



When We Connect Across the Gender Equality Map

By supporting the work of women's and civil society organizations
advancing gender equality, KFW brings people together, fosters dialogue,
and helps shape a more gender-equal future.

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Korea Foundation for Women (KFW)

Introduction

The Korea Foundation for Women (KFW) believes that a society in which everyone enjoys equality and dignity can become a reality only when the voices of women and minorities across diverse social locations are made visible.

Together, the on-the-ground efforts of women's and civil society organizations working toward gender equality form a vast ecosystem that is transforming our society.

This booklet traces the journey of the Gender-Equal Society Development Program, a core program through which the Foundation advances its mission, from 2014 to 2025. By grouping the projects developed and carried out by partner organizations under the program into eight categories, it looks back on the paths of change these organizations have forged and considers the gender-equal world we hope to build.

The booklet is designed to offer a comprehensive overview of the work and significance of the Gender-Equal Society Development Program. It also serves as a guide for the Foundation's partner organizations and donors, who are equally important partners in this work.

Thank you.

June 2026

Korea Foundation for Women

* This booklet is a supplementary volume to the report *A Study on the Outcomes and Future Development of KFW's Gender-Equal Society Development Program (2014-2025)*. It draws on final reports submitted by organizations on individual projects supported under the program, the Foundation's annual reports on the program, and findings from in-depth interviews with activists from participating organizations.

What Is the Gender–Equal Society Development Program?

“A core mission program of KFW that supports women’s efforts to create a society in which women and other socially marginalized people are free from discrimination based on gender, race, class, age, or other factors—and, ultimately, to build a society grounded in care.”

—2013 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program

“A core mission program of KFW that supports the women’s movement until the day when ‘the women’s movement is no longer needed.’”

—2011 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program

“KFW’s Gender–Equal Society Development Program can be seen as more than the sum of its funding allocations: it has built a ‘change infrastructure’ for the feminist movement in Korea. This infrastructure serves as a channel through which emerging agendas gain public recognition, fertile ground for nurturing new movement actors, and a node linking one field to another, one generation to the next, and the local to the global.”

—A Study on the Outcomes and Future Development of KFW’s Gender–Equal Society Development Program (2014–2025)

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Reframing Practice: Records of the Changes We Made Together

This chapter presents a record of the work carried out by organizations supported by KFW through the Gender–Equal Society Development Program from 2014 to 2025, organized into eight categories. The cases presented here draw on final reports submitted by organizations on projects supported under the program, the Foundation’s annual reports on the program, and in–depth interviews with activists. Rather than presenting a simple inventory of projects, this chapter seeks to trace the changes accumulated on the ground by reading them as part of several broader currents. In doing so, it brings together and makes visible the changes that organizations have created in their own contexts, revealing how deeply and widely those changes have taken root in our society.

The achievements of the gender equality movement are not the product of any single project. Calls raised in public squares lead to institutional reform, efforts to reshape language alter the contours of public discourse, and small local gatherings grow into nationwide solidarity. Such change emerges through the intersecting and cumulative efforts of many organizations. The eight categories therefore do not represent separate or self–contained fields. They continually overlap and connect, and through these intersections have formed the ecosystem of the women’s movement.

The eight categories are neither an administrative framework for classifying projects nor rigid academic divisions. Rather, they offer a language for tracing the pathways through which change takes shape. Agenda setting; the expansion and subversion of gender discourse; the incubation of new and next–generation activists; new languages through culture, arts, media, and sports; intersectionality; the local and the global; activist

capacity— building; and documentation and archiving—these eight categories serve as indicators of the diverse ways in which the gender equality movement has transformed society beyond rallies and declarations.

The moment an activist records their own experience; the moment the voice of a marginalized group first gains a language in public discourse; the moment a small local gathering and the voices of its participants are recognized as part of the movement—this chapter is a collective record of such moments. Through them, it seeks to reflect on the role that the Gender–Equal Society Development Program has played as a ‘change infrastructure’ for the feminist movement in Korea.

1. Agenda Setting: Bringing Issues onto the Public Agenda

1) The #MeToo Movement: From Personal Experience to Collective Language

In 2018, when the #MeToo movement swept across Korean society, the Foundation's Gender–Equal Society Development Program served as a hub for transforming the anger and courage of individuals across the country into an “organized social force.” The central achievement of the projects supported during this period lay not merely in amplifying survivors' disclosures, but in turning #MeToo into a public agenda—one that exposed structural problems and demanded institutional solutions.

(1) The Public Square in 2018 and the “#MeToo Grantmaking Program”

As the #MeToo moment gained momentum in 2018, the Foundation provided office space on the first floor of its building to Citizen Action in Support of the #MeToo Movement (“Citizen Action”). Citizen Action set up an emergency coordination office by dispatching one activist from each of six organizations, held daily issue briefings to journalists, and organized weekly rallies. Through its grants on demand, the Foundation also helped ensure that the movement in the public square continued.

With support from grants on demand, the “2,018–minute Marathon #MeToo Speak–Out” kept survivors speaking throughout the night in the public square. It became a space that reframed how Korean society understood sexual violence and brought wider recognition that sexual violence is both an individual experience of harm and a product of structural inequality. The “Rally to End Sex Discrimination and Sexual Violence” consolidated this momentum into collective demands for institutional change, while “#MeToo Performance: Words That Shatter the World” highlighted the inseparable relationship between structures of sexual exploitation and sexual violence.

“I do not think I will ever forget this seemingly endless night, when we cried and laughed together and kept speaking the same words until the very end. Together, we will fight the world. We may each feel that we are walking a lonely path, but we must remember that we are not alone. Knowing that we stand together for gender equality makes me stronger.”

(Participant in the “2,018–Minute Marathon Speak–Out”, *2018 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

The activism unfolding in public squares was not confined to the Seoul metropolitan area. In 2018, Jeonbuk Women's Associations United swiftly mobilized in the public square through its grants on demand project, "Beyond #MeToo, Toward #WithYou: Building a Gender-Equal Society." In Gyeongnam, a focal point in the cases involving Prosecutor Seo Ji-hyeon and Lee Youn-taek, Gyeongnam Women's Associations United formed a regional #MeToo coalition and called for changes in the justice and educational systems. In Busan, BRIDGE's next-generation activists joined campus #MeToo rallies and the Busan #MeToo rally in solidarity, broadening the movement's base across regional and generational lines. These efforts helped ensure that the #MeToo movement became not simply a story of Seoul, but a story shared across the country.

"I think I shouted even louder because I wanted people to know that that so many people, so many women, were standing together for #MeToo, and that you, too, could join us. Some people on the street looked at us curiously, and others gave us disapproving looks, but some applauded and cheered us on. As the march continued, many more people joined us, and by the time we returned to where we had started, there were far more people with us than at the beginning." ([Participant in "The World #MeToo Will Change—Let's Build It Together," 2018 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

The Foundation also raised emergency funds and launched the "#MeToo Grantmaking Program" to support a range of activities aimed at sustaining the momentum of the #MeToo movement. Five projects were selected for support: the Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center's "Survivor Kit: A Project to Help Sexual Violence Survivors Reclaim Everyday Life"; the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea's "Migrant Women's MeToo: Strengthening Sexual Violence Prevention and Support for Survivors"; Incheon WomenLink's "Our Courage Can Change Schools: Intensive School #MeToo Workshops for Teenage Girls in Incheon and the Production of a Guidebook"; Jeonbuk Women's Associations United's "An Unending Call for a Gender-Equal Society: 'We Are Changing' in Action"; and the Daegu Migrant Women's Human Rights Center's "Bium: An Outreach Counseling Center for Migrant Women to Prevent Sexual Violence and Strengthen the #MeToo Movement." Together, these grants enabled the organizations to carry out strong, sustained action at the height of the #MeToo movement.

(2) The #MeToo Movement from 2019 Onward

In 2019, the Ulsan Feminist Planning Group, supported through the Foundation's next-generation grantmaking track, launched the region's first organized response to School #MeToo. Its efforts prompted the superintendent of education to publicly address the issue at an event organized by the group. The Daegu Women's Film Festival and the Women's Human Rights Film Festival hosted by Korea Women's Hot-Line extended the momentum of the #MeToo movement into cultural forums for public dialogue and helped shape broader public discourse. The Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center documented the history of the anti-sexual violence activism on film, linking the new generation of activists who emerged after #MeToo to the longer history of the women's movement against gender-based violence.

Youth Feminist Group, the predecessor to Youth Feminist Network Witty, reframed School #MeToo—which risked being reduced to sensational coverage—as a “movement for gender equality in schools,” redirecting its focus toward more fundamental structural reform. By gathering input from 339 citizens and submitting a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the group demonstrated that young people are not merely recipients of support and protection, but political agents capable of directly influencing the international community. Among the outcomes were UN recommendations calling on the Government of the Republic of Korea abolish the national sexuality education standards and introduce comprehensive sexuality education, among other measures.

“In 2016, around the time when feminists in their twenties and thirties were emerging as a visible social force in the wake of the Gangnam Station misogynistic murder case, I think some of us youth feminists came together because we were grappling with similar questions. We identified as feminists, but at the same time felt somewhat out of step within mainstream feminist discourse. We kept questioning those boundaries and exploring where youth rights and feminism intersect. Through School #MeToo, we met many more youth feminist peers with a wider range of experiences, and we formed the organization in the hope of building a sustainable youth feminist movement.”¹⁾

Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the spirit of #MeToo led to reflection within the movement itself. At the 3rd Feminist Theater Festival, Femi Theater did not conceal an incident involving an abuse of power that occurred during the festival. Instead, it conducted a transparent investigation and publicly disclosed its findings, setting a positive example for how cases of sexual violence in the arts and culture sector can be addressed. This showed that #MeToo had deepened beyond the act of speaking out against external perpetrators into a practice of transforming community culture. Munhwa Gihoek Dal, a feminist cultural organization also invited poet Choi Young-mi, who had been marginalized in the aftermath of the literary #MeToo movement, creating an opportunity for local women to express their solidarity and support.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2018	Korean Women's Associations United	2,018-Minute Marathon Speak-Out to End the Era of Gender Discrimination and Sexual Violence
2018	Korea Women's Hot-Line	Rally to End Gender Discrimination and Sexual Violence: "Let's Build a New World with #MeToo"
2018	Jeonbuk Women's Associations United	Beyond #MeToo and Toward #WithYou: Building a Gender-Equal Society
2018	Gyeongnam Women's Associations United	Gyeongnam Femi! Let's Meet! (Encountering Strong, Everyday Feminism)
2018	BRIDGE	Special mission, find your sister!
2018	Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center	"Survivor Kit": A Project to Help Sexual Violence Survivors Reclaim Everyday Life
2018	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Migrant Women's #MeToo: Strengthening Sexual Violence Prevention and Support for Survivors
2018	Incheon WomenLink	Our Courage Can Change Schools: Intensive School #MeToo Workshops for Teenage Girls in Incheon and the Production of a Guidebook
2018	Jeonbuk Women's Associations United	A Continuing Call for a Gender-Equal Society: "We Are Changing" in Action
2018	Daegu Migrant Women's Human Rights Center	Bium, an Outreach Counseling Center for Migrant Women: Preventing Sexual Violence and Promoting the #MeToo Movement
2019	Ulsan Feminist Planning Group	School #MeToo Booster: "Breaking Down the Walls"
2019	Daegu Women's Film Festival	Encountering Women through Film
2019	Korea Women's Hot-Line	Distributing Films on Women's Human Rights and Training Women Professionals in the Cultural Sector to Promote Gender Equality Awareness

1) Interview with an Activist, February 2026

Year	Organization	Project Title
2019	Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center	Feminist Talk Show “Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis”: Toward a Synthesis of Feminist Movements Across Generations
2019	Youth Feminism Group	School #MeToo Changes Schools
2020	Femi Theater	The 3rd Feminist Theater Festival
2020	Munhwa Gihoek Dal	Feminist Culture Salon “Riding the Wolf”

2) Digital Sex Crimes: From Correct Naming to Social Regulation

Efforts to place digital sex crimes on the public agenda began in 2017 with a campaign calling for a change in the social language used to describe them. The Foundation’s Gender–Equal Society Development Program began by giving an accurate name to the violence taking place in digital spaces, and its support gradually evolved toward dismantling the industrial structures that enable such violence and proactively responding to emerging technology–facilitated crimes.

