Expected to pursue accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The organizations of government officials may become enormous.</li> <li>▪ Concerned about lack of professionalism</li> <li>▪ Unclear accountability due to frequent relocation of public officials</li> <li>▪ Difficult to maintain continuity of programs due to transfer of the heads of government agencies</li> <li>▪ Lack of seeking changes due to the rigidity of the bureaucratic organization</li> </ul>

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Commissioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diverse use of experts from the private sector</li> <li>▪ Enable differentiated operation</li> <li>▪ Expected to pursue efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concerned about vulnerable facility management and administration</li> <li>▪ Insecure status of instructors may cause a setback in class</li> <li>▪ Pursuit of profit may decrease the quality and public nature of service.</li> <li>▪ Limited in job assignment and opportunities for women officials</li> </ul>

Source: Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim (2010), "Problems and Tasks of the Women's Centers," p.14.

As Korea's local self-governing system stabilized in the mid-1990s, the Women's Centers met opportunities to specialize its functions according to each local government. In the Seoul area, the Women's Centers changed its name to Women's Development Centers and began to put its emphasis of operation on vocational training and women's development. Beginning with Seoul, other areas also initiated their movement to differentiate part of the Women's Centers as women-specific vocational development institutions (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 43).

〈Table II-2〉 Overview of changes of the Women's Centers

Category	Changes	Institution name
Early Women's Center Led by the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promoted enlightenment of women, women-centered family welfare projects</li> </ul>	Banyeolbang, Taehwa Christian Community Welfare Center, etc.
Early Women's Center led by the government (1950-1960s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shifted implementers from individuals and private institutions to the government</li> <li>▪ Vocational guidance, enlightenment projects for women</li> </ul>	Gyeongnam Women's Business Center, Seoul Municipal Business Center, etc.
1962-1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Established women's welfare facilities nationwide as part of the government's projects to promote women's self-reliance</li> <li>▪ With the legislation of the <i>Mother and Fatherless Child Welfare Act</i> (1989), the Women's Center</li> </ul>	Expanded the name of the Women's Center

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Category	Changes	Institution name
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>was based on the <i>Mother and Fatherless Child Welfare Act</i>.</li> <li>Expanded the service recipients from protected women to women at large</li> </ul>	
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changed the policy on the Women's Center after the new establishment of the Office of the Minister for Political Affairs</li> <li>Changed the legal basis after the legislation of the <i>Framework Act on Women's Development</i> (1995)</li> </ul>	
2000s and afterward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislated the <i>Framework Act on Women's Development</i>; established the Basic Plan for Women's Policy</li> <li>Promoted vocational education, emphasized social education, reinforced volunteer services</li> </ul>	Included Women's Development Center

Source: Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim (2010), Reconstructed from "Problems and Tasks of the Women's Centers," p.3

〈Table II-3〉 The number of the Women's Centers by the establishment year  
(Unit: Centers)

1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
1	4	5	15	60	54	139

Source: Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min (2012), "Women-specific Vocational Development Support System and Project Operation Experiences," p.44.

The focus on the purposes and functions of the Women's Centers has changed, little by little, depending on the periods. In the initial period when "women centers" were led by the private groups, the purpose of the centers were to conduct enlightenment projects to raise women's low status and to carry out women-centered family welfare projects. These initiatives of the centers can be summarized into social education and welfare functions. In the 1960s when the Women's Centers began to be established as a government body, the centers announced its purpose as vocational guidance and enlightenment for women,

and diversified its projects to "technical education, women's college, child care, counseling and enlightenment for working women" (Seong-gyeong Kim, 1998: 16). Still, its functions could be summed up as education and welfare (Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim, 2010: 3). However, after the *Framework Act on Women's Development* was enacted and the First Basic Plan for Women's Policy was established, the centers expanded its functions from simple education and welfare to link the functions to facilitation of women's social participation. It also focused on the operation of programs to support women's participation in economic activity (Bok-gyu Kim & Young-suk Lim, 2010: 3). Based on the First Basic Plan for Women's Policy (1998-2002), the government supported costs (30.6 billion won) for building 11 women's centers. But then the government announced its position that it was difficult to provide further support from the state coffers for the centers established in new local areas. The government said that the Women's Centers were one of the projects to promote the welfare of local residents and that such projects belonged to the duties of local governments. At this, the Ministry of Women's Affairs contended that the government should continue its national support, given the conservative tendency of the local communities and women's low social participation rate (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2003: 123).

Subsequently, the government stressed the development and use of women's human resources in its policies and it requested the Women's Centers to reinforce its vocational training function for women rather than focusing on simple hobby education and welfare services. It was also pointed out that hobby or cultural education programs should not be overlapped because such education for the middle-class women was provided by community centers or local private facilities as well as by the Women's Centers. Also, there was growing criticism that hobby or cultural education was not a proper function for the Women's Centers as a public body. At this, it was suggested that the Women's Centers strengthen its vocational education function by changing its functions in response

to the needs of the time, because the centers were founded in the past when the country had poor cultural and welfare services (Sung-jung Park et al., 2008: 3-4). In this setting, the Ministry of Women's Affairs adopted and implemented the functional restructuring of the Women's Centers as important agenda in 2008. For example, the ministry notified local governments of its measures for rationalizing the functions of women's education and training institutions, focusing on the functional restructuring of the Women's Centers. Then, the ministry requested the local governments to report their plans to rationalize the functions of the women's centers at the metropolitan, provincial, municipal, and county levels (Yeong-hye Kim et al., 2010: 14). The directions for the restructuring of the Women's Centers and degree of implementation were different depending on the local governments. Seoul strongly implemented a policy to reinforce the vocational education function of the centers and succeeded in shifting its functions. However, there are still a lot of local areas where the women's centers have not greatly departed from their traditional functions. Because each area is situated in different conditions, the question over whether the vocational education function of its women's centers should be strengthened or not still remains controversial. Also, depending on the focus of functions, the names of the Women's Centers have diversified.

According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, approximately 155 women's centers are in operation nationwide as of January 2013. The region with the largest number of the centers is Gyeonggi Province, with a total of 29 centers, including 2 provincial centers and 27 municipal and county centers. The centers are also evenly distributed across the nation, with 22 centers in Chungcheong Province, 23 in Jeolla Province, and 34 in Gyeongsang Province.

〈Table II-4〉 Current status of the Women's Centers nationwide (in 2013)  
(Unit: Centers)

Total	Seoul	Busan	Daegu	Incheon	Gwangju	Ulsan	Gyeonggi	Daejeon	Gangwon	Chungbuk	Chungnam	Jeonbuk	Jeonnam	Gyeongbuk	Gyeongnam	Jeju
155	16	3	3	4	1	1	29	3	15	12	10	11	12	21	13	1

Note: As of Jan. 10, 2013.

Source: Inside data of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2014a), "Current Status of the Women's Centers Nationwide."