(1) Shifting the Language: From “Revenge Porn” to “Digital Sex Crimes”

In 2017, DSO (Digital Sexual Crime Out) launched the “Digital Sex Crimes Out: New Language Project,” which, at first glance, appeared to be a simple exercise in replacing terms: changing “hidden–camera filming” to “sexual assault,” “revenge porn” to “digital sex crimes” or “distribution–based sexual assault,” and “mere viewing” to “viewing–based rape.” Yet this shift in language was not merely a matter of replacing one term with another. By redefining acts that had been tolerated as entertainment or voyeurism in the language of sexual violence, the project marked an epistemic shift—one that made the structures of abuse visible and enabled society to recognize the gravity of the harm experienced by victims and survivors.

“I was struck by the fact that after the card–news posts were uploaded, I saw people responding sensitively to new issues, while media outlets also began covering them quickly. In the past, when we were active on such matters, I remember that it was difficult to get media coverage unless we contacted news outlets directly and sent them a request asking them to report on the issue. Recently, I have felt that society has truly changed a great deal.” (DSO, *2017 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

In the same year, DSO took this shift in language into the realm of public action by filing a joint criminal complaint against around ten heavy uploaders who had distributed large volumes of sexually exploitative videos on domestic webhard platforms. It also publicly criticized the police for their inadequate response to the cases, making clear that digital sex crimes are not private matters between individuals, but crimes that investigative authorities have a responsibility to address.

In 2018, the Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center sought to build global networks for transnational collective action through its project, “Building an International Solidarity Process to Support Victims and Survivors of Cyber Sexual Violence.” This was based on the understanding that, given the online nature of digital sex crimes, such violence cannot be adequately addressed through regulation within a single country alone. The initiative was an active response to the government’s complacent position that regulation was impossible simply because the relevant servers were located overseas.

Between 2020 and 2021, UnivFemi brought into public discourse the secondary victimization of survivors related to the “Nth Room” case and hate speech targeting those who had spoken out through #MeToo on Everytime, an online community widely used by university students. Through press conferences and subway advertisements, the group called on the platform to take ethical responsibility, and these efforts led to a concrete administrative response: a recommendation by the Korea Communications Standards Commission to strengthen self-regulation. This marked the beginning of public discussion of hate speech in digital spaces as an issue subject to official regulation.

“I remember the press conference held in front of the headquarters of Everytime, the university online community where secondary victimization of survivors of the “Nth Room” case and misogynistic posts were pouring in, in place of the April Witch March. 36 organizations co-hosted the press conference, and another 45 signed on in support of our demands. I also remember many moments from the monthly seminars, which were small enough for us to sit together and share our concerns alongside the stories we encountered in the books we read. During our most recent series of roundtables across the country, we were warmly welcomed by university feminists who were struggling with similar concerns and fighting in their own spaces. Through these experiences, we learned that even when networking itself is the goal, a well-developed project plan is essential.”
(UnivFemi, *2020 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

(2) Proactive Responses to Technological Advances

Digital sex crimes have evolved alongside technology. The Foundation's grantmaking kept pace with these changes and responded proactively. In 2021, Korean Womenlink analyzed the gender-discriminatory structures embedded in AI technology and developed Korea's first "Feminist AI Guidelines." Comprising 15 keywords and 52 items, the guidelines declared that AI is not the exclusive domain of those who create it and that users' rights must also be guaranteed.

In 2025, the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea conducted field research that revealed how online information facilitating sexual and racial exploitation by Korean men was helping to organize offline structures of sexual exploitation in Vietnam. By demonstrating that digital sex crimes constitute a form of structural violence that crosses national borders, the research laid the groundwork for coordinated international responses.

(3) Expanding Education and Monitoring: Addressing the Blind Spots

Anyang Sharing Women's Association in 2018 and Wonju Womenlink in 2021, developed preventive education materials reflecting how children and adolescents actually use media and distributed them to schools. In 2023, Daegu Women with Disabilities United provided women with developmental disabilities with education on identifying online grooming and digital sex crimes, empowering those who had long been overlooked by prevention efforts to better protect themselves.

In 2024, Chuncheon Womenlink's monitoring of trials involving digital sexual exploitation presented a new model of practice in which citizens directly oversee the process of holding perpetrators accountable. In 2025, the Women Director's Network produced *Jaemin*, an animation raising awareness of the seriousness of deepfake sex crimes. Depicting how an adolescent goes from perpetrator to victim, the work opened up new possibilities for preventive education by addressing deepfakes not through warnings from adults, but in the language of peers.

“This year has brought a lot of good news—from the selection of “Nth Room isn’t over — Solidarity for a Digital Sexual Violence Watch” for KFW’s Gender–Equal Society Development Program to receiving the Voice of the Year Award at the Seoul International Women’s Film Festival. I am pleased that the significance and importance of this sexual violence trial monitoring project—which began organically among local citizens several years ago, when the Nth Room case created a sense of social urgency—have been recognized.”(Chuncheon Womenlink, 2024 *Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2017	DSO (Digital Sexualcrime Out)	Digital Sex Crimes Out: Raising Awareness and Working to Eradicate Digital Sex Crimes
2018	Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center	Building an International Solidarity Process to Support Victims and Survivors of Cyber Sexual Violence
2018	Anyang Sharing Women’s Association	Developing Target–Specific Lesson Plans and Awareness–Raising Content for Digital Sexual Violence Prevention Education
2020	UnivFemi	Networking for University Feminists in Their 20s and 30s
2021	UnivFemi	2021 University Feminist Networking
2021	Korean Womenlink	Does AI Know What Sexism Is?
2021	Wonju Womenlink	Digital Sexual Violence: A World Where It Could Happen to “Anyone,” but Should Happen to “No One”
2023	Daegu Women with Disabilities United	“I Want to Love, Too”: Accompanying Women with Developmental Disabilities Toward Safe Sexuality and Love
2024	Chuncheon Womenlink	Nth Room Isn’t Over — Solidarity for a Digital Sexual Violence Watch
2025	Women Director’s Network	Video Production Project by Next–Generation Women Directors Responding to Digital Sexual Violence
2025	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Field Research on Cross–Border Online Sexual and Racial Exploitation and Rape Culture

3) Reproductive Rights: From an Instrument of the State to Women’s Rights

The significance of this period lies in the shift in public debate over pregnancy termination away from the unproductive binary of “women’s right to self–determination versus the fetus’s right to life” and toward and toward a framework of “reproductive rights” encompassing the entire life course, including sexuality education, contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, childrearing,

and menopause This was not merely a movement to decriminalize abortion, but a paradigm shift that reclaimed women's bodies—long treated by the state as instruments of population policy—as a domain of rights and bodily autonomy.

(1) Beyond Abortion Decriminalization: Ensuring Reproductive Rights

In 2018, Korean Women's Associations United began developing legislative measures to address the legal and institutional gaps that would follow the decriminalization of abortion. The core of this effort was to reshape the terrain of debate. The existing framework, which pitted a woman's right to choose against a fetus's right to life, placed women in a defensive position. The Foundation's grantmaking programs sought to dismantle this framework and rearticulate reproduction in the language of fundamental rights encompassing liberty, equality, and social rights. The right to contraception, the right to terminate a pregnancy, the right to continue a pregnancy, the right to give birth safely, and the right to receive support for childrearing were all understood as part of a single framework of rights.

"Although I had long regarded abortion decriminalization as a longstanding agenda of the women's movement and as something that was self-evidently necessary, approaching it in connection with the broader concept of reproductive rights—as a matter of guaranteeing fundamental rights—was a process of persuading myself before persuading the public. I also came to realize that the expectation that the movement goal of abortion decriminalization would naturally lead to the advancement of women's human rights was overly complacent or vague. Reproductive rights include not only the right to terminate a pregnancy, but also rights related to contraception, continuing a pregnancy, childbirth, and childrearing. These rights can be fully guaranteed only through changes not only in perceptions of sexuality and reproduction, but also in laws and social institutions as a whole. The task force discussions with experts from various fields helped give concrete shape to these concerns and issues, while also making the weight of the phrase 'securing reproductive rights' in the project title feel increasingly heavy."

(Korean Women's Associations United, 2018 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

In 2020, Feminist Journal Ilda quickly articulated a critical response to the government's proposed amendments to the Criminal Act and the Mother and Child Health Act concerning abortion. By emphasizing that the state's responsibility was not to "revive the abortion ban" but to "ensure

reproductive rights,” this work brought into public discourse the principle that women’s voices must continue to shape the legislative process.

In 2025, the Korean Women’s Environmental Network’s “Public Forum on Menopause Care” expanded the discussion of reproductive rights across the entire life course. Menopause had long been discussed in the language of aging or loss. Through a large-scale survey, the project identified the social care needs and policy gaps surrounding menopause and called for menopause to be understood not as a set of symptoms that individuals must endure alone, but as an issue that communities should discuss together. By spreading a culture of celebrating and openly sharing experiences of menopause through the “Menopause Party,” the project helped create a cultural foundation for women to embrace changes in their life course not as sources of shame or loss, but as a positive transition.

(2) Reproductive Rights at the Intersection: The Voices of Women with Disabilities

One of the first projects to pose a fundamental question in discussions of reproductive rights was Empathy for Women with Disabilities’ 2015 project, “Creating a New Paradigm for the Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities.” The project sought to “center the voices” that had been most marginalized in reproductive rights discussions. The pregnancy and childbirth of women with disabilities had long been treated as matters subject to state intervention and control, framed through eugenic perspectives and protection-oriented approaches.

The project directly challenged this structure. It called into question the state’s efforts to control the reproduction of people with disabilities in pursuit of “health” and “normality” and through the lens of “bodily utility.” It also affirmed women with disabilities as autonomous decision-makers and negotiators in matters concerning their own bodies and health.

In doing so, the project made clear that reproductive rights discourse must not be centered solely on the experiences of non-disabled women. By making visible how reproductive rights had been doubly denied at the intersection of disability and gender, the project significantly broadened the scope of Korea’s reproductive rights movement.

“In the case of the project ‘Creating a New Paradigm for the Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities,’ considerable effort went into inviting organizations to take part in the discussions. At the time, we could only anticipate in abstract terms where tensions might arise between the women’s movement and the disability rights movement in relation to reproductive rights, and it was difficult to approach individual organizations in each movement and ask them to participate. During the outreach process, we often received responses such as, ‘It is still difficult to talk about this,’ or ‘We are not ready yet.’ At the same time, however, some people made the effort to attend the forum, saying that ‘Even if it is difficult, the very act of talking about it is itself a significant step.’ Through this process, we were able to lay the groundwork for conversations on reproductive rights.” ([Empathy for Women with Disabilities, 2015 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program](#))

(3) The Stark Reality of Population Policy: Reinterpreting Infertility Support Through a Gender Lens

In 2019, through its monitoring of infertility support policies, Korean Womenlink raised an uncomfortable question: Is the state’s support for infertility treatment intended to protect women’s right to health, or is it a form of population policy aimed at increasing the birth rate? The findings pointed more toward the latter. The harms and side effects that assisted reproductive technologies can have on women’s bodies were being systematically overlooked in policy discussions, while eligibility for support was limited to the so-called “normal family” centered on marriage.

The project raised concerns that infertility support was designed not to guarantee women a diverse range of life choices, but to reinforce a particular form of family. In other words, the very way the state provides support reflects a view of women’s bodies as instruments of reproduction.

(4) Taking Ownership of Our Bodies: Bodily Sovereignty and Self–Care

In 2020, the Korean Women’s Environmental Network used a survey on women’s experiences with feminine hygiene products to critically examine the commercialized view of women’s bodies. The feminine hygiene industry, represented by products such as feminine cleansers, defines women’s bodies

as objects in constant need of cleansing and correction. The project challenged that view, redefining women's bodies not as "objects to be kept clean and maintained" but as "an intimate realm for self-directed care"

"Commercial advertisements telling us how our bodies should look to others are everywhere, yet the information we truly need—specific and accurate knowledge about our bodies—is always lacking. [...] We need accurate information about our own bodies. Only with reliable information can we avoid being misled by false advertising. Let us work together to dismantle the prejudices that make women's bodies seem like 'objects to be managed.'" ([Korean Women's Environmental Network, 2020 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2018, Feminist Journal Ilda's documentation project on sexuality expanded this redefinition into a broader context. By recording the voices of women who chose "not to become mothers" and migrant women who insisted that they should not be treated as instruments of childbirth, the project made visible a range of reproductive choices beyond heteronormative and marriage-centered norms. In the language of lived experience, these records showed that reproductive rights encompass not only the right to give birth, but also the right not to give birth and the right to make decisions about one's own body.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Creating a New Paradigm for the Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities
2018	Korean Women's Associations United	Expanding Discourse and Developing Legislative Measures to Secure Reproductive Rights
2018	Feminist Journal Ilda	Expanding the Discourse on Women's Sexuality
2019	Korean Womenlink	Reclaiming Women's Rights "at Risk" amid the the "Low Birthrate Crisis" Discourse: An Analysis of Infertility Support Policies and Policy Alternatives
2020	Korean Women's Environmental Network	Transforming Perceptions of the Body through a Survey on Women's Experiences with Feminine Hygiene Products and an Analysis of Product Ingredients
2020	Feminist Journal Ilda	Women's History Unearthed by Women Researchers and Narratives Created by Feminist Artists
2025	Korean Women's Environmental Network	Public Forum on Menopause Care

4) Women's Labor: Documenting Discrimination and Changing Institutions

The achievements of projects related to women's labor have grown out of frontline counseling and support, extending into policy advocacy for legal and institutional reform and the documentation and archiving of discrimination. In doing so, they have broadened the horizons of Korea's women's labor movement. The workplace has been one of the most immediate and everyday fronts in the struggle for gender equality, and these projects remained firmly engaged on that front.

(1) From Hiring Practices to Organizational Culture

In 2016, Korean Womenlink secured commitments from 82 organizations and groups to adopt "résumés without photos" in order to address appearance-based discrimination in hiring. Through in-depth interviews, the project documented the appearance standards women face in the job-seeking process and the reality of being treated as decorative "flowers," turning hiring practices—one of the most everyday sites where discrimination is reproduced—into a feminist agenda. In the same year, the Korean Women Workers Association analyzed how the minimum wage was intertwined with the low-wage structure affecting women workers, helping to broaden public discussion on closing the gender wage gap.

"Many parts of the project required the participation of expert researchers, including the 'Solidarity Workshop to Plan Activities for Raising the Minimum Wage from a Gender Perspective,' the 'Forum on the Minimum Wage from a Gender Perspective,' and the 'Fact-Finding Study on Women Workers Earning Minimum Wage.' However, it was extremely difficult to find researchers who could give presentations or conduct research on the combined subject of gender and the minimum wage. We searched through personal networks, asking professors and researchers at research institutes with whom we had connections, and also looked up researchers on the websites of relevant institutes, reaching out to them directly by email and phone. In the process, we built valuable relationships with researchers and agreed to remain in contact and explore future projects together. Gaining these new collaborators was itself a major achievement for those of us working on the project." ([Korean Women Workers Association, 2016 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2021, Okee Salon, Life Culture Research Institute reinterpreted the work of care workers not as a “service,” but as a “civic practice,” bringing the social value of care work into public discussion. In 2022, Korean Women’s Associations United used in-depth interviews to reveal how discrimination faced by women workers intersects with disability, migration status, age, and other factors, and proposed directions for labor policy aimed at structural reform rather than individual remedies.

In 2024, the Seoul Women Workers Association developed model rules of employment for gender equality that explicitly set out measures to prevent workplace sexual harassment and protect victims. The association distributed the model to workplaces and proposed that it be incorporated into the Ministry of Employment and Labor’s standard rule of employment. Rather than waiting for the law to change, the project created a practical tool that workplaces could put into practice immediately.

(2) Precarious Women’s Labor and Bringing Occupational Injuries into Public Discourse

In 2014, Feminist Journal Ilda documented the lives and labor of 30 young women struggling in a precarious labor market, bringing the issues of “passion labor” and “organizational hierarchies” into public discussion. From 2018 to 2019, Zoomanett, a women’s arts community, conducted workshops that reinterpreted invisible forms of labor, including domestic and care work, as well as experiences of part-time work, through “work chronologies.” The experience, through which women affirmed their “working selves” and restored a sense of self-worth, showed that documenting labor can also become a form of healing.

In 2025, SHARPS (Supporters for the Health And Rights of People in the Semiconductor Industry) documented occupational diseases in the electronics industry from a gender perspective by interviewing 15 victims and bereaved family members. This work gave voice, in the words of those directly affected, to how women workers’ bodies had been treated as expendable resources by industry.

In 2019, the Changwon Women's Association trained specialized instructors in gender equality education for workers and delivered "a workplace outreach program on gender equality" at 15 workplaces, challenging the male-dominated culture of labor unions. In 2021, YemunGong, an arts planning organization, brought the social status of women artists and their experiences of gender discrimination into public discussion through a relay talk series. In 2025, the Feminist Designer Social Club sought to address power imbalances within the industry through feminist mentoring for aspiring women designers.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Feminist Journal Ilda	Documenting the Labor and Identity of Women in Their 20s
2016	Korean Womenlink	"A Society Exhausted by Appearance Obsession: Change Beginning with Résumés without Photos" (tentative title)
2016	Korean Women Workers Association	Exploring Strategies for Advancing the Minimum Wage Movement from a Gender Perspective
2018	Zoomanett	Co-Creating Alternative Résumés: Recovering and Documenting Women's Work Experiences
2019	Zoomanett	Co-Creating Alternative Résumés 2: Documenting and Sharing Women's Work Experiences
2019	Changwon Women's Association	Connecting Gender Equality and Labor
2021	Okee Salon, Life Culture Research Institute	Going Through Disasters and Gendered Care Crises:
2021	YemunGong	Female Artists "On Air"
2022	Korean Women's Associations United	Stories of Gender-Equal Workplaces Built Together Through Differences and Common Ground
2024	Seoul Women Workers Association	Delivering Tailored Assistance to Workplace Sexual Harassment Victims and Working to Institutionalize Gender-Equal Employment Rule
2025	SHARPS	Activities and Documentation to Secure the Right to Health of Women Workers in the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries
2025	Feminist Designer Social Club	2025 FDSC Mentoring for Aspiring and Early-Career Designers
2025	Korean Women Workers Association	30 Years of the Equality Hotline: Structural Sex Discrimination and Women Workers' Responses

2. Expanding and Subverting Gender Discourse: Challenging Dominant Narratives

1) Sexuality: From Taboo to Rights

The most fundamental achievement of sexuality-related projects during this period was that they brought sexuality out of the realm of the private, the dangerous, and the unspeakable, and repositioned it within a public language of rights. Who is allowed to have desire? Which bodies are recognized as normal? Whose relationships can be called love? These projects drew such questions out of the realm of taboo and turned them into public discussion, demonstrating that “the personal is political.”

(1) Documenting Existence: Bringing Marginalized Identities into Public View

In 2015, LEZPA, a queer-oriented radio and podcast platform, built networks among queer women living in cities and supported them in expressing their own stories through media such as video, photography, and radio. Simply existing, and documenting that existence on their own terms, was itself a form of activism. From 2016 to 2017, UNNInetwork, a feminist cultural movement organization, published *Queer Feminist Magazine FeRM*, bringing together queer and feminist perspectives and creating an alternative media platform for sharing queer feminist identities.

In 2018, Feminist Journal Ilda carried this work further. The project documented the sexualities of 20 women ranging in age from their teens to their 60s, bringing into public discussion identities, relationships, and practices that had long been obscured by ignorance, including homosexuality, non-marriage, BDSM, intersex experiences, drag performance, and polyamory. In particular, the rare documentation of an intersex person's experience in Korea drew social attention to bodily violence and forced surgeries. What these records demonstrated was not simply the existence of diversity. Rather, they revealed that the very boundary between what is deemed normal and abnormal is itself a product of power.

“More than with any other topic, it was difficult to find people willing to document and speak about sexuality. This showed us how, for women, discourse on sexuality had been walled off by barriers so thick they felt almost like the walls of a prison. We drew great strength from participants who told us that, through Feminist Journal Ilda’s project, they felt empowered by being able to speak about experiences they had previously had nowhere to share.” (*Feminist Journal Ilda, 2018 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

(2) The Language of Desire: Sex Education That Breaks Taboos

In 2017, Flaming Feminist Action’s “Unnis’ Sex Education” turned the logic of conventional sex education on its head. Whereas conventional sex education, structured around risk and prevention, taught women to fear sex, this program offered women in their 20s the opportunity to observe their own bodies and explore their sexual desires on their own terms. Its most groundbreaking message was that women can be agents of their own desire.

“At first, it began simply with endless questions about, and resistance to, conventional sex education. If it is education about sexual ‘relations,’ why is there no education about ‘relations’? Why are sperm depicted as active and eggs as passive? How is any of this supposed to help society? Out of these questions, feminist sex education began. From the outset, however, we faced many difficulties. Our original venue, OOO University, refused to allow us to rent a classroom, and just one day before the program was scheduled to begin, OO University also denied our request. We were exhausted and angry from hearing terms such as ‘contraception solves everything’ and ‘free sex,’ but at that moment we felt completely at a loss. After scrambling back and forth among OOO University, OO Women’s University, and OO University, we somehow managed to secure a classroom. Realizing that perceptions of feminism were still at this level only made us more determined.”(*Flaming Feminist Action, 2017 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2022, the Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center’s “Affirmative Consent” campaign carried this momentum into institutional discourse. By seeking to shift the standard for determining sexual violence from “whether the victim resisted” to “whether consent was given,” the campaign moved beyond a framework centered on whether a woman had said—or been able to say—“no.” Instead, it proposed a new sexual norm requiring a clear “yes.” Disseminated through forms that could be practiced in everyday life, including

an online game and toolkit, the campaign sought to make sexual self-determination not an abstract right, but an everyday right and a concrete everyday practice. It also helped advance efforts to change the statutory definition of rape under current law from “violence or intimidation” to the presence or absence of consent.

“What I think will stay with me for a long time is that I was able to talk about ‘affirmative consent’ with a wide range of people from different regions, age groups, and communities. The ‘Affirmative Consent Outreach Education’ program was a valuable opportunity to reflect on and share with many others the rich language around consent. In particular, as a workshop facilitator, hearing participants speak vividly about how consent is practiced in their everyday and sexual actions will serve as an important resource for future activities. The ‘Customized Workshops’ were especially meaningful because, in a context where many people either know little about consent or misunderstand it as a one-time, one-sided act, they allowed participants to experience ‘affirmative consent’ firsthand through well-designed dialogue, play, and embodied movement.” ([Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, 2022 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2023, Daegu Women with Disabilities United centered the voices of women with developmental disabilities, who had been among the most marginalized in sexuality discourse. The project affirmed that women with developmental disabilities—long treated as asexual—have the right to love and experience desire. By connecting this affirmation with grooming prevention education designed to protect that right, the project demonstrated in concrete terms that sexual rights must apply to everyone.

“All of the women with developmental disabilities who participated in this project were in their 20s. While the quality of the project itself was important, the opportunity for them to interact with one another and be together resonated deeply. While the peer gatherings continued, their exposure to online digital sex crimes and dating violence decreased markedly. We came to see that, while sexuality and romantic relationships—whether with men or women—are important, friendship and solidarity are also deeply important for them. Many participants shared how happy they were to meet one another, how sad to part, and how much they hoped to have another opportunity like this. This made the project deeply rewarding and moving.” ([Daegu Women with Disabilities United, 2023 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

(3) Reimagining Relationships: Beyond Heteronormativity

From 2020 to 2021, Doing Social Cooperative created spaces where women living outside heteronormative relationship scripts could imagine new forms of relationships and build connections with one another through lectures and workshops exploring the themes of “de-centering romance,” “non-marriage,” and “community.”

“Although the five-week program has ended, it was truly comforting to meet peers who shared similar interests and values, and I felt a sense of being ‘connected.’ I was also comforted by the realization that there was nothing wrong with me, and I gained the courage to stand up to an unjust reality. It was a time filled with hope—the hope that, by coming together as ‘we,’ we could create small but meaningful changes in things that would have been difficult to face ‘alone.’”(Feedback from a participant in a Doing Social Cooperative program, 2020 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

(4) At the Strongholds of Oppression: Youth and Religion

Cracks began to appear even in youth and religion, two areas where sexuality had been most heavily constrained. In 2015, Gofeminist, a feminist research organization, and in 2021, Youth Feminist Network Witty, challenged the condemnation of young people’s sexual lives and reframed youth sexuality as a matter of human rights. In 2020, amid repeated failures to enact an anti-discrimination law, Seoul YWCA produced content telling the stories of LGBTQ+ people within the church, bringing voices long treated as taboo within patriarchal religious culture into public discussion. By confronting churches that speak of peace and hospitality based on the Bible with the very people they had long overlooked, the project opened up the possibility for gender equality discourse to take root within religious communities.