〈Table II-5〉 Names of the Women's Centers nationwide (in 2013)  
(Unit: Centers)

Total	Women's Center	Cultural Center	Welfare Center	Center for Women	Development Center	Competency Development Center/Institute	Education and Culture	Lifelong Learning and Education	Other	Vision Center	Culture and Welfare
155	62	23	18	8	8	7	7	6	6	5	5

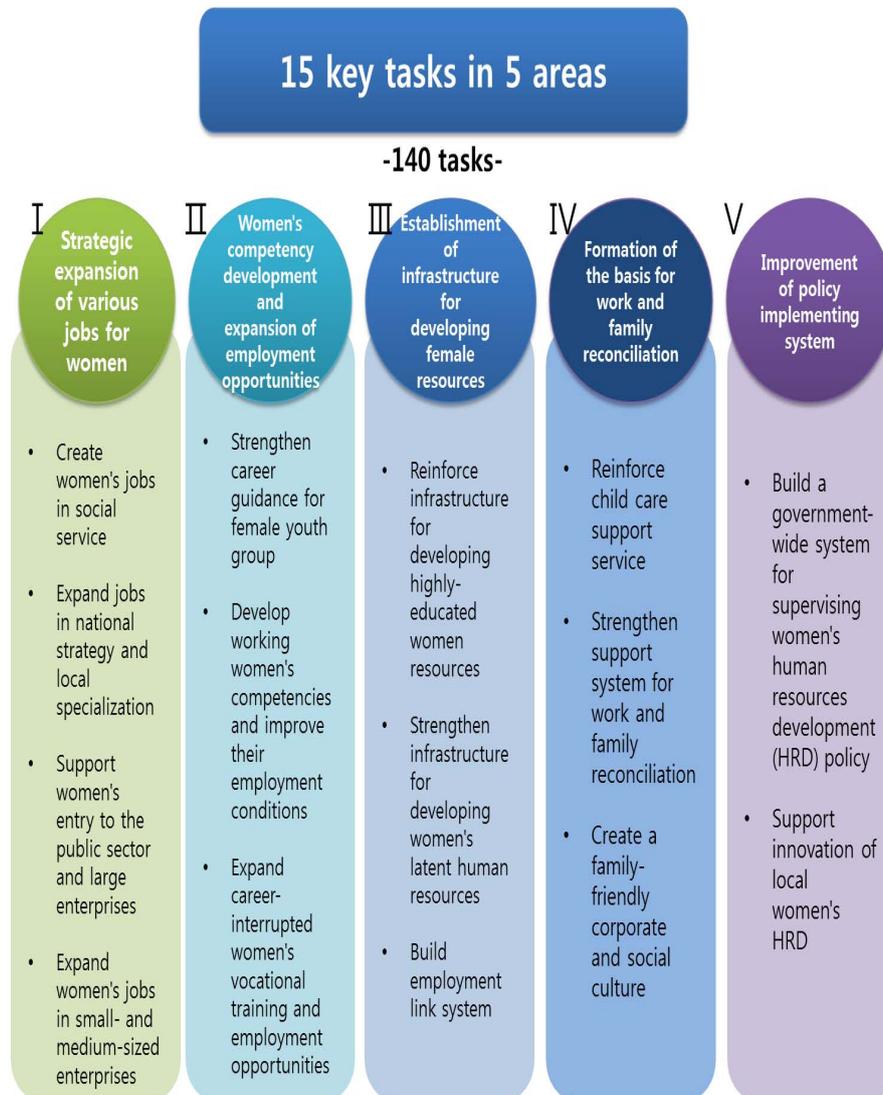
Note: As of Jan. 10, 2013.

Source: Inside data of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2014a), "Current Status of the Women's Centers Nationwide."

## B. Projects and Programs of the Women's Centers

The Women's Centers provide social education, vocational education, and welfare support. As an emphasis was put on female resources development, its vocational education functions have been reinforced. In areas other than Seoul, however, the centers still maintain its strong tradition of social education. For the current status of specific projects for women resources development at the Women's Centers, refer to the plans for female resources development and implementation performances. The First Master Plan for Female Resources Development (2006-2010) was formulated as a government-wide comprehensive measure for efficient development and use of women's human resources. Also, the master plan was jointly established by 14 ministries, departments, and

administrations including the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. The formulation of the plan was grounded on their common awareness that because of the rapid progress of a low fertility and aging society and the arrival of the age of global competition in a knowledge and information society, facilitating women's participation in the labor market was an essential task for the government to achieve economically and socially sustainable and balanced development. The First Master Plan for Female Resources Development was consisted of key tasks to expand jobs and develop women's capabilities for direct development and use of female resources, to establish infrastructure for developing women's human resources, to lay the groundwork for work and family reconciliation, and to improve system for comprehensive policy implementation.



Source: Related Ministries (2006), The First Master Plan for Women Resources Development (2006-2010), p. 10.

[Figure II -1] Basic policy directions and contents of the First Master Plan for Women Resource Development

In particular, the first master plan included a task that local governments should spread the Women's Centers, the Women Resources Development Centers, and the Women Farmers' Centers on a large scale and reinforce their functions in order to "strengthen infrastructure for developing women's latent human resources." In the case of local governments, they did not take enough interest in female resources development projects and their women's centers—which were important infrastructure—were preoccupied with social education. Therefore, it was necessary for the centers to establish its status as professional vocational training institutions. As such, the first master plan came to include plans to strengthen vocational training and vocational counseling functions of the Women's Centers and enhance the competencies of the Women's Centers' staff (Related Ministries, 2006: 42-46).

〈Table II-6〉 Contents related to the Women's Centers in the First Master Plan for Women Resources Development

Key task	Sub-task	Contents	Details	Ministry in charge
3-2. Strengthen infrastructure for developing women's latent human resources	3-2-1. Reinforce functions of the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center	① Strengthen vocational training function of the Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct vocational training performance assessment of the Women's Center, award prizes for outstanding centers and local governments, and provide incentives</li> <li>Strengthen connection with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, including expansion of participation in women's job projects</li> </ul>	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family/local governments
		② Implement projects to strengthen vocational counseling functions of the Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a pool of vocational counselors, dispatch vocational counselors to the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center, encourage establishment of "temporary vocational counseling office"</li> </ul>	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family/local government

Key task	Sub-task	Contents	Details	Ministry in charge
		Resources Development Center and the Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and operate systematic vocational counseling programs suitable for women, particularly for career-interrupted women</li> </ul>	nts
		③ Reinforce competencies by building network between the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen network through regular meetings of representatives from the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center</li> <li>▪ Conduct regular education for the staffs of the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center to foster expertise</li> <li>▪ Promote the dissemination of excellent vocational training programs</li> </ul>	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family/ local governments

Source: Related Ministries (2006), The First Master Plan for Women Resources Development (2006-2010), pp.46-47.

The Second Master Plan for Female Resources Development (2011-2015) set its vision as to promote sustainable national growth through the use of women resources. Also, the second master plan stressed strengthening support for women's employment according to their life cycle.



Source: Related Ministries (2011), The Second Master Plan for Women Resources Development (2011-2015), p.37.

[Figure II-2] Basic policy directions and contents of the Second Master Plan for Women Resource Development

With regard to the Second Master Plan for Female Resources Development, major local governments submitted their performances of operating the Women's Centers (2013) and action plans (2014) as shown in <Table II-7> and <Table II-8>.

〈Table II-7〉 Performances of Operating the Women's Centers in 2013 Based on the Second Master Plan for Women Resources Development

Area	Institution	Performances
Seoul	Women's Development Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 26,324 persons completed vocational training (completion rate: 83.6%)</li> <li>- 13,684 persons found jobs (employment rate: 52.0%)</li> <li>- 16,251 persons completed cultural education</li> </ul>
Daegu	Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online employment counseling service coaching for 161 persons; found jobs for 42 persons</li> <li>- 9 startups moved in the Business Incubation Center; 378 persons participated in Business Startup Expo; supported 100 million won for national startup support competition project; sent 10 persons for overseas startup training (once)</li> </ul>
Ulsan	Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocational education in 176 courses for 4,218 persons; job placement for 2,813 persons; job-finding and startup for 961 persons, startup and job placement for 18 persons</li> <li>- Vocational education and training of 130 career-interrupted women; autonomous human resources development training of 849 persons; employment support training of 150 persons in social service; women's vocational competency development training of 3,745 persons; vocational competency development training of 25 persons for the vulnerable class; operation of "Successful Job-finding Program" for 220 persons; startup support for 18 persons</li> <li>- Job-finding counseling and job placement for 11,272 persons, group counseling programs for 220 persons</li> <li>- Job-finding support meeting of related agencies and enterprises(Women's Center: 16 times; Human Resources Development Center: 33 times)</li> </ul>
Gyeonggi	Women's Vision Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment performances: 3,311 persons wanted help; 2,375 persons wanted jobs; found jobs for 1,739 persons; employment rate, 73%</li> <li>- Established support system for the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers: meetings of heads of the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, meetings of heads of the Women's Centers</li> <li>- Provided employment support service for areas without designated Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers: dispatched 16 employment planners; referred 159 persons to the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers for women internship; re-employment planning program, 12 times, 181 persons; operated outreach employment support services, 405</li> </ul>

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Area	Institution	Performances
		times - Supported functional shift of the Women's Center: supported consulting to upgrade functions of the Women's Center; creative planning competition projects in 12 courses for 1,481 persons - Supported work-family reconciliation: operation of "Happy Working Mom Program" 25 times for 657 persons - Vocational education for career-interrupted women: 25 persons completed the bio lab researcher training course; 14 persons found jobs
Chungbuk	Women's Center	- Promoted employment support for municipal and county Women's Center: operated 7 Women's Center employment information centers in the areas without designated Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers; built network with job-finding institutions for local women

Source: Related Ministries (2014), Extracted from the 2014 Action Plan for the Second Master Plan for Women Resources Development (2011-2015).