“The Christian feminist project led me to ask whether the ‘peace’ we speak of in the church is truly just for everyone. I came to think that, while speaking of peace, we must reflect on whether we have been turning away from inequality, discrimination, hatred, and violence within the church. In that sense, the roundtable discussion on the enactment of an anti-discrimination law and the interviews with LGBTQ+ people were deeply meaningful. They gave us time to sincerely engage with the discrimination and hatred we had long avoided. When we speak of peace, no one should be left behind. If women are excluded from power, and LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized people are discriminated against and pushed aside, that cannot be the peace God desires.”
(Seoul YWCA, 2020 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	LEZPA	Doremi Project: Rainbow Media Project in the City
2015	Gofeminist	Where the Youth Human Rights Movement Meets Feminist Humanities
2016	UNNInetwork	Feminist Action Magazine <i>Unnine</i>
2017	UNNInetwork	<i>Queer Feminist Magazine FeRM</i>
2017	Flaming Feminist Action	Unnis' Sex Education: What No One Ever Taught Us
2018	Feminist Journal Ilda	Expanding the Discourse on Women's Sexuality
2020	Seoul YWCA	Creating a Gender-Equal Church: "Feminism Crosses the Church Walls"
2020	Doing Social Cooperative	Wherever You Stand, We Will Be Connected
2021	Doing Social Cooperative	Wherever You Stand, We Will Be Connected
2021	Youth Feminist Network Witty	So That Our Talk Continues
2022	Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center	Affirmative Consent: The Clearest Form of Sexual Consent
2023	Daegu Women with Disabilities United	"I Want to Love, Too": Accompanying Women with Developmental Disabilities Toward Safe Sexuality and Love

2) Responding to Backlash: In an Age of Hate, Yet We Keep Moving Forward

The key achievement of the projects supported by the Foundation in responding to backlash was that they named attacks by anti-feminist forces as structural violence and developed the language and strategies for collective response. They further showed that as anti-feminism intensifies, the feminist movement does not retreat; instead, it grows stronger by developing more precise language and building broader solidarity. During this period, the response to backlash was not simply about defense, but about action and redefinition. It was a process of going beyond resisting the language of hate to redefine and expand what feminism means.

(1) 'Rewriting and Continuing to Write "Feminism in the Age of Backlash"

In 2019, Feminist Journal Ilda began the work of broadening the scope of feminism, which had come to be narrowly understood through the lens of online "mirroring" discourse. By identifying and documenting 20 new feminist groups engaged in feminist practice across diverse fields, including veganism, religion, and disability, the project showed that feminism is not the exclusive preserve of a particular online culture, but a practice that operates across all areas of life. At a time when backlash sought to portray feminism as the radical language of a particular group, this documentation served as a counter-discourse, demonstrating in concrete terms how diverse and far-reaching feminism truly is.

"Around the time when a university-wide vote was initiated to abolish Sungkyunkwan University's General Women Students' Association, known as Chongyeo, my father said, 'If you lose this fight, Chongyeo will disappear because of you.' What he meant was that I should take every possible measure to stop Chongyeo from disappearing. It was not a reprimand meant to hurt his daughter. My father had also been a supporter who had closely followed our movement to rebuild Chongyeo and our campaign to reject the abolition vote, actively offering his opinions throughout. But those words made me cry every night. And every morning, I went to campus and desperately handed out leaflets asking people to help stop the abolition of Chongyeo." [Excerpt from "After the Feminist Reboot, Feminist ACTION Discovery Series: Chongyeo Was Abolished, but Feminists Opened a Second Act."](#) (Source: Feminist Journal Ilda <https://ildaro.com/8544>)

In 2022, the same organization's project deepened this line of work through its project, "Rewriting Feminism in a Backlash Era.". The project documented 20 feminists from different fields as they articulated the philosophies and values needed to respond to debates over "reverse discrimination" and anti-feminist incitement. By connecting feminism with contemporary issues such as AI, meritocracy, and climate justice, the project offered solidarity and encouragement to activists who could easily become isolated amid backlash. It was a commitment not to be driven back by hate, but to rewrite—and continue writing—feminism in our own language.

(2) How to Resist Hate: Neither Silence Nor Retaliation, but Fact-Based Reasoning

The way the women's movement responded to hate and backlash itself became a new discourse. From 2022 to 2024, Beyond the Rainbow Foundation's *Kwonsonjingak* was Korea's first current affairs and political talk show to combine queer and feminist perspectives, directly entering YouTube, a major battleground for anti-feminist agitation. The program delivered logical rebuttals and accurate information in response to fake news and anti-feminist claims spread by groups that incite hatred against feminists and LGBTQ+ people. In particular, it dismantled arguments that frames transphobia as feminism, seeking to reclaim spaces of public discourse dominated by hate. Rather than ignoring hate or responding to it emotionally in kind, the program built a counter-discourse that challenged fake news with facts and reason

"We produced content that actively countered the fake news and anti-feminist claims spread by anti-feminist groups and groups inciting hatred against LGBTQ+ people, while also providing accurate information. Through this, we contributed to preventing the spread of fake news. In particular, at a time when transphobia was being presented as feminism, we actively challenged such claims and helped dispel misunderstandings about transgender people and feminism. In doing so, we helped create the conditions for more people to participate in the feminist movement." ([Beyond the Rainbow Foundation, 2022 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2019, the North Chungcheong-based group Feminists in Action put this principle into practice more directly through the project "In Search of Feminists Far and Wide." When the group encountered ridicule and verbal abuse from male-dominated online communities during its online and offline outreach, its response was neither silence nor retaliation. Instead, it treated the attacks as "evidence of just how necessary the project was", and continued its activities. Backlash was not a sign that the movement was misguided, but a sign that it was having an impact. Recognizing that signal not with fear, but as affirmation, was itself another practice of moving toward gender equality.

(3) Articulating Policy Regression: Institutional Monitoring and International Solidarity

During the 2022 presidential election, a candidate's campaign claim that "structural gender discrimination does not exist" showed that backlash had entered the language of institutional politics. In response, women's organizations sought support through grants on demand for projects such as "Feminist Citizens' Action: Break the Politics of Discrimination, Hate, and Incitement" and "Relay Speak-Out to Stop the Abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family," reclaiming public squares once again. These actions reaffirmed that when hate becomes part of official political discourse, feminism will respond with the voices of even more women. They also sought to reaffirm the lesson that political power that turns its back on women will ultimately be judged by history.

In 2023, Korean Women's Associations United systematically tracked the removal of the words "women" and "gender equality" from the names of local government departments following the launch of the 8th popularly elected local government. Policy regression sometimes takes place quietly, not through legal amendments or official declarations, but through changes to department names or budget cuts. By comparing and analyzing these changes and bringing them to the attention of the National Assembly and the international community, the project showed that making regression visible is itself an act of resistance and a way of shaping public discourse. Making visible what has been rendered invisible, and naming what had remained unnamed, became the starting point for countering backlash.

We witnessed the regression of gender equality policies across regions. Women's policy research bodies were merged or consolidated with organizations with entirely different mandates; the words 'gender equality' or 'women' were removed from the names of departments dedicated to gender equality; and related budgets were cut. In this context, I believe it was highly meaningful to monitor the gender equality promotion systems and gender equality policies across all 17 metropolitan and provincial governments.[...] Although it was a truly difficult period, with new issues demanding a response every day, going through this process helped each organization build solid policy capacity, which made the work deeply rewarding."([Korean Women's Associations United, 2023 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program](#))

From 2023 to 2024, the same organization directly reported to members of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) in Geneva on the Korean government's attempt to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the weakening of institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality. This strategy of turning to international advocacy when domestic channels had been blocked helped secure substantive recommendations from the CEDAW Committee. By actively bringing domestic backlash to the attention of international organizations, the project showed that the language of the feminist movement could carry force beyond the boundaries of Korean society.

In 2021, Korea Women's Political Solidarity analyzed how backlash becomes institutionalized through hate-driven political pledges and sexual violence involving abuse of power through its project, "Dignity of Politics: A Project to Eliminate Violence Against Women in Politics." The project also established the new concept of "violence against women in politics" and put forward proposals for legal reform.

"We had planned this project since late 2020, but were unable to carry it out due to a lack of project funding. It was only in the second half of 2021 that we were finally able to proceed with support from KFW's grantmaking program, "Creating a Society Where Women Are Safe." We wanted to show that the incidents repeatedly brought to light over the past several years—including sexual violence involving abuse of power, vandalism of campaign posters of feminist candidates, violence against campaign workers, and sexual harassment of local women council members—were not merely fragmented individual experiences, of which only a small fraction had been revealed. We believed that, in order to create "a society where women are safe," legislatures and politics themselves must first become gender-equal."([Gender Politics Research Institute Korea Women's Political Solidarity, 2021 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program](#))

(4) Holding the Ground: Breaking Through Backlash in Local Communities and Everyday Life

In 2021, Youth Feminist Network Witty was told, when applying to rent a venue, that there was an “internal policy not to accept feminist organizations.” Witty did not let this pass in silence. Instead, it publicly identified it as an expression of hatred and backlash against the feminist movement and demanded an apology from the institution. The institution eventually admitted its wrongdoing, but in its published apology, prejudice against feminism and a lack of awareness of gender equality were glossed over as merely an “inadequate response.” Witty documented this process in a column and included it in detail in its final report, bringing the incident into public discussion. Recording unjust refusals and inadequate apologies was itself a way of resisting the backlash faced by the movement, while encouraging one another.

While organizing a gender equality film festival in 2022, Neomeoseo faced a flood of around 140 complaints in a single day, as well as the unilateral cancellation of the event by a public institution. This incident showed that backlash operates not only through online hate, but also through the ways public institutions yield to such pressure. By documenting the incident and continuing to disseminate images promoting gender equality, Neomeoseo held the line against the retreat of gender equality in the public sphere. Refusing to disappear and simply continuing to exist was itself a powerful response to such hate.

“We had discussed the development of gender equality images with the Women and Family Division of OO-gu, and were planning to produce banners using those images for Gender Equality Week. However, after it became known that one of the films to be screened at the Gender Equality Film Festival dealt with homosexuality, unidentified individuals submitted around 140 mass complaints to the district mayor in a single day. The district mayor’s office and the Women and Family Division were thrown into confusion, and the Gender Equality Film Festival was canceled. The images for the planned Gender Equality Week banners were substantially revised and the banners using the gender equality images we had been developing were never produced.”(Neomeoseo, *2022 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

In an age of hate, the organizations discussed here were not the only ones forced to confront backlash. Many projects saw their venue bookings canceled, either in response to complaints or at the discretion of the

institutions themselves. Yet these organizations continued to trust and encourage one another, believing that we are still moving toward gender equality. Rather than “retreating,” they chose “the courage to speak, document, and hold the line.” That courage has been put into practice in different ways—on online platforms, in the meeting rooms of international organizations, and in the face of cancellation notices from public institutions—collectively shaping a broad discourse on how to live and continue the movement in an age of backlash.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2019	Feminist Journal Ilda	After the Feminist Reboot: Discovering Feminist ACTION
2019	Feminists in Action	In Search of Feminists Far and Wide
2021	Youth Feminist Network Witty	So That Our Talk Continues
2021	Korea Women's Political Solidarity	Dignity in Politics: Project to Eradicate Violence Against Women in Politics
2022	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Feminism × Queer: Bringing a Rainbow to YouTube
2022	Feminist Journal Ilda	Rewriting Feminism in the Age of Backlash
2022	Neomeoseo	Developing and Disseminating Design Images for Gender Innovation in Public Promotional Materials
2022	Korean Womenlink	2022 Feminist Citizens' Action: Break the Politics of Discrimination, Hate, and Incitement
2022	Korean Women's Associations United	Relay Speak-Out to Stop the Abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
2023	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Reading Popular Culture through Queer Feminism: Queering K-pop
2023	Korean Women's Associations United	From Local to Global: Connecting the Local, National, and Global through the Gender Equality Agenda
2024	Korean Women's Associations United	9th Periodic Review of Response Activities in Korea at the 88th UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
2024	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	A Global Gender-Equal Rainbow: A Visiting Platform for Queer Feminists
2025	Korean Womenlink	Feminist Grand March That Ousted Yoon Suk Yeol: From the Politics of Discrimination and Hate Incitement to Gender-Equal Politics!

3. Incubating New Organizations and Feminist Activists: Nurturing the Next Generation of the Women's Movement

The new generation of feminist activism that emerged in force after the feminist reboot often took forms quite different from those of the established women's movement. It was loosely organized, often without affiliation to any particular organization; built networks and solidarity online as well as offline; and its activities extended into previously unfamiliar cultural forms and arenas such as sports, motorcycling, and webtoons. To support the emergence of this new generation, the Foundation established the Next-Generation Women's Movement Grantmaking Program in 2017.

This initiative was also an extension of the Foundation's decision to create a grantmaking track for new organizations in 2015, with the aim to incubate newly formed movement groups. The Next-Generation Women's Movement Grantmaking Program had relatively accessible eligibility requirements: any group of three or more people with at least six months—or, in some cases, three months—of experience in feminist activities and a commitment to contributing to the growth and expansion of the women's movement was eligible to apply.

The Foundation's support for new organizations and next-generation women's movement groups was intended to lay the foundation for newly formed groups develop into sustainable forces within the movement. This support went beyond simply providing funds. Funding for personnel costs helped groups retain their activists, while practical training in complex accounting and administrative procedures enabled them to build the operational capacity needed to carry out their work. By connecting groups across generations and regions, the programs also helped them develop the strength needed to sustain their activities over the long term.

1) The Next-Generation Women's Movement: Springing into Action from the Very Start

When the Foundation launched its support for the next-generation women's movement in 2017, a wave of dynamic initiatives emerged almost simultaneously, as though activists had been waiting for just such an opportunity. DSO redefined "hidden-camera filming" as "filming-based sexual assault" and filed a collective criminal complaint against heavy uploaders. Gangnam Station Exit 10 established the Young-Young Feminist Network, while the Human Rights Legal Community Do Learn Do Run held an academic seminar. Bad Feminists, a feminist group based in Daegu, published a record of murders motivated by misogyny. Femi-Cine, a feminist film screening group in Jinju, organized an outdoor screening titled "Moonlight Theater."

In Ulsan, the University feminist group FACE developed a lecture titled "Youth: My First Feminism," while Cider Factory held an exhibition of feminist creative works. Flaming Feminist Action also introduced a radically different approach to sex education on university campuses by creating space to discuss women's sexual rights.

"The sense of connection and closeness I felt with people I had just met at the March 8 International Women's Day Feminist Cultural Festival, *Moving Forward, the Feminist Way*, must have come from the energy of the feminists gathered there. I began my feminist activism out of grief and anger over someone's death. Yet once I joined the movement, it taught me about the joy and warmth of feminism, and about solidarity and love."([Gangnam Station Exit 10, 2017 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

The only common thread among these projects was that they were led by people in their 20s and 30s. They differed in region, approach, and agenda. Yet this very diversity was a defining feature of the new generation of feminist activism during this period. A new feminism—loosely organized, horizontal, and spanning both online spaces and everyday life—sprang up simultaneously across the country. Rather than seeking to organize or steer this broader current, the Foundation supported and encouraged each initiative to grow in its own way.

“As people were leaving after the event, many of them thanked us, saying, ‘Thank you for creating a space like this.’ Seoul was far away, and there were feminists in the local community who had been longing to attend feminist events closer to home. There were also feminist moviegoers who had grown tired of male-centered and misogynistic Korean films. For the Femi-Cine planning team, it was a major achievement to discover that these people were here in our community—and that they had come together at Moonlight Theater.”(Femi-Cine, [Feminist Film Screening Group, 2017 Outcome Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2018, BOSHU collaborated with the feminist football team FC Women’s Playing to publish a magazine, bringing together young feminists in the region. In Busan, BRIDGE reconnected the movement across generations by seeking out and interviewing women activists from three decades earlier. That same year, the Pan-Feminist Network formed a feminist coalition based on small groups led by people in their 20s and 30s. The coalition laid the political groundwork for joint action on key issues and events, including International Women’s Day on March 8 and the Gangnam Station memorial. It also created a structure that enabled previously fragmented groups to speak with one voice on shared agendas.

In 2019, ChimaRiders built a feminist community in the entirely different sphere of motorcycling. The Youth Feminism Group founded Youth Feminist Network Witty as a nationwide organization, while Boston People brought to light the need for the Life Partnership Act. North Chungcheong-based group Feminists in Action also broadened the grassroots base of the local movement by organizing a “Feminist Assembly” in the region.

“The highlights of the campout for me were the ‘Bike × Feminism Roundtable’ and ‘Burning the Patriarchy.’ They created a space where many people could come together, speak openly about the difficulties they faced as members of minority groups and as women, and offer one another courage and strength. They reminded us that this was more than simply a camping event—it was a space for people brought together by shared feminist values.”(ChimaRiders, [2019 Outcome Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

From 2023 onward, Gongpye Dandan created spaces for healing and solidarity with survivors of intrafamilial sexual violence and campaigned to abolish the statute of limitations for such offenses. In 2024, Faze shared the

lives and voices of out-of-school youth with wider audience in webtoon form. In 2025, the Women Director's Network produced an animated film addressing deepfake sexual violence.

2) New Organizations: Building Organizational Foundations through Funding for Staffing and Operating Expenses

Launched in 2015, the support program for new organizations formed another pillar of the Foundation's efforts to incubate women's organizations. Its primary aim was to provide the basic conditions needed to prevent groups with a clear agenda from being hindered by administrative barriers. Even before establishing dedicated support for new organizations, the Foundation had actively sought ways to assist such groups—for example, by connecting overseas donors interested in the single-parent movement with relevant initiatives in Korea. Separately from the Gender-Equal Society Development Program, the Foundation also operates the Single-Parent Migrant Women Empowerment Grant.

From 2015 to 2016, with support from the Foundation, the Incheon Single-Parent Family Support Center secured an office lease deposit and funding for a full-time activist, thereby strengthening its organizational foundations. For an organization in the early stages of operating independently, office space and full-time staff were essential to its survival. Building on this foundation, single parents received basic counselor training and grew into activists who could support their peers. The Center also established a formal institutional footing by registering as a nonprofit organization.

During the same period, Intree—the Association of Unwed Mothers Creating a Changed Future, an organization led by unwed mothers themselves—reported that support for personnel costs created an environment in which members, who had previously had to balance their activism with paid work as heads of their households, could focus more fully on the organization's activities. In its first year of receiving support, Intree registered with the Seoul Metropolitan Government as a nonprofit organization and has since continued its work as a key actor in the unwed mothers' movement.

“In 2016, Intree entered into an agreement with Kyung Hee Cyber University, enabling 66 unwed mothers to enroll and begin their studies. Through another agreement with the Mapo Employment and Welfare Support Center, 11 unwed mothers participated in vocational training in a range of areas, including natural soap and cosmetics production, beauty services, and computer skills. Working with a professional sex education organization, unwed mothers have also trained and worked as sex education instructors. They have delivered first moon party programs for the children of Intree members and for girls from low-income households through after-school programs. These activities have helped participants explore a wider range of career opportunities and rebuild their self-esteem. Intree also registered with the Seoul Metropolitan Government as a nonprofit organization and worked in solidarity with the city government and other institutions to establish agreements aimed at preventing discrimination against unwed mothers. In 2017, the organization expanded its local activities to Namyangju and Ulsan. Its membership grew substantially, from approximately 80 members in February 2016 to 198 at the time of reporting, and it now provides a variety of programs for members of different age groups.”(*Intree, 2016 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2016, Munhwa Gihoek Dal, a feminist cultural organization based in the Jirisan region, launched an innovative feminist project titled “Rethinking Sexual Culture in Rural Communities: No More Letting It Slide” through this grantmaking program. In 2017, the Busan Single-Parent Family Center received support for its project “Beyond Taking a Leap: Turning Dreams into Reality.”

In 2022, the Korea Women’s Political Network launched a political leadership school for women, while the Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah developed a gender equality assessment for churches, bringing gender equality work into the religious sphere. From 2023 to 2024, the BB Social Cooperative was able to retain its full-time activists amid political transition and economic hardship, while building expertise in advocating for the housing rights of women who choose not to marry.

3) Support for New Organizations and Next-Generation Women’s Movement Groups: Changing Forms, Activities, and Boundaries

From 2020 onward, the distinction between new organizations and next-generation women’s movement groups became less clearly defined by generation or identity than it had been in the past. This appears to reflect how new movement groups evolved over time with some becoming

organizations, others remaining small collectives, and still others developing into networks. As a result, as specified in the eligibility requirements, the sole distinguishing criterion became organizational form—whether the applicant operated as an organization or as a group or small collective. Accordingly, in 2020, UnivFemi, Youth Feminist Network Witty, and Doing Social Cooperative applied and were selected under the new organizations category rather than the next-generation women’s movement category. In subsequent years, a diverse range of groups—including the Seoul Women’s Independent Film Festival, the Rural Feminism Research Group, Anothers, and the feminist photography group Utopia—applied under the next-generation women’s movement category.

Building on this support, several groups, including Intree in 2016 and Gongpye Dandan in 2023, went on to establish themselves as organizations, either as unincorporated associations or as registered nonprofit organizations. Many others, however, have chosen to remain unregistered, explaining that they prefer to maintain some distance from formal institutional structures, because the administrative burden could constrain their activities. In the meantime, some organizations announced their dissolution, while project-based groups and informal networking groups eventually dispersed. Yet it was not difficult to encounter their members again in other feminist spaces.

Some groups transitioned into for-profit or nonprofit cooperatives, including social cooperatives, rather than becoming conventional organizations. Some developed into membership-based organizations, while others retained the character of small feminist groups. These new movement groups have taken a wide variety of forms, that differ considerably from those of established women’s organizations. One challenge they all consistently identify, however, is the extreme difficulty of securing funding for full-time activists and operating expenses. In an era of neoliberalism, in which individuals are increasingly expected to fend for themselves, this shared challenge underscores the continuing importance of the Foundation’s role.

4) Building a Foundation for Administrative Capacity: Reporting, Accounting, and Tax Matters

Support for new organizations and next-generation women's movement groups was distinct from other programs in that it provided administrative training and assistance, allowing unregistered small groups and newly established organizations to focus on their core activities. Foundation staff worked alongside them to navigate unfamiliar and complex administrative procedures, including preparing final reports, handling taxes, and managing accounting.

"We appreciate your understanding of the particular circumstances of the next-generation women's movement. As an unregistered organization, we face greater operational challenges than organizations with full-time staff. We are also a survivor-led group, and our members are often dealing with a range of personal circumstances. Coordinating the project between a women's organization and a survivor group has made it difficult to move the work forward quickly. Despite these challenges, we are grateful for your trust and patience. We will continue our efforts to combat intrafamilial sexual violence and speak out in different spaces so that it becomes a more visible and prominent issue in both gender-based violence and feminist work. By enabling creative and innovative projects to be continually identified and developed, this grantmaking program provides an important foundation for new and unregistered organizations. We hope for your continued support and encouragement." ([Gongpye Dandan, 2023 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Incheon Single-Parent Family Support Center	One (Big) Step Toward Becoming One (Big) Family
2016	Munhwa Gihoek Dal	Rethinking Sexual Culture in Rural Communities: "No More Letting It Slide"
2016	Intree, Association of Unwed Mothers	A New Class Begins
2017	DSO(Digital Sexualcrime Out)	Digital Sex Crimes Out: Raising Awareness and Working to Eradicate Digital Sex Crimes
2017	Gangnam Station Exit 10	Formation of the Young-Young Feminist Group Alliance "Kkol-Fem Union" (Tentative Title)
2017	Human Rights Legal Community Do Learn Do Run	Feminism That Speaks Up and Takes Action: Wagle Wagle