〈Table II-8〉 2014 Action Plan for the Second Master Plan for Women Resources Development Related to the Women's Centers

Area	Five strategies	Key tasks	Task name	Action plans
Seoul	Build system and infrastructure for developing female resources	Build infrastructure for implementing the female resources policy	Strengthen operation of Women's Development Center	Reinforce women's employment support through expansion of customized vocational education (to over 70% of operating vocational education programs); establish identity as vocational education institution
Daegu	Expand middle-aged women's job opportunities	Strengthen support for career-interrupted women's re-employment	Expand online employment counseling service	Gyeonggi Women Resources Development Center's function as a local base center; publicize online employment coaching service on the Women's Center website
		Promote support for women's	Develop training programs to enhance the basic	Build and support human network between successful startups and enterprises that moved in the Business

II . Women Resource Development Institutions and Projects ●●● 23

Area	Five strategies	Key tasks	Task name	Action plans
		startup	knowledge of startups and on-site experience	Incubation Center; conduct collaboration education and special lectures by inviting successful startups through connection with other business incubation centers
			Provide consulting for management of startup-related financial support and success of startups	Conduct professional practice and small capital startup education for those who moved in the Business Incubation Center and prospective startups; support 1:1 consulting and mentoring education, startup education, and participation in Business Startup Expo
Ulsan	Strengthen young women's employment competencies	Develop and guide careers for women and youth	Seek central-local joint measures for creating women's jobs	Operate the Women's Center - Women's employment and startup assistance(assistance of 3,000 persons; employment of 1,200 persons; startup of 20 persons) - Vocational education (186 courses, 4,428 persons)
	Expand middle-aged women's job opportunities	Strengthen support for career-interrupted women's re-employment	Reinforce vocational training function of the Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct diverse vocational education and training for women's vocational competency development and promotion of employment support</li> <li>- Women's vocational competency development training; vocational education and training for career-interrupted women</li> <li>- Autonomous human resources development training; employment support training in social service</li> <li>- Women's ICT education and social cultural education</li> <li>- Vocational competency development training for the neglected class, free online education centers)</li> <li>▪ Hold events for supporting women startups and meetings between those want help and job-seekers</li> </ul>
			Projects to reinforce vocational training function of the Women's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operate vocational counseling and employment planners</li> <li>- Counseling for job-hunters and job placement: 11,300 persons</li> </ul>

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Area	Five strategies	Key tasks	Task name	Action plans
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operate successful employment counseling programs: 220 persons</li> <li>- Outreach vocational counseling: 50 persons</li> </ul>
			<p style="text-align: center;">Strengthen competencies by building network between the Women's Center and the Women Resources Development Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operate employment portal sites and build and manage employment databases for women's vocational educational institutions</li> <li>- Regular meetings of representatives from the Women Resources Development Center and the Women's Center</li> <li>- Consolidate collaborative network between businesses and related institutions for employment support and vocational education and training</li> </ul>
Gyeonggi	Expand middle-aged women's job opportunities	Strengthen Support for career-interrupted women's re-employment	New Job Center for Strengthen the role of women's support headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project to dispatch employment planners (20 planners)</li> <li>- Project to raise competencies of career counselors at the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers</li> <li>- New Job Women Internship for 120 persons</li> <li>- Operate re-employment design program "Oasis" (education for job-hunting women in the areas without designated Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers conducted by municipal and county Women's Centers to increase self-confidence and job-finding skills)</li> <li>- Operate "Happy Working Mom Program" for work-family reconciliation in 10 enterprises</li> <li>- Project to upgrade the functions of the Women's Center: competition for local-specific projects at the Women's Center; the Women's Center consulting and operation of the Gyeonggi Women's Center Council</li> <li>- Implement projects to enhance an women-friendly corporate environment</li> </ul>

Area	Five strategies	Key tasks	Task name	Action plans
Chungbuk	Expand middle-aged women's job opportunities	Strengthen support for career-interrupted women's re-employment	Build system for information on help and job wanted	- Government-private joint use of women's employment system (local governments, the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, municipal and county Women's Centers)
			Consolidate employment link for local women	- Operate information centers to consolidate employment link at municipal and county Women's Centers
Gyeongbuk	Expand middle-aged women's job opportunities	Strengthen support for career-interrupted women's re-employment	Reinforce job support system by operating women's employment support centers and by allocating employment planners	- Operate five employment support centers under the Women's Center - Provide customized vocational counseling and employment support by placing 9 employment planners in the Women's Center
			Enhance competency through network-building of employment support institutions	- Project to strengthen competencies of employment planners at the provincial women's employment support institutions

Source: Related Ministries (2014), Extracted from the 2014 Action Plan for the Second Master Plan for Women Resources Development (2011-2015).

As mentioned earlier, the Korean government has exerted policy efforts to support the Women's Centers so that the centers can actively contribute to increasing women's social and economic participation. Seoul, Gyeonggi, and other areas have already seen positive outcomes from their efforts.

## 2. Women Resource Development Centers

The Women Resources Development Centers are vocational training and employment support institutions for adult women. The focus of operating the

Women Resources Development Centers are on providing vocational training of promising occupational types and employment support service for working women in the low-income bracket, and middle-aged women. Compared to the Women's Centers, the Women Resources Development Centers offer by far more diverse in professional vocational training programs. However, these centers are now in a situation where it is difficult to grow as professional training institutions from the aspects of finance and facilities (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 51).

## A. Developments of the Women Resources Development Centers

Beginning in the second half of the 1970s, the Ministry of Labor operated vocational training programs including in-house vocational training based on the *Framework Act on Vocational Training* for employment security and competency development of incumbent workers as well as youths who did not proceed to higher schools. However, because married women had difficulty attending regular vocational training institutions due to housework and child-rearing, they could hardly benefit from existing vocational training programs. As such, there arose a need for providing married women with opportunities to develop their vocational competencies, support their employment in order to facilitate women's economic activities and to give women opportunities for self-realization (Sook-ja Park, 2002: 36). The *Framework Act on Vocational Training* amended on Dec. 31, 1981 and the *Employment Security Act* partially amended on Apr. 3, 1982 stipulated that "The Minister of Labor shall make effort to develop occupational types suitable for women and expand their employment opportunities."

The predecessor to the Women Resources Development Centers was the "House for Working Women." The House for Working Women was first established in 1993 based on the *Equal Employment Act* and the *Act on the Budgeting and Management of Subsidies*. Its implementer was a non-profit women's civic

group (YWCA). The *Equal Employment Act* expressly stated that "the State and local governments shall provide equal opportunities in all vocational training programs for working women's capability development and improvement, secure vocational training facilities and equipment, and take other necessary measures for working women." According to the *Equal Employment Act*, Guideline for the Establishment and Operation of the House of Working Women and National Subsidies was prepared. According to this guideline, the House of Working Women was established as a non-profit corporation. The guideline also stated that the Minister of Labor should take charge of this institution (Chang-gyun Chae & Hye-won Goh, 2001: 22).