Year	Organization	Project Title
2017	Bad Feminists(feat. Daegu)	One Year after the Gangnam Station Misogyny–Motivated Murder: Here, Now, Us
2017	Femi–Cine	Femi–Cine Moonlight Theater
2017	FACE	Youth: My First Feminism (Gender Equality Academy)
2017	Cider Factory	A Feminist Creative Project That Twists Language and Media
2017	Busan Single–Parent Family Center	Beyond Taking a Leap: Turning Dreams into Reality
2018	BOSHU	FemiSports: “Women Come Together, Bodies Come Alive”
2018	BRIDGE	Special mission, find your sister!
2018	Pan–Feminist Network	National Network–Strengthening Project
2019	Youth Feminism Group	School #MeToo Changes Schools
2019	ChimaRiders	ChimaRiders Campout
2019	Boston People	We Need Families beyond Blood and Marriage
2019	Feminists in Action	In Search of Feminists Far and Wide
2020	Youth Feminist Network Witty	So That Our Talk Continues
2020	Doing Social Cooperative	Wherever You Stand, We Will Be Connected
2020	UnivFemi	Networking for University Feminists in Their 20s and 30s
2020	Seoul Women’s Independent Film Festival	The 2nd Seoul Women’s Independent Film Festival
2020	Rural Feminism Research Group	Building Rural Feminists’ Capacity for Gender Equality at Work and in their Communities
2020	Anothers	Our Voice II
2020	Feminist Photography Group Utopia	Photography Project on Older Rural Women and Adolescent Girls: My own Flower Garden
2022	Korea Women’s Political Network	Women Become Leaders: Women’s Political School
2022	Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah	Young Feminists and Church Sisters Explore Gender Equality in the Church
2023	BB Social Cooperative	Advocating for Women’s Housing Rights and Establishing Women–Centered Residential Communities
2023	Gongpye Dandan	<i>ancing as Proud Survivors</i> : Celebrating survival and healing through interaction with other survivors
2024	BB Social Cooperative	Advocating for Women’s Housing Rights and Establishing Women–Centered Residential Communities
2024	Faze	Women Who Jumped over the School Gate
2025	Women Director’s Network	Video Production Project by the Next–Generation Women Directors Responding to Digital Sexual Violence

4. Culture, Arts, Media, and Sports: Speaking of Gender Equality in the Language of Everyday Life

It was no coincidence that, during this period, the Foundation's Gender–Equal Society Development Program broadened its scope to encompass media, culture and the arts, and sports. This signaled a shift in the language of the movement. A movement that had once spoken through declarations and rallies was now also speaking through film, theater, and running—and reaching a wider public through these new forms. In particular, the new generation of activists who emerged following the feminist reboot translated feminism into the language of everyday life through YouTube and Instagram, independent publishing, and sports clubs. As this translation reached more people, the movement's base grew broader and deeper. The most important achievement of these projects was demonstrating that feminism need not remain the exclusive concern of activists, but could become a culture in which anyone could participate.

1) Media: Another Gateway to Feminism

The central achievement of the media-related projects was to dismantle the sexist language and discourse reproduced by mainstream media and replace them with new language and new forms of records. By documenting women's histories, replacing the language of hate with the language of feminism, and calling attention to the structural responsibility of digital platforms, these projects have served as a catalyst for spreading a culture of gender equality.

(1) Women's Films: The Power to Bring People Together

In the field of visual media, a wide range of initiatives sought to broaden the audience for women's films and preserve related records. In 2014, the Incheon Women's Film Festival launched the 'Local Women's Film Festival Network,' laying the groundwork for solidarity among local women's film

festivals. The network established through this effort has since been carried forward by the Seoul International Women's Film Festival. In 2023, the festival also produced a gender-sensitive guidebook on visual media literacy and distributed it in conjunction with instructor-training workshops.

From 2017 to 2018, the Seoul International Women's Film Festival acquired the copyrights to approximately 300 women's films, digitized them in high definition, and established an online streaming system, thereby completing Archive BORA. The Korea Women's Hot-Line has also continued to organize its Film Festival for Women's Rights. The women's rights film archive developed through the festival makes these films accessible to wider audiences through traveling screenings.

"(After the screening of the *The Divine Order*), The film portrayed patriarchy well by showing that even Nora's husband, Therese's husband, and the father-in-law were not happy within it. The liberated man's hairstyle and Hawaiian shirt at the end were so funny and endearing. I also liked how the film portrayed and highlighted Nora's struggle and women's solidarity. It would be a good film for people who are new to feminism, or to watch together with men. I did not think the film's hopeful course of events was mere fantasy. Whenever I speak up, there are always people beside me who add their voices in support. That part of the film really resonated with me"(Participant in a Korea Women's Hot-Line Program, 2018 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

(2) Speaking about Feminism on New Media Platforms

YouTube became a new space for a new generation of feminism activism. Most organizations supported through the grantmaking program used YouTube to reach wider audiences by sharing videos of rallies and public discussions, as well as vlogs. Some also produced full-fledged current affairs talk shows, including Beyond the Rainbow Foundation's *Kwonsonjingak*. In 2015, the Korean Women Workers Association launched *The Donkey Ears of the Euls*, a podcast specializing in women's labor issues, amplifying the voices of workers on the ground whose experiences were rarely covered by mainstream media.

A listener from Daegu who identified herself as a non-regular worker wrote to us: “I never miss an episode. I used to think I was the only one struggling as a non-regular worker. But listening to the program helped me realize that I was not alone in what I was going through, and that there were others working together to make things better. The program has given me strength. Please keep it going until non-regular workers no longer have to face discrimination.” Her message gave us a boost, too! (Listener of the Korean Women Workers Association, 2015 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

In 2024, Faze created an Instagram webtoon featuring the stories of at-risk girls who were out of school. Through the series, the organization engaged with more than 900 followers and developed new narratives that challenged stereotypes about at-risk youth.

(3) A Hub for In-Depth Feminist Discourse

Feminist Journal Ilda has sustained its documentation projects for more than a decade. Beginning in 2014 with accounts of the work and identities of women in their 20s, the journal went on to document young women’s experiences of discrimination in 2016, women’s diverse sexualities in 2018, and the rewriting of feminism in an age of backlash in 2022. By identifying timely themes each year, these projects gave voice to women whose experiences had previously gone unspoken.

UNNInetwork’s *Queer Feminist Magazine FeRM* created an alternative media platform for queer feminist identities excluded from mainstream media. Through sales and distribution via independent bookstores, it also established a sustainable model for independent publishing.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Incheon Women’s Film Festival	Connecting Feminism with Local Communities through Film
2014	Feminist Journal Ilda	Documenting the Work and Identities of Women in Their 20s

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Korean Women Workers Association	Volume Up! <i>The Donkey Ears of the Euls</i>
2016	Feminist Journal Ilda	Making Discrimination Visible: Women in Their 20s and 30s
2016	UNNInetwork	Feminist Action Magazine <i>UNNIne</i>
2017	Seoul International Women's Film Festival	Revitalizing Local Women's Film Festivals through a Film Archive
2017	UNNInetwork	Queer Feminist Magazine <i>FeRM</i>
2018	Seoul International Women's Film Festival	Digitization of the Seoul International Women's Film Festival's Archive BORA
2018	Korea Women's Hot-Line	Distributing Women's Rights Films and Training Women Practitioners in the Cultural Sector to Promote Gender Equality Awareness
2018	Feminist Journal Ilda	Expanding Discourse on Women's Sexuality
2022	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Feminism × Queer: Bringing the Rainbow to YouTube
2022	Feminist Journal Ilda	Rewriting Feminism in the Age of Backlash
2023	Seoul International Women's Film Festival	Feminist Visual Media Literacy: Theory and Practice
2024	Faze	Women Who Jumped over the School Gate

2) Culture and the Arts: A New Language on Stage and in Galleries

Projects in culture and the arts provided women artists with a foundation for creative work, recovered previously undocumented women's lives through artistic expression, and enabled survivors to heal through art and grow into empowered agents in their own lives.

(1) Taking Stock of Changes in the Theater Industry after #MeToo

One of the most enduring achievements in the theater was the Feminist Theater Festival, initiated by Femi Theater. Supported in 2020, when it was in its third edition, the festival has continued through its eighth edition in 2026 and has become a regular forum for public discussion that promotes gender equality in the arts and cultural sector. In particular, when an incident involving an abuse of power occurred during the festival, the organizers did not conceal it. Instead, they conducted a transparent investigation and made

the findings public, setting a positive precedent for handling cases of sexual violence in the arts and cultural sector. In 2019, Theatre Artists Against Sexual Violence monitored six publicly funded theater productions from a gender-equality perspective and published reviews, subjecting the gender awareness of the arts ecosystem to public scrutiny.

“Have arts funding bodies shown no shame or self-reflection whatsoever in response to the 2018 #MeToo movement? I believe that arts funding programs and institutions also bear clear responsibility for the conditions that shaped the theater environment of the past. I also believe that their insensitivity to gender issues helped create today’s unequal arts ecosystem. There was an urgent need to bring this issue to light and subject it to continued scrutiny. I could not find the necessary information anywhere, so I decided to begin the work myself.” (Theatre Artists Against Sexual Violence, 2019 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

(2) Sustaining the Stage as Both a Space and a Language of Healing

Using the stage as a space for survivors to heal was one of the most distinctive achievements of the culture and arts projects during this period. In 2023, Gongpye Dandan’s *Dancing as Proud Survivors* featured survivors of intrafamilial sexual violence expressing themselves through movement. In 2024, Banni (formerly Gongpye Dandan) continued this work with *Our Survival Story*, a performance that combined readings and theater against a backdrop of self-portraits created by the survivors themselves. These performances demonstrated that healing, art, and social engagement could come together in a single practice. They also had a lasting impact, with participants later becoming activists themselves.

“As a participant, I too sometimes found the somatic healing exercises unfamiliar and demanding. But seeing the other participants motivated me, and together we were able to see the process through. It was a new experience to create something together and draw energy from one another. Having the support we needed allowed us to turn what we had imagined into reality, one step at a time. That process gave me strength in my everyday life and helped me develop a stronger sense of what I was capable of. Personally, co-planning and running the program, communicating with others, and solving problems along the way have also helped me make more concrete plans for a business I was preparing to launch. Through this experience, I saw what can happen when a shared vision for the community, the strengths each person brings, and institutional support come together. I have come to trust myself more, and each day I feel a deeper sense of belonging to the place and community I am part of.” (Gongpye Dandan, 2023 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

(3) Transforming Women's Issues into Art

In the visual arts, projects supporting the self-expression among marginalized groups were particularly prominent. From 2016 to 2017, i-Gong held the *Feminist Media Activist Biennale*, exploring issues affecting women—including pregnancy, childbirth, and mother-daughter relationships—through media art. These culture and arts projects provided a platform for emerging women artists and demonstrated that art could do more than support activism—it could itself become a form of activism.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2016	Alternative Visual Culture Factory, i-Gong	Feminist Media Activist Biennale 2016
2017	Alternative Visual Culture Factory, i-Gong	Femi 3.0 Project: Workshop for Women Media Activists
2019	Theatre Artists Against Sexual Violence	Talking about “Uncomfortable Theater”: Monitoring Gender Equality in Publicly Funded Theater
2020	Femi Theater	The 3rd Feminist Theater Festival
2023	Gongpye Dandan	<i>Dancing as Proud Survivors</i> : Celebrating survival and healing through interaction with other survivors
2024	Feminist Theater Festival Organizing Committee	The 6th Feminist Theater Festival
2024	Banni (formerly Gongpye Dandan)	<i>Our Survival Story</i> : A Recovery Project Centered on Gender Equality and Promoting Physical and Mental Healing

3) Sports: Equality on the Playing Field

The question raised by the sports-related projects was simple: Can everyone participate in sports? Through their work, these projects showed just how radical that simple question remains in Korean society. They helped create a new culture in which everyone has the right to experience the joy of sport in the bodies they have, and women can challenge their physical limits in solidarity with one another. These projects did not stop at declaring that right. They created spaces for people to compete, ran the courses themselves, and embodied that right through action.

(1) Defining Moments on the Field: Defying Prejudice and Reaching New Heights

From 2016 to 2017, the Korean Sexual–Minority Culture and Rights Center prepared to host Asia’s first Pride House ahead of the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The project used the global stage of the Olympics to affirm the principle that sport should be equally open to everyone.

“As we organized the event and ran the Facebook page, we repeatedly saw just how deeply people had longed for sports that everyone could participate in—sports free from discrimination and respectful of diversity. During the Rio Olympics, people voiced their anger at sexist commentary and coverage, while celebrating the medal wins of LGBTQ+ athletes as if they were their own. At the Pride House booth during the Queer Culture Festival, visitors lined up to ask questions about Pride House and shared their own experiences of sports both online and in person.”(Korean Sexual–Minority Culture and Rights Center, 2016 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program)

In 2018, UNNInetwork’s *Queer Women’s Games* drew a large number of participants under the slogan “The Game Has Already Begun.” On the playing field, the event directly challenged—and disproved—the stereotype that women and sexual minorities are less athletic.

“Spectators could not take their eyes off the relentless shuttlecock rallies, and the basketball final, with one team chasing the other to within a single point, drew gasps and cheers from the crowd. When a relay team took a fall but still finished the race, the audience applauded and cheered them on. In all these ways, it looked like any other sporting event. Yet there was one clear difference. At the Queer Women’s Games, there was no place for the stereotypes that have long divided physical activity along gender lines—the idea that women are uninterested in sports or are less athletic. No one enjoying the Games was concerned with assumptions about what sports they should play or how they should move because they were women or sexual minorities. There were simply athletes challenging their own physical limits and coming together, regardless of their gender or whether they identified as a sexual minority.”(UNNInetwork, 2018 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program)

That same year, BOSHU in Daejeon brought local feminists together through sports by running the feminist soccer team FC Women’s Playing and the jiu–jitsu class Overset. Their work showed that the playing field could be more than a site of debate—it could be a space where people build solidarity through sport.

"As FC Women's Playing became better known, a few people began joining simply because they liked soccer, rather than because they were interested in feminism. As we spent time together, conversations about feminism would naturally come up in our group chat or over team dinners, and I could see their perspectives gradually shifting. It was especially moving to later see some of them at other talks."(BOSHU, 2018 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

(2) Self-Defense Training Becomes Part of Everyday Life

Among the sports-related projects, self-defense training engaged most directly with the issue of bodily autonomy. The feminist self-defense programs developed by UNNInetwork in 2020 and FADO in 2021 went beyond physical defense techniques, taking self-discovery as their starting point. In collaboration with Empathy for Women with Disabilities, they explored a gender-inclusive model of training and produced the workbook *Now FADO*, helping to build a network through which community members could protect one another. In 2017, Munhwa Gihoek Dal's intensive self-defense training program, held in a rural community where patriarchal norms were deeply entrenched, drew strong interest nationwide and demonstrated that self-defense was not an issue limited to women in cities.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2016	Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center	Breaking the Gender Binary: Questioning "Femininity"
2017	Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center	PRIDE HOUSE: Gender Equality in Sports
2017	Munhwa Gihoek Dal	Recharging Rural Feminism
2018	UNNInetwork	Sports for All: 2018 Queer Women's Recreational Sports Games (Tentative)
2018	BOSHU	Femi Sports: Women Come Together, Bodies Come Alive
2020	UNNInetwork	Feminist Self-Defense Training to Fight, Take Action, and Change the World
2021	FADO	Acting Like FADO!

5. Intersectionality: Feminism for All, Across Differences

The Foundation sought to embrace diverse voices working to challenge discrimination, while taking into account the different social positions of women whose lives are shaped by intersecting factors such as age, disability, region or country of origin, sexual orientation, and marital status. Projects involving sexual minorities, migrant women, women with disabilities, women who choose to remain unmarried, and older women revealed distinct and overlapping layers of oppression while recognizing them all as agents in their own right. Answering the question of whom feminism is for is itself essential to deepening the movement for gender equality. These projects documented lives and experiences overlooked by mainstream discourse on women, brought previously unheard voices into public discussion, and opened up possibilities for intersectional solidarity among people facing different forms of oppression. Intersectionality was not merely a theory, but a method of movement-building put into practice through these projects.

1) Sexual Minorities: Making Their Presence Visible and Expanding the Language of Rights

The first challenge faced by projects concerning sexual minorities was to make their presence visible. From 2014 to 2025, these projects moved beyond anti-discrimination slogans, affirming the presence and possibilities of sexual minorities across media, sports, religion, the workplace, and the family, while developing a language through which their rights could be articulated. Their enduring legacy is the declaration that workplaces, churches, playing fields, and courtrooms must be safe and equal spaces for sexual minorities and all other marginalized people.

(1) Queer Feminist Media: Speaking on Our Own Words

In 2015, LEZPA's Doremi Project held a camp-style media conference where queer women living in cities became media producers and told their own stories. From 2016 to 2017, UNNInetwork published the action magazine *FeRM*, challenging a society that dictates who counts as a woman and what femininity should look like. Bringing queer and feminist perspectives together,

the magazine established a sustainable model for independent publishing through sales and successful crowdfunding on Tumblbug. By expressing queer feminist perspectives—often excluded or distorted by mainstream media—in concrete, everyday language, FeRM became a powerful hub where queer feminists could connect and affirm their identities.

The people taking the photos, handling the design and layout, and doing the copyediting were all part of our group. They were friends who already worked in those fields. Since we already had all of this work going on within the group, our goal was simply to put it into writing. Had we thought we also needed to train people and build those capabilities from scratch, I do not think the project would ever have been possible. Overseeing the entire process was especially demanding. We had a rule that every member of the core team had to take a turn in the lead role. I was the first person to take it on after the magazine was launched, and the role then rotated among the others. But once everyone had taken a turn, they all ended up leaving. The magazine received an incredible response, but I remember just how difficult it was to produce.”²⁾

From 2022 to 2024, Beyond the Rainbow Foundation produced *Kwonsonjingak*, a current affairs talk show from a queer feminist perspective. The program challenged arguments that framed transphobia as feminism and systematically debunked disinformation circulated during election periods. Its *Queering K-pop* project critically examined queer fandom culture within the K-pop industry, a subject largely overlooked by mainstream media, and helped expand queer feminist discourse across global networks.

(2) Sports: Every Body Has the Right to Take the Field

From 2016 to 2017, the Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center launched a project under the Grantmaking Program with the goal of hosting Asia’s first Pride House at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. Pride House was designed to use the global spotlight of the Olympics to challenge gender-and sexuality-based prejudice in the male-dominated, heteronormative world of sports. It sought to bring two issues to the fore: discrimination and inequality in sports, and equal rights in keeping with the spirit of sport. Its main activities included strengthening international

2) Interview with an Activist, February 2026

networks, organizing participatory sporting events such as the “Bowling Instead of Curling Tournament,” and bringing these issues into public discussion through the media. Despite numerous challenges resulting from the lack of government support, the project ultimately helped expand discourse on gender equality in sports and strengthen inclusive sports networks for sexual minorities. The project marked an important step in shaping the direction of the Pride House movement and broadening the foundation for gender equality in Korean society.

“We heard from organizers in Toronto who said, ‘We’re planning a Pride House meeting around the theme of the Olympics in formerly colonized countries, and we’d love for you to come and join the conversation.’ Activists from LGBTQ+ organizations in Brazil preparing for the Rio Olympics were there, along with people from Tokyo, Toronto, the United Kingdom, and our group. They said to us, ‘You could organize a Pride House too.’ Once we thought about it, the timing felt almost perfect. There had been an uproar over the persecution of LGBTQ+ people at the previous Winter Olympics in Sochi, including calls for a boycott. And the next Winter Games were going to be held in PyeongChang, which gave the idea enormous symbolic weight. Asia had never hosted a Pride House before, either. That was when we decided it really needed to happen.”³⁾

In 2018, UNNInetwork’s *2018 Queer Women’s Games* brought together 315 participants for official competitions in badminton, basketball, relay racing, futsal, and other sports. Putting the question “What would sports for everyone look like?” into practice on the playing field, the event gave participants the opportunity to embrace their bodies and express their desire to engage in sports, regardless of how skilled they were. In doing so, it helped expand inclusive sports networks for sexual minorities.

(3) Religion and the Family: Cracks in the Strongholds of Conservatism

From 2022 to 2023, the Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah published *For Those Who Feel Uncomfortable in Church*, an introduction to Christian feminism created jointly by young feminists and women active in the church. The book offered a vision of the church as a place where marginalized people, including sexual minorities, could belong and coexist as equals. In doing so, it challenged patriarchal religious culture from within.

3) Interview with an Activist, February 2026

“Although Huldah’s board members took the lead in writing the book and held numerous meetings, the project’s defining feature was the extensive participation of young feminists. Many Christian feminist organizations and groups work from a range of perspectives, but Huldah’s primary focus is on bringing feminist theology to a wider public, building strong solidarity with young feminists, and ultimately creating a future in which they can take the lead. The *How Gender-Equal Is Our Church?* test was planned and developed entirely by young feminists, though in close collaboration with sisters in the church. Over the eight months they spent working, meeting, crying, and laughing together, the sisters in the church came to see the young feminists not as students or assistants, but as genuine allies and partners. The young feminists, too, began to see themselves as people capable of proposing their own ideas, taking part in discussions, and creating projects of their own. This was the most significant way in which we grew, and it is where the future will take shape.”(Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah, 2022 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2019, Boston People held seminars and networking events to build public support for the enactment of a Life Partnership Act recognizing households formed by people who choose not to marry and sexual minorities. In 2022, Korean Womenlink called for the removal of the provision defining family in the Framework Act on Healthy Families and brought together the voices of people in diverse family arrangements, including same-sex couples. By highlighting how a legal definition of family centered on blood ties and marriage excludes sexual minorities and people whose lives and relationships fall outside those norms, these projects raised a core issue for the sexual minority rights movement: the need to rethink how family is defined.

(4) Where Sexual Minority Identities Intersect

In 2022, Korean Women’s Associations United examined interviews with women workers through the lenses of sexual orientation and gender identity, analyzing the complex and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by sexual minority workers and bringing these issues into the labor policy agenda. In 2019, Empathy for Women with Disabilities joined the South Korean Coalition for Anti-discrimination Legislation and launched the “Equality Talent Show” campaign, calling for a society free from discrimination against people with disabilities, migrants, sexual minorities, and

all other marginalized groups. This practice of building solidarity among people facing different forms of oppression showed that the movement for sexual minority rights is not separate from, but part of, a broader movement for equality.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	LEZPA	Doremi Project: Rainbow Media in the City
2016	Korean Sexual–Minority Culture and Rights Center	Breaking the Gender Binary: Questioning “Femininity”
2016	UNNInetwork	Feminist Action Magazine UNNIne
2017	Korean Sexual–Minority Culture and Rights Center	PRIDE HOUSE: Gender Equality in Sports
2017	UNNInetwork	<i>Queer Feminist Magazine FeRM</i>
2018	UNNInetwork	Sports for All: 2018 Queer Women’s Recreational Sports Games (Tentative)
2018	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Reframing Women with Disabilities’ Experiences of Victimization and Developing Strategies for Living Differently
2019	Boston People	We Need Families beyond Blood and Marriage
2019	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Reframing Women with Disabilities’ Experiences of Victimization and Developing Strategies for Living Differently
2022	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Feminism × Queer: Bringing the Rainbow to YouTube
2022	Korean Womenlink	Rebuilding “Family”: Laws, Institutions, and Culture
2022	Korean Women’s Associations United	Building Gender–Equal Workplaces Together through Difference and Common Ground
2022	Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah	Exploring Gender Equality in the Church with Young Feminists and Sisters in the Church
2023	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Reading Popular Culture through Queer Feminism: Queering K–pop
2023	Christian Women’s Research Institute Huldah	Exploring Gender Equality in the Church with Young Feminists and Sisters in the Church
2024	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	A Global Gender–Equal Rainbow: A Visiting Platform for Queer Feminists

2) Migrant Women: From Beneficiaries to Fellow Citizens

The core aim of projects under the grantmaking program focused on migrant women was to dismantle the view of migrant women as a vulnerable group in need of assistance and to affirm them as fellow citizens and agents in their own right—people who speak, document their experiences, and build solidarity. These projects brought visibility to the diverse experiences of refugee women, women from the Korean diaspora who had returned to Korea, and migrant women in rural communities, all of whom had been obscured by the singular image of the “marriage migrant woman.” In the process, the projects helped migrant women establish themselves as feminist activists who named and challenged the discrimination they faced at the intersections of race, gender, and class.

(1) From Recipients of Support to Creators of Change

In 2015, the Asia Migrant Women’s Multicultural Community launched a family communication program aimed at preventing violence stemming from a lack of communication within families formed through international marriage. That same year, the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea took a further step by training migrant women themselves as counselors specializing in sexual violence support, creating a new model in which “migrant women supporting other migrant women.” This shift—from recipients to providers of support—became a guiding principle across subsequent projects involving migrant women.