The initial purpose of establishing the House of Working Women was to promote working women's welfare. The House of Working Women conducted projects such as short-term vocational competency development for one to six months, employment information service, job placement, counseling for working women's difficulties, operation of welfare facilities for trainees' children, and support for cultural activity. In 1993, the Ministry of Labor began its business for supporting establishment and operation of the House of Working Women in three different areas and supported 46 facilities nationwide until it transferred its duties to the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2001. Since its establishment in 1993 in three metropolitan areas (Seoul, Busan, Gwangju) on a pilot basis, the House of Working Women has added three branches every year until 1996, with a goal to establish a branch in 15 metropolitan provinces and cities. But then, the number of its branches sharply increased in response to mass unemployment after the financial crisis of 1997, from 5 branches in 1997 to 18 in 1998 and 9 in 1999 (Chang-gyun Chae & Hye-won Goh, 2001: 22-23). Due to the mass unemployment after the IMF bailout in 1997, not only women but also male heads of households lost their jobs. At this, women had to undertake responsibilities for making a living for their families. With the addition of a policy goal in order to secure social safety nets for unemployed women,

particularly, for female heads of households, the House of Working Women greatly expanded its functions as an institution for re-employment training of unemployed women and vocational training of female heads of households (Sook-ja Park, 2002: 37).

According to the amendment of the Government Organization Act in Jan. 2001, duties related to the House of Working Women were transferred from the Ministry of Labor to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In April of the same year, with the amendment of the Enforcement Ordinance of the *Framework Act on Women's Development*, the legal basis for the duties of the House of Working Women was improved and some of its duties were entrusted to 16 provinces and cities (Chang-gyun Chae & Hye-won Goh, 2001: 23-24). In May of the year, the Rule for the Establishment and Operation of the Women Resources Development Centers were enacted by the order of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Accordingly, the names changed from the House of Working Women to the Women Resources Development Centers. After the duties of the Women Resources Development Centers were transferred from the Ministry of Labor to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a lot of changes took place in the service system. Unlike the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Women's Affairs did not have local line service, so the Minister of Women's Affairs inevitably entrusted some of its duties to governors and mayors.

According to Article 4 of the Rule for the Establishment and Operation of the Women Resources Development Centers, the Minister of Women's Affairs should set standards for the establishment and operation of the centers, select the areas and implementers of establishing and operating the centers, secure the budget and allocate the budget to provinces and cities, review the performances of the centers and provide support differently according to the performances. Governors and mayors who supervise the areas where the Women Resources Development Centers are located should report matters concerning the receipt of applications for subsidies and decisions on the applications to the Minister of

Women's Affairs (Sook-ja Park, 2002: 39). Accordingly, the government subsidized the costs in whole or in part for the new establishment of the Women Resources Development Centers as non-profit corporations that conducts projects, including vocational competency development training and job placement for women. The government also supported part of annual operating costs of the centers. As of 2001, the support for the operation costs amounted to 9.5 million won per center annually, which accounted for approximately 30% of the total annual operation costs of each center (Chang-gyun Chae & Hye-won Goh, 2001: 23-24). Since Jan. 2005, duties related to the Women Resources Development Centers have been transferred to 16 metropolitan and local governments up to the present (Hye-won Goh, 2004: 5-6).

The House of Working Women underwent changes in purpose and function as its legal basis changed from the *Equal Employment Act* to the *Framework Act on Women's Development*.<sup>1)</sup> If its main purpose was to promote the welfare of working women in the past, the purpose changed to develop women's capabilities and improve their social and economic status (Hye-won Goh 2004: 5). Article 33 Paragraph 2 of the *Framework Act on Women's Development* states, "The State and local governments can support operation costs of women-related facilities in whole or in part within the budget to promote women's rights, interests and welfare." Also, Article 34-2 of the Enforcement Ordinance of the *Framework Act on Women's Development* states, "The Minister of Women's Affairs can support operation costs, in whole or in part within the budget, of non-profit corporations or organizations which operate facilities to provide vocational competency development training, employment information, job placement, counseling, services to support welfare benefits and cultural activities for women to develop women's capabilities and improve their social and economic status." Article 37 of the Enforcement Ordinance of the *Framework*

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1) The *Framework Act on Women's Development* was amended to the *Framework Act on Gender Equality* in 2013, which is scheduled to take effect in July 2015.

*Act on Women's Development* states, "Of the duties concerning the subsidies, the Minister shall entrust to governors and mayors his or her authority of delivering the subsidies to the relevant corporations or organizations, and the authority of follow-up management of the subsidized projects." Also, the Rule for the Establishment and Operation of the Women Resources Development Centers stipulate, "The Women Resources Development Centers shall perform projects to provide vocational competency development training, employment information, job placement, counseling and to support welfare benefits and cultural activities for women to develop women's capabilities and improve their social and economic status."

〈Table II-9〉 Legal basis for the Women Resources Development Centers

Date	Law	Related Ministry	Name	Remarks
1993	The Equal Employment Act	Ministry of Labor	House of Working Women	
Jan. 2001	Amendment of the Government Organization Act	Ministry of Women's Affairs(New)		Transferred to the Ministry of Women's Affairs
Apr. 2001	Amendment of the Enforcement Ordinance of the Framework Act on Women's Development	16 provinces and cities		Transferred to provinces and cities
May 2001	The Rule for the Establishment and Operation of the Women Resources Development Center	16 provinces and cities	Women Resources Development Center	Changed the institution names

Source: Yeong-seop Choi et al.(2012), *The Role of Female Resources Development Institutions in the Labor Market and Measures for Development*, p.35.

As of 2014, the Women Resources Development Centers have 53 centers nationwide, with the largest number of 17 centers in Seoul, followed by 7 centers in Gyeonggi Province. While the government-led Women's Centers are distributed evenly across the nation, the Women Resources Development Centers operated by private corporations are distributed largely in the Seoul metropolitan area. Due to this big difference between areas, women in the other regions have somewhat limited access to the centers (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 50).

〈Table II-10〉 Current status of the Women Resources Development Centers  
\*(Unit: Centers)

*Total	Seoul	*Busan	Daegu	In cheon	Gwangju	Dae jeon	Gyeong gi	Gang won	Chung buk	Chung nam	Jeon buk	Jeon nam	Gyeong buk	Gyeong nam	Jeju
53	17	3	2	3	2	1	7	2	1	3	2	3	3	3	1

Source: Homepage of the Korea Women's Resource Development Center United (July 2014), About the centers by area (<http://www.vocation.or.kr>).

Note: Busan has two more Women Resources Development Centers than the above statistic which do not belong to the Korea Women's Resource Development Center United. When these two centers are included, the centers add up to 55 in total.

The implementers of the projects at the current 53 centers consist of diverse private women's groups. Korea YWCA operates the largest number of 26 centers. Also, "Onto Dure" Cooperative and Korean Women's Association operate 4 centers respectively and the Korean Women Workers Association and the Korean Association of University Women run 3 centers, respectively.

## B. Projects and Programs of the Women Resources Development Centers

The Women Resources Development Centers carry out projects related to women's employment. The projects include re-entry to the labor market of married job-hunting women in their 30s and 40s; development of occupational

types suited for women in their 50s and 60s; and intensive female resources development in the areas of education, child care, culture, and environment; development of competencies for employment and business startup. The main training targets of the Women Resources Development Centers have shifted from low-income women in the early stage to highly-educated and career-interrupted women as the proportion of the latter women's participation in training has gradually increased. Also, the Women Resources Development Centers perform projects to facilitate re-employment of full-time housewives and career-interrupted women. Such projects include employment facilitation projects such as vocational competency development training and provision of employment information, job placement, counseling for working women in distress, support programs for women's social and cultural lives, and operation of welfare facilities for trainees' children (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 51).

According to the Korea Women's Resources Development Center United (2014), the targets of the center's educational service support include unemployed women who have difficulty of re-employment due to interrupted career, female students who prepare to get a job for the first time as a member of a society, the employed who plan to get a job with enough time for the preparation, and workers who consider changing careers in the long term in response to the current job insecurity. Accordingly, the center's main projects include specialized education and training in response to the demands of local employment market, diverse employment support projects and group counseling programs, counseling for those who want help or jobs, job placement, vocational competency development training, job capability improvement education and career counseling for workers, and support for women's social and cultural lives.



Source: Homepage of the Korea Women's Resource Development Centers United (July 2014),  
Main projects of the Women Resources Development Centers  
(<http://www.vocation.or.kr>).

[Figure II -3] Main projects of the Women Resource Development Centers

As of 2014, the Women Resources Development Centers provide the following programs as shown in <Table II-11>.

<Table II -11> Education programs of the Women Resources Development Centers (in 2014)

Category	Programs
Vocational competency development, job capability improvement training, employment/startup support projects	Cake design class, animation digital producer, barista class, story-telling class, sidedish employment/startup class, electronic accounting, career coaching, photoshop, art therapist, baby massager, professional organizer for domestic cleanup, performance planning marketer, beauty, after-school instructor for children, flower decorator, enneagram, storytelling math instructor, CAD office worker, essay instructor, child art instructor, bookkeeper, care manager, nail art, financial planner, child care help, cook, balloon art, vocational counselor, florist, advertizement handwriting designer, baker, clothes repair, clinic coordinator, psychological counselor, skin carer, medical tourist coordinator, travel product planner, senior life coach, conflict arbitrator training, CS instructor training, computer, office consultant, online marketing, infant/child play instructor, beauty shop startup(hair and nail care), cultural site field trip guide, film CG producer, food startup, etc.
Social and cultural	Crafts, florist, natural soap, computer, quilt, home fashion, sign language,

Category	Programs
education	cooking, home baking, investment technique, yoga, English, reform work, beauty, child career coaching, auction practice for novice investors, fine art, Pilates class, etc.
Group counseling	"Start Job-finding 2060", re-employment plan group counseling, employment success package employment hopes, career steppingstone, group counseling at the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, "Employment Solution 2060," "Search Tomorrow's Hope" planning program, employment coaching program, etc.

Source: Homepage of the Korea Women's Resource Development Centers United (July 2014).  
 Extracted from education programs of the Women Resources Development Centers  
 (<http://www.vocation.or.kr>).

Although the Women Resources Development Centers have contributed as an institution dedicated to adult women's employment, the centers have very little space compared to the Women's Centers. Not only this, the development centers have a considerable burden of investment in education and training facilities because it is based on rental buildings. Also, while the operating costs of the Women's Centers are fully covered by local governments, the costs of the Women Resources Development Centers are shared from national subsidies supported by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, transferred money of business operators, and revenues from the paid education program fees. However, the transferred money is very small because of poor financial conditions of non-profit women's groups as business operators. Another problem is also pointed out that the development centers are in too difficult situations to dedicate themselves to development and operation of training programs because they have to cover operating costs for themselves through diverse service projects (Sook-ja Park, 2002: 52-54). In addition, other problems are pointed out as follows: Differences in local governments' interest in and support for the Women Resources Development Centers; lack of human resources; difficulty of developing occupational types befitting the demands for human resources in the local labor market and local women resources; frequent turnover of workers at

the centers; lack of qualifications of instructors and differences in qualifications; and old equipment including computers (Byeong-suk Kim, 2003: 153-164).

The Women Resources Development Centers still have many obstacles to becoming a training institution specializing in women's employment. Nevertheless, the development centers have grown as leading female resources development institutions through its various projects. The projects include development of customized training programs considering the situation of career-interrupted women; operation of employment support services; development and operation of non-traditional occupational type training programs to overcome the problem of women's employment concentrated in women-friendly occupational types; and active participation in the project of the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers. This last project began in 2008 to provide integrated services for women's employment.

### **3. Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers**

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers began its operation based on the Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-Interrupted Women enacted in 2008. Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers offer active employment support services taking into account the features of career-interrupted women. The centers are operated in the form of existing women's vocational education and training institutions but its function is strengthened through additional services, such as counseling, job placement and follow-up management, and work-family reconciliation support services. Also, going beyond simple vocational education training and job placement, the centers provide integrated services from instilling a will to get a job and confidence in career-interrupted women to offering job information and counseling, job placement and follow-up management (Yeong-seop

Choi et al., 2012: 40).

## A. Development of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

The Korean government has long put efforts in raising women's economic activity participation rate, which remained in the lower ranks among the OECD countries. Since the introduction of the *Equal Employment Act* in 1998, the government has established and implemented the Basic Plans for Equal Employment every five years. In 2006, the government introduced active improvement measures to establish equal recruitment and personnel management practices of businesses and settle an equal corporate culture. As a result, it began to apply the measures to business places with 1000 employees or more, expanding to business places with 500 employees or more in 2009. By amending the *Equal Employment Act* to the *Act on Equal Employment and Support for Work-family Reconciliation* in 2008, the government has strengthened its policies toward work and family reconciliation of incumbent women workers. These efforts were largely initiated by the Ministry of Employment and Labor, which took charge of equality in employment (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 58-59).

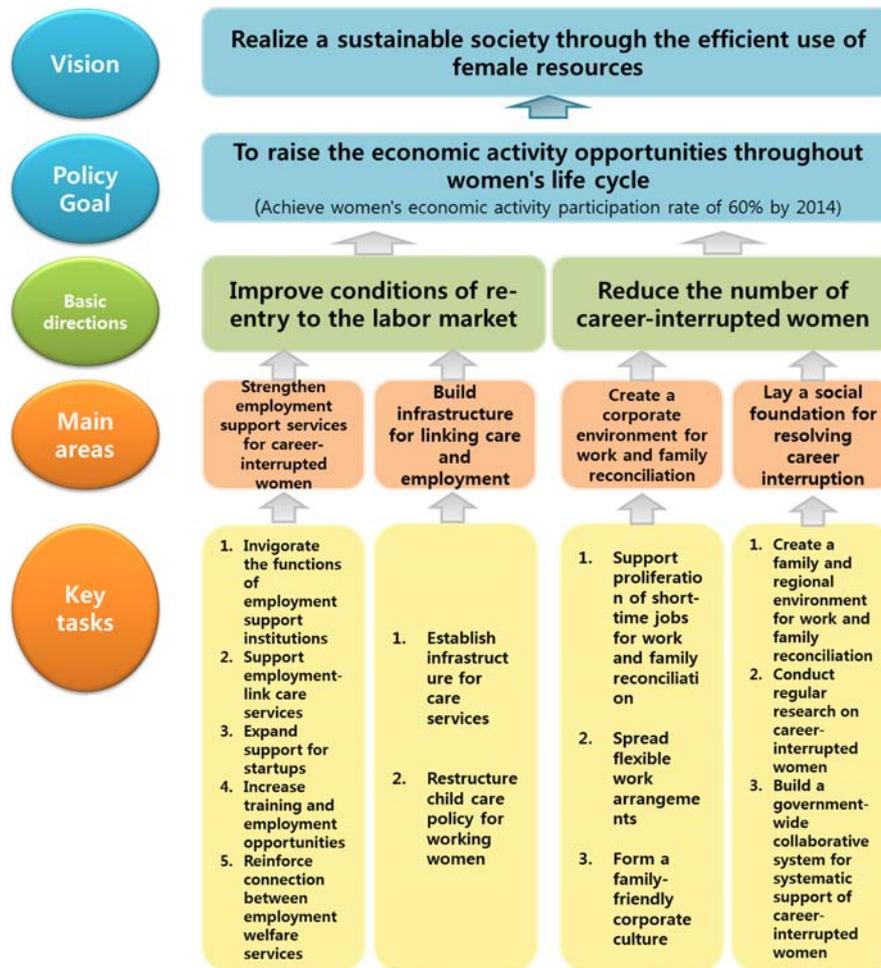
With the launch of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in 2003, policies on women's human resources development and promotion of their participation in economic activity began to attract greater attention. In particular, the legal basis for the Women Resources Development Centers were expressly laid in the *Framework Act on Women's Development* under the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. The Women Resources Development Centers were an institution dedicated to women that supports education and training, and re-employment of full-time housewives. Through this legal basis, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family came to have the function of education and

training support for women who prepare to re-enter the labor market. As its organization expanded in 2005, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family invested a lot of budget on policies to expand childcare facilities and to broaden the scope of women subject to childcare expense support. This was to reduce women's child-rearing burden, which was a major cause for women's low economic activity participation rate. In 2006, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family made the Master Plan for Female Resources Development (2006-2010) and in collaboration with many other ministries the ministry exerted its effort to increase women's jobs and simultaneously to build infrastructure for various types of support. However, despite these policies, such efforts could not bring any tangible effect on raising women's economic activity participation rate. Women's economic activity participation rate, which was 48.4% in 2000, could not reach 50% until 2009. At this, it was pointed out that the policy directions should be shifted from the policy on facilitation of employment of the jobless to the policy on economically inactive population, many of who remained latent human resources. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Ministry of Employment and Labor jointly legislated *the Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women* in May 2008. While the "Policy to Support Equal Employment and Work-family Reconciliation" targeted mostly the incumbent workers and the unemployed, *the Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women* targeted job-seeking women among the career-interrupted women who left the labor market due to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, or child-rearing (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 59).

The government set the support for career-interrupted women's participation in economic activity as national agenda and began to implement the agenda. In order to support employment of career-interrupted women who had difficulty re-entering the labor market and finding jobs, the government established the *Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women* in 2008,

and began to implement the "Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers" project on a full scale (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2014a: 1). In this law, "career-interrupted women, etc." refer to job-seeking women among those who have stopped their economic activities or even those who have never done economic activities for the reasons of pregnancy, childbirth, child-rearing, or care of family members.

Based on the *Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women*, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Ministry of Employment and Labor jointly made the Basic Plan for Facilitating Career-interrupted Women's Economic Activities every five years. According to Article 4 of the *Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women*, the basic plan should include the current conditions and prospects of career-interrupted women, major policies on career-interrupted women, and other matters concerning facilitation of career-interrupted women's economic activities as set forth by the Presidential Decree. The Minister of Gender Equality and Family and the Ministry of Labor should make the basic plan and go through deliberation at the Women's Policy Coordination Committee according to Article 11 of the *Framework Act on Women's Development*.

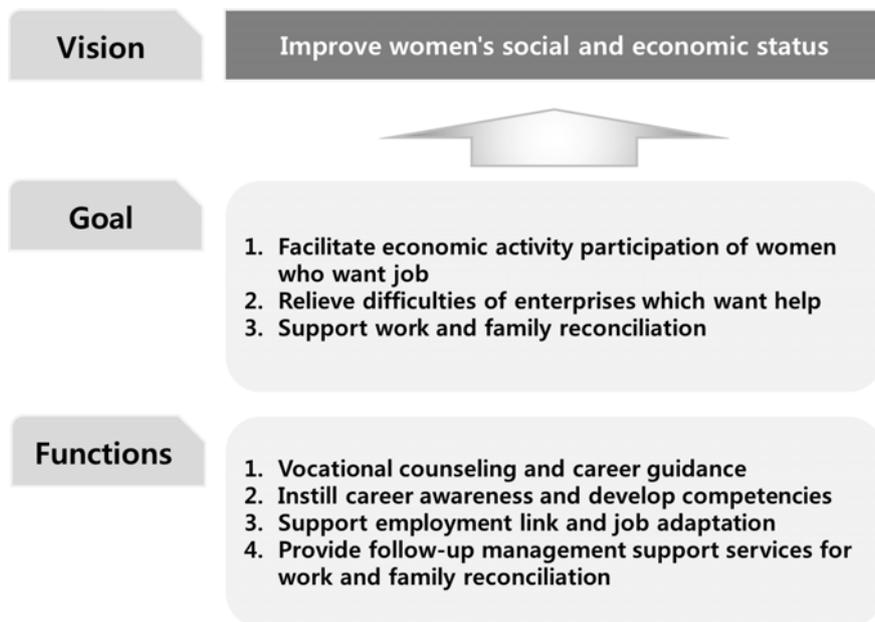


Source: Related Ministries (2010), The Basic Plan for Facilitating Career-interrupted Women's Economic Activities (2010-2014), p.18.

[Figure II-4] Basic directions for the Basic Plan for Facilitating Career-interrupted Women's Economic Activities

As an implementing system to realize the policy will of this Act, the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family have designated and operated Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers as joint projects since 2009 (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 60). Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers are based on Article 13 Paragraph 1 of the *Act on*

*Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women*, which states “The Minister of Gender Equality and Family and the Minister of Employment and Labor may designate and operate support centers for career-interrupted women which can provide comprehensive services such as counseling, information, employment and welfare support services, considering the features of career-interrupted women.”



Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family·Ministry of Employment and Labor (2013), *The 2013 Operation Guidelines for Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers*, p.31.

[Figure II-5] Basic directions for operating Career-interrupted Women Supporting

To implement the projects efficiently, the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family designated and operated existing education and training institutions, the Women's Centers, and other institutions as Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2013: 1).

〈Table II-12〉 Current status of designation as Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

(Unit: Centers)

Total	Seoul	Busan	Daegu	In cheon	Gwang ju	Dae jeon	Ulsan	Gyeong gi	Gang won	Chung buk	Chung nam	Jeonb uk	Jeon nam	Gyeong buk	Gyeong nam	Jeju	Sejong
120	25	7	4	7	5	2	2	17	6	5	9	7	6	7	8	2	1

Note: As of Dec. 31, 2013.

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013), Annual Report on Women's Policy (Unpublished), p.1.

In order to provide employment support services for job-seeking women in the areas where Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers are not designated, the government has also designated the Metropolitan Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers since 2010 and operated 10 centers nationwide as of 2013. The government has also dispatched employment planners to women's employment support centers, including the Women's Centers, in the areas without designated Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers and provided employment support services, including help-wanted or job-wanted service and job placement.

〈Table II-13〉 Current status of designation as the Metropolitan Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

(Unit: Centers)

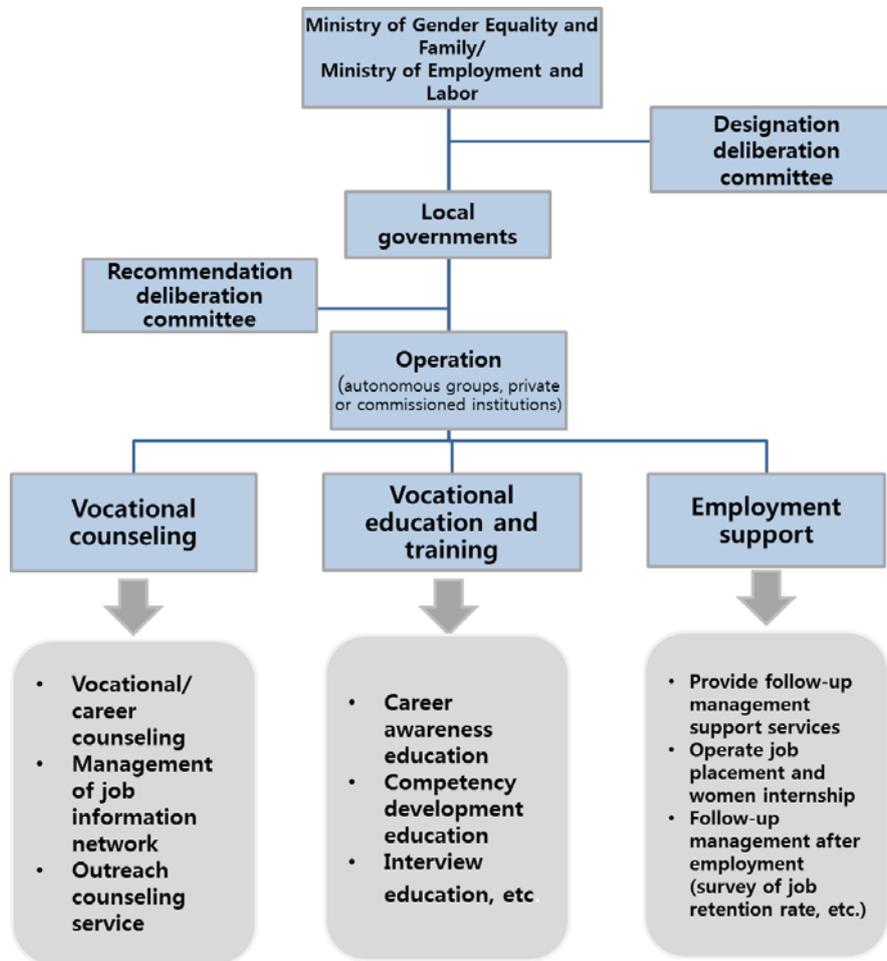
Area	Total	Seoul	Busan	Daegu	In cheon	Gwang ju	Dae jeon	Ulsan	Gyeong gi	Gang won	Chung buk	Chung nam	Jeon buk	Jeon nam	Gyeong buk	Gyeong nam	Jeju	Sejong
Centers	10	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-

Note: As of Dec. 31, 2013.

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013), Annual Report on Women's Policy (Unpublished), p.3.

As mentioned above, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers do not construct new facilities for its centers. Instead, it makes use of existing institutions that provide employment support services for women or that have experience of providing such services. Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers are designated evenly among the areas so as to provide equal employment support services for job-seeking women all across the nation. Regarding the designated centers, the government reviews their business performances and appropriateness of their operation, then provides incentives or cancels the designation (The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family & the Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2013: 13).

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers have a system for implementing its projects as shown in [Figure II-6]. At the central government level, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Ministry of Employment and Labor divide their roles in budgeting and administrative support. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family supports the operating costs for vocational education and training programs, women internship (New Job for Women, immigrant women by marriage), follow-up management support projects (former work-family reconciliation support projects), and outreach employment support services. The Ministry of Employment and Labor supports costs for group counseling and follow-up management after employment. Local governments as well invest their budget on support services for women (The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family & the Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2013: 4).



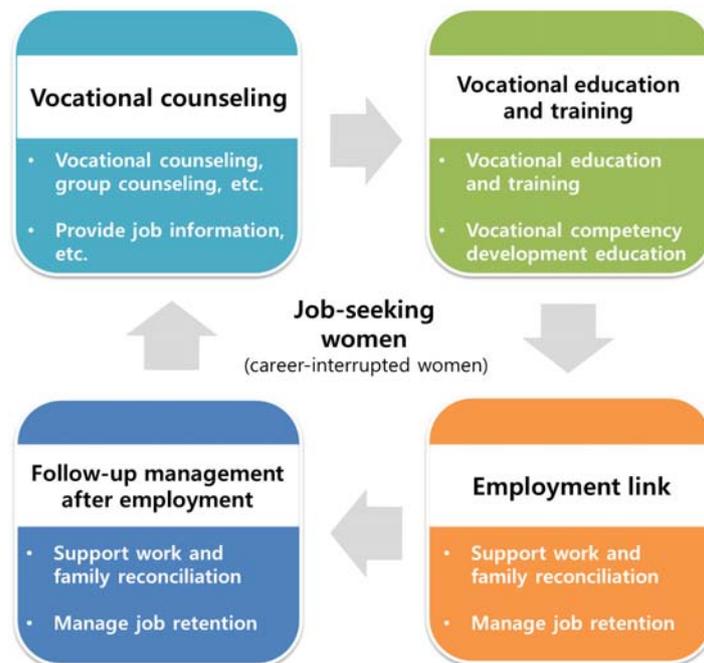
Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family·Ministry of Employment and Labor (2013), The 2013 Operation Guidelines for Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, p.7.

[Figure II -6] System for implementing projects of Career-interrupted Women Supporting

## B. Projects and Programs of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers perform the following projects as shown in [Figure II-7], to support the services in four steps for re-employment

of job-seeking women. These services feature a comprehensive employment support service provided as one-stop service for counseling, training, employment, and follow-up management after employment, taking the characteristics of career-interrupted women into consideration. These services are provided free of charge for all career-interrupted women who have registered at the Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers and who seek jobs for re-employment. This free service originated from policy directions to actively encourage their economic activities by reducing their cost burden through the government's support when they receive assistance for their capability assessment, completion of training, and job placement (Eun-jin Oh & Moo-suk Min, 2012: 62).



Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family & the Ministry of Employment and Labor (2013), The 2013 Operation Guidelines for Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, p.32.

[Figure II -7] Projects of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

The major projects of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers include the following services (The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family & the Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2013). First, the Centers conduct customized vocational counseling according to the individual life cycle of job-seeking women. Vocational counseling is, in principle, one-on-one counseling and if necessary, group counseling is offered to make their life plans, and enhance their self-confidence, image making, and awareness. When providing vocational counseling, the centers assess vocational competencies of job-seeking women and divide them into those who can get a job immediately, those who need to participate in group counseling programs, and those who need vocational education and training in order to connect them to necessary services. For the assessment of vocational competencies, the centers can use the "Online Career Coaching Service" ([www.dream.go.kr](http://www.dream.go.kr)) developed by Gyeonggi Province Women's Development Centers.

Also, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers operate "New Job Women Internship" program to link career-interrupted women to enterprises. This internship is a job adaptation program to support career-interrupted women when they find jobs after having left their workplace for a long time as full-time housewives or for other reasons. The centers identify enterprises in need of recruiting female workforce and then help women registered at the centers find internship at the enterprises. Through this system, the government supports monthly subsidies of 600,000 won per person for the enterprises that hire career-interrupted women or full-time housewives as interns within six months, or for the interns. According to the operation guidelines for Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, the centers should include more than 30% of women from the vulnerable class when linking the New Job Women Internship to enterprises. Here women from the vulnerable class refer to female heads of household, low-income women (minimum livelihood security expenses of 150% or lower), seniors (over 55 years old), women with disabilities, North Korean female refugees, long-term unemployed women over 6 months and women with

more than three children.

In addition, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers provide outreach employment support service. This is to provide active employment link service for career-interrupted women so that they can overcome their fear of re-employment arising from their lack of self-confidence and participate in economic activities. For active employment link of women who lack of career experience and confidence, the centers also offer services accompanied by employment planners, who accompany the women to help their preparation of resumes, interview, and negotiations on working conditions.

For follow-up management of career-interrupted women after their employment, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers also conduct individual counseling for job adaption and give feedback on the result. The centers also implement projects to support a women-friendly corporate environment, to strengthen employment and support job retention, and to alleviate the burdens of housework and child-rearing. In order to support a women-friendly corporate environment, the centers conduct lectures supporting projects for improvement of workplace awareness, or projects to improve facilities where it is good for women to work; ladies restroom, shower stall, lounge, lactation room, and temporary playroom. In this case, the government can support up to 60% of the total operating costs within the limit of maximum four million won per enterprise (business place) when the enterprise establishes facilities dedicated to women in order to facilitate women's job security and employment.

〈Table II -14〉 Main projects of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

Step 1 Vocational counseling and group counseling	Step 2 Vocational education and training	Step 3 Job placement	Step 4 Follow-up management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job-wanted counseling</li> <li>- Help-wanted counseling</li> <li>- Group counseling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support at government expense</li> <li>- Vocational education and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personalized and customized job placement</li> <li>- Accompanied interview</li> <li>- New Job Women Internship</li> <li>- Marriage immigrant women internship</li> <li>- Outreach service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support work-family reconciliation</li> <li>- Support women-friendly enterprises</li> <li>- Follow-up management</li> </ul>

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family & the Ministry of Employment and Labor (2013), Extracted from the 2013 Operation Guidelines for Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers, p.32

〈Table II -15〉 Performances of operating Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers (Employment performances)

(Unit: Persons, %)

Category	Help-wanted	Job-wanted (a)	Employed people					Employment rate (b/a)	
			Sub-total (b)	Contract for un-fixed work period	Contract for un-fixed work period (part-time)	Contract for fixed work period	Contract for fixed work period (part-time)		Startup
2010	148,882	164,294	101,980	48,353(47.4)	-	51,941(50.9)	-	1,686(1.7)	62.1
2011	237,133	187,006	117,370	69,240(59.0)	-	46,554(39.7)	-	1,576(1.3)	62.8
2012	227,924	194,494	122,610	70,747(57.7)	-	50,428(41.1)	-	1,435(1.2)	63.0
2013	233,115	209,530	107,652	68,218(63.4)	5,616(5.2)	22,613(21.0)	10,143(9.4)	1,062(1.0)	51.4

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2014b), Main Statistics on Female Resources, p.20.

When we examined the performances of operating Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers for the recent three years, the centers maintained a relatively good performance. The centers found jobs for approximately 117,000 women in

2011, 123,000 women in 2012 and 108,000 women in 2013, recording the employment rate of 62.8%, 63.0%, and 51.4% for each year. When it comes to the work types of the employed in 2013, contract for un-fixed work period accounted for 63.4% of the total employed people.

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers also perform vocational education and training to raise the possibilities of career-interrupted women's entry to the labor market through vocational competency development and reinforcement of employment competencies. To this end, professional career counselors stationed at Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers conduct counseling and guidance programs suitable for the women. The centers have also operated vocational education and training programs considering the traits of career-interrupted women; their age, education, and career experience. Beginning with 184 courses in 2009, the centers nationwide operated 393 programs in 2010, 309 programs in 2011, 410 programs in 2012, and 680 programs in 2013.

Particularly in 2013, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers newly opened business customized programs to meet the demands from the industrial field. In order to nurture professional women resources in areas where it was difficult for women to enter, the centers opened polytechnical college coop programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and Labor. Also, the centers strived to reflect the demands from the business field by offering new programs, focusing on promising occupation types for employment, including advanced courses (inclusive of on-the-job training) and startup courses (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2013: 4-5).

〈Table II-16〉 Main vocational education and training programs of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

Type		Programs
General program	Business customized courses	Automobile equipment designer training course, history and culture guide, automobile parts assembler, trade expert, marketing practice, etc.
	Professional technique	Web-content design, CAD & modelling, video CG producer, shipbuilding/vessel designer, CNC lathe technician training course, etc.
	Polytechnic college coop programs	Advertisement graphic design, machine CAD& lathe, small-and medium business R&D technical administration, CAM design, etc.
	Promising jobs	Youth career coach, reading psychotherapy, after-school instructor, law clerk, tourist coordinator training course, re-employment course for nurses on leave, etc.
	Advanced course	CAD/CAM operator, solar power industry QC expert, HACCP/food QC course, etc.
	Startup course	Women-friendly cooperative startup, handicraft shop startup course, Korean cake cafe startup course, wall papering craftsman training course, etc.
	Courses for the highly-educated	MICE professional, global education consultant, expressive art therapist, professional interpreter for medical tourism, English play & musical performance planner training course, etc.
Program for the vulnerable	Courses for middle or elderly women	History, eco and culture guide, urban agriculture coordinator, indoor environment total manager, etc.
	Courses for marriage immigrant women	Marriage immigrant women counselor, interpreting and translation assistant, bilingual story-telling instructor, after-school English instructor training course for multicultural moms
	Courses for women with disabilities	Administrative clerk, barista training course
	Course for North Korean refugee women	Barista training course

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013), Annual Report on Women's Policy (Unpublished), p.5.

In 2013, people who received vocational training at Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers totaled 15,031 women, and of them, 13,942 women completed the training courses (completion rate of 92.8%).

〈Table II-17〉 Performances of operating vocational education and training programs of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

(Unit: Persons, %)

Category	Educated people (a)	Current status of completion			
		Sub-total (b)	Completion	Early employment	Completion rate(b/a)
2010	9,256	8,508	8,031	477	91.9
2011	7,084	6,567	6,185	382	92.7
2012	9,140	8,412	7,983	429	92.0
2013	15,031	13,942	13,130	812	92.8

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2014b), Main Statistics on Female Resources, p.21.

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers have operated job experience programs called New Job Women Internship programs for career-interrupted women who have difficulty adjusting to workplace due to long-term interruption of their career and tend to easily quit their jobs. The centers accomplished the following performances of operating the centers in 2013. In particular, 5,189 out of 5,363 women completed the internship programs and continued to work.

〈Table II-18〉 Performances of operating New Job Women Internship programs of Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers

(Unit: Persons, %)

Category	Target to link (a)	Current status of linking New Job Women Internships				Employed people after completing internship			
		Linked (b)	Completed	Dropout	Link rate (b/a)	Sub-total (c)	Employed (d)	Not-employed	Employment rate (d/c)
2010	4,620	4,948	4,308	640	107.1	4,308	3,952	356	91.7
2011	3,300	4,262	3,518	744	129.2	3,518	3,390	128	96.4
2012	4,200	5,363	4,637	726	127.7	4,637	4,415	222	95.2
2013	5,040	6,146	5,363	783	121.9	5,363	5,189	174	96.8

Source: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2014b), Main Statistics on Female Resources, p.21.

### **III. Conclusion :**

## **Achievements and Implications**

Korea had low women's economic activity participation rate compared to other developed countries and interruption of Korean women's career during their pregnancy and childbirth was serious. Therefore, the Korean government stressed the development and use of women's human resources as an important policy agenda. In this background, Korea's education and training institutions for women were established beginning with the Women's Centers. The institutions have ramified and developed to the Women Resources Development Centers and Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers. While the Women's Centers have provided education for women at large and welfare service, the latter institutions have provided professional vocational training and employment support services mostly for career-interrupted women. In the rural areas, the Women Farmers' Centers have provided services with similar functions of the Women's Centers.

As it has put an emphasis on female resources development as an important policy agenda, the government has also placed policy pressure on the Women's Centers to reinforce its vocational education and training functions. In Seoul and other metropolitan cities, the Women's Centers have shifted its functions successfully to this end in some degree. However, there are still a lot of the Women's Centers which function as leisure education institutions, where middle-class women receive leisure or hobby education. Because most of the Women's Centers are directly operated by local governments as bureaucratic organizations, they are slow to accept changes and their operation is lacking in professional quality. Also, opposition from the existing service users of the Women's Centers acts as an obstacle to shift the functions of the centers.

With non-profit private corporations as its main operators, the Women Resources Development Centers have actively adapted to social conditions and developed in response to changing policy demands. However, since the duties related to the development centers were entrusted to local governments, the stability of the operation of the institutions has decreased. Also, other problems

have been pointed out that functions overlap between the Women's Centers and the Women Resources Development Centers in the areas where there are the Women's Centers. Despite all this, the Women Resources Development Centers have positioned itself as unique female resources training institutes while performing the government's vocational training and employment support projects.

Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers are close to projects rather than institutions, which provide one-stop integrated services for re-employment of career-interrupted women based on the Women Resources Development Centers and the Women's Centers. Through its projects, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers have pursued professional and standardized operation of female resources development institutions. Also, by providing high quality integrated services, the center has accomplished great achievements in raising women's employment rate.

In the Korean labor market, there are still very limited opportunities for re-employment of career-interrupted women, so training programs tend to be restricted to areas in high demands for female resources. However, Korea has made ceaseless efforts to develop female resources in areas where few women have entered. Because policies or projects targeting both men and women can hardly take women-specific characteristics into account, vocational competency development projects targeting women only have great significance for female resources development. The government has also prepared various policy alternatives to overcome the social issues of women's career interruption. Its legislation of laws and establishment of the basic plans are some of its most important efforts and achievements. Also, the existence of infrastructure for projects exclusive for women, such as the Women Resources Development Centers and the Women's Centers, works as an important delivery system that enables the government to implement its policies. Also, Career-interrupted Women Supporting Centers offer programs that effectively work in the delivery system. In the final analysis, Korea could achieve its performances of female resources development policies by being equipped with laws, basic plans, institutional infrastructure and programs.

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