In 2016, Jogakbo, held *Korean Diaspora Women Speak Out: ‘Tell Them We’re Here Too!’* The event provided a platform for women from the Korean diaspora who had returned from China, Japan, and Russia to speak firsthand about the discrimination they faced in Korean society. These women had long been othered as low-wage workers in so-called “3D jobs”—dirty, dangerous, and difficult. Despite being ethnic Korean returnees, they were treated as outsiders in Korean society and experienced a double marginalization. Publicly bearing witness to their own lives was itself a form of activism. The event also provided an opportunity for women from the Korean diaspora to grow as global women leaders.

“The purpose of ‘Korean Diaspora Women Speak Out: ‘Tell Them We’re Here Too!’ was to raise awareness of the discrimination and violence directed at people who are both women and migrants, and to lay the groundwork for women from the Korean diaspora to become agents of the women’s movement themselves. More than half of the Korean diaspora currently lives in China, Japan, and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States—including Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan—while approximately 800,000 have returned to Korea and now live as members of Korean society. Yet they have come to be stereotyped as low-wage workers in so-called ‘3D jobs’—dirty, dangerous, and difficult. On a personal level, through this event I wanted to show that the category of ‘migrant women from the Korean diaspora’—so often othered, generalized, and treated as a single homogeneous group—is in fact made up of diverse individuals, each with her own life and experiences.”(*Jogakbo, 2016 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2018, Feminist Journal Ilda documented migrant women’s experiences of sexuality, directly challenging the objectification of women who had migrated to Korea through international marriage as either a “solution to the low birth rate” or simply “women who bear children.” The assertion that migrant women are equally entitled to bodily autonomy and sexual self-determination helped address a significant blind spot in reproductive rights discourse.

(2) Refugee Women: From Recipients of Emergency Relief to Narrators of Their Own Stories

In 2019, the Daegu Migrant Women’s Human Rights Center expanded the discourse on migrant women in a new direction through a project in which refugee women created their own picture books. Refugee women had generally been treated only as recipients of aid in need of emergency medical care. This project challenged that perspective by enabling them to turn their own experiences and trauma into picture books. The process provided a space for psychological healing, while the completed books helped Korean readers recognize refugees as their neighbors. The project’s most significant achievement was that the participants moved beyond relying on counselors and began to articulate their own visions for the future.

(3) Making Intersectional Discrimination Visible and Responding to Crises

In 2020, the Rural Feminism Research Group reframed migrant women in rural communities as women farmers and producers in their own right. It exposed the dual oppression they faced: viewing international marriage as merely a transaction and the patriarchal sexual culture of rural communities. In 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea provided emergency supplies and financial assistance to migrant women who had been excluded from government support because of their immigration status. At the same time, it worked with the women on a human rights campaign declaring that “disaster relief is a right, not a favor.” In 2022, Korean Women’s Associations United brought public attention to the intersectional discrimination experienced by women workers with migrant backgrounds, arising from the interplay of gender, race, and immigration status. It reframed such discrimination not as a result of individual shortcomings, but as a structural problem.

“Emergency relief payments were introduced during the COVID-19 crisis, but they remained out of reach for migrant women. COVID-19 did not distinguish between Koreans and foreign nationals; it posed a threat to everyone. Migrant women live in Korean society as residents, citizens, and workers, yet when the crisis struck, they were left even more vulnerable. To bring this reality to the attention of Korean society and call for equal public health protections and disaster relief that leaves no one behind, we organized a human rights campaign in solidarity with organizations including the Gyeongnam Migrant Women’s Human Rights Center and the Federation of Mongolian Women in Korea.”(Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, *2021 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Asia Migrant Women’s Multicultural Community	“Our Family Has Changed!”: A Family Communication Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
2016	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Building a Society of Gender and Racial Equality through Migrant Women’s Efforts to Protect the Rights of Other Migrant Women
2016	Jogakbo	“Tell Them We’re Here Too!”: Korean Diaspora Women Speak Out

Year	Organization	Project Title
2018	Feminist Journal Ilda	Expanding the Discourse on Women's Sexuality
2019	Daegu Migrant Women's Human Rights Center	Refugee Women's Picture Book Project: <i>Storybook</i>
2020	Rural Feminism Research Group	Empowering Rural Feminists to Build Gender–Equal Workplaces and Communities
2021	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Creating an Equal Safety Net for Migrant Women Affected by Disasters
2022	Korean Women's Associations United	Building Gender–Equal Workplaces Together through Difference and Common Ground

3) Women with Disabilities: Moving Beyond Control in the Name of “Protection”

The most fundamental challenge facing projects concerning women with disabilities was to redraw the boundary between “protection” and “violence.” Control imposed on women with disabilities was often framed in the language of protection and love, making it all the more deeply entrenched. These projects have highlighted the need to move away from control and paternalistic protection toward respect for self–determination, to develop strategies for living beyond victimization, and to transform institutions and social attitudes.

In 2015, Empathy for Women with Disabilities fundamentally repositioned women with disabilities within the discourse on reproductive rights. It affirmed that women with disabilities are the primary decision–makers regarding their own bodies and health. This declaration made clear that discussions of reproductive rights cannot center solely on the experiences of women without disabilities.

From 2018 to 2019, the same organization's project, *Reinterpreting Experiences of Victimization and Developing Strategies for a Different Life*, exposed the reality of controlling behaviors in intimate relationships. Through more than 363 structured counseling sessions over two years, the project documented how restrictions on dating, going out, and mobile phone use—imposed in the name of “protection”—systematically deprived women with disabilities of their right to self–determination. The project's most significant qualitative achievement came through self–help groups such as the Manse

Team and the Photography Group. Through these groups, participants came to see that they could live independently in the community rather than in institutions and shape their lives on their own terms.

“These days, many women with developmental disabilities come to our organization. We often hear about things that may seem very small—for example, someone wants to sleep without a bra but is not allowed to because her breasts might sag, or she wants to change her support worker but cannot because the support worker is her aunt. These situations need to be properly addressed, but at the same time, it is not always easy to describe them simply as violence. They are clearly human rights violations and forms of discrimination, but we felt there was a need to develop a language that could explain them within existing institutional frameworks. Practical counseling support was also essential.”⁴⁾

In 2023, Daegu Women with Disabilities United directly addressed the sexual rights of women with developmental disabilities. The project affirmed that women with developmental disabilities—long regarded as asexual—have the right to love and experience desire. By combining this affirmation with education that helped participants recognize online grooming and gaslighting, it underscored that sexual rights apply equally to everyone. Beginning that same year, People and Peace provided sexual rights education in special education classes. The program gave students who had largely been left out of sex education opportunities to build their self-esteem and become more aware of sexual violence. It also helped improve the gender sensitivity of the teachers working in those classes.

“There are many programs and forms of support for children with developmental disabilities, but far less recognition of the natural sexuality and desire for love that women with developmental disabilities may experience as they enter adulthood in their twenties. Women with disabilities are often treated as asexual, while women with developmental disabilities are continually exposed to sexual violence because of the particular vulnerabilities associated with their disabilities. They may not recognize an experience as sexual violence, mistake it for love, and be exploited financially and sexually. This project began in response to these concerns. It was especially meaningful because we came to understand that experiences of friendship and acceptance gained through meeting peers who shared similar struggles were just as important as romantic love. Many of the participants, who often lived restricted and controlled lives at home, had opportunities to experience new things for the first time. Many said they wished there were more programs like this, and we hope that the work will continue in some form, whoever may carry it forward.”(Daegu Women with Disabilities United, 2023 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

4) Interview with an Activist, January 2026

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Creating a New Paradigm for the Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities
2018	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Reinterpreting Experiences of Victimization and Developing Strategies for a Different Life
2019	Empathy for Women with Disabilities	Reinterpreting Experiences of Victimization and Developing Strategies for a Different Life
2023	Daegu Women with Disabilities United	“I Want to Love, Too”: Walking Alongside Women with Developmental Disabilities toward Safe Sexuality and Love
2023	People and Peace	“Exploring Sexual Rights, Seeing Sexual Rights Differently”: Sexual Rights Education for People with Disabilities Using Picture Books
2024	People and Peace	“Understanding Sexual Rights, Reframing Sexual Rights”

4) Rights Beyond the “Normal Family”: Women Who Choose Not to Marry, Single Parents, and Unmarried Mothers

Projects concerning women who choose not to marry, single parents, and unmarried mothers challenged the stigma and exclusion produced by the ideology of the “normal family.” Women who do not marry, women who have children outside marriage, and women without spouses have all been repeatedly labeled “abnormal” by social institutions built around blood ties and marriage. The projects supported by the Foundation resisted this labeling and affirmed that diverse ways of living deserve equal respect.

(1) Recognizing Non–Marriage as a Choice and Independent Living as a Right

In 2019, Boston People carried out two initiatives in parallel. The first, *Introduction to Independent Living*, provided women living alone who had chosen not to marry with practical information on finances, housing, food, mental health, and other aspects of independent living. The second was a policy advocacy initiative that examined public demand for a Life Partnership Act and developed language for describing non–romantic cohabitation. Together, the two initiatives formed a dual strategy aimed at both supporting women in living independently and bringing about institutional change. This approach showed that the movement of women who choose not to marry is concerned with both everyday living and political change. Held that same

year, *An Evening to Find a Life Companion* provided a space to discuss how to build a healthy and connected life outside marriage and led to the formation of self-organized follow-up groups.

“Participants had a strong understanding of the Life Partnership Act, and there was broad consensus on the need for its enactment. The group brought together people with diverse interests and areas of work, including youth researchers, welfare advocates, people interested in LGBTQ+ issues, and activists in the women’s movement. Drawing on their own life experiences, professions, activities, and fields of research, participants were able to discuss the issue from a wide range of perspectives. The many ideas proposed for the enactment of the Life Partnership Act led to a lively and especially fruitful discussion.”(Boston People, 2019 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2022, Korean Womenlink documented cases in which households of people who had chosen not to marry were excluded from workplace benefits and recognition as medical guardians because the legal definition of family centers on blood ties and marriage. Through a series of National Assembly forums and public rallies, the organization connected these cases to its call for the removal of the provision defining “family” in the Framework Act on Healthy Families. From 2020 to 2021, Doing Social Cooperative’s educational program, *Beyond Romance, Chosen Singlehood, and Community*, brought together individual feminists who had previously remained disconnected and created a space for imagining lives beyond heteronormative relationship scripts. Since 2023, BB Social Cooperative has been working to establish community housing for middle-aged and older women who have chosen not to marry and live alone. Through this project, BB Social Cooperative is testing a new model in which care in later life is provided within a chosen community rather than through ties of blood.

(2) Single Parents and Unmarried Mothers: Rejecting Stigma and Becoming Agents of Change

Projects involving single parents and unmarried mothers challenged the stigma that cast them as “objects of pity” and supported them in becoming active agents within the movement. The Foundation’s early support for new organizations focused in particular on incubating single-parent organizations.

This support went beyond financial assistance, helping single parents themselves grow into activists.

In 2015, the Incheon Single-Parent Family Center brought previously marginalized single fathers together through a self-help group called “Hanultari” and involved them as members of the steering committee. This demonstrated that the single-parent movement was not confined to one gender. The center’s “Hope Spoon” project also provided a moving example of beneficiaries becoming donors, as single parents who had received support pooled small contributions and donated them to the Foundation.

In 2016, Intree, an association of unmarried mothers, supported women’s studies courses and vocational training that helped unwed mothers develop a stronger sense of self and build the determination to achieve financial independence. Through an agreement with Kyung Hee Cyber University, the association helped 66 unmarried mothers begin their studies. It also challenged social prejudice through an agreement to prevent discrimination against unmarried mothers and community awareness-raising activities. The fact that Intree’s membership more than doubled during the project demonstrated that it had become a trusted space where unwed mothers could gather and feel safe.

In 2017, the Busan Single-Parent Family Center moved away from formal, activist-led events and instead organized campaigns planned and carried out by single parents themselves. By speaking openly about their lives and asking others for understanding, participants challenged the label that “once a single parent, always a single parent” and experienced a renewed sense of agency and empowerment.

“At single-parent events, I used to avoid people I knew whenever I saw them. But today, I surprised myself by going up to them first and inviting them to join in. They may already have had already guessed my situation, because they actually thanked me. I feel as though something that had been weighing on me has finally lifted, and I feel much more at ease. From now on, I want to take a more active part in these events.”(Busan Single-Parent Family Center, *2017 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Incheon Single-Parent Family Center	One (Big) Step Toward One (Big) Family
2016	Association of Unwed Mothers Intree	A New Class Begins
2016	Incheon Single-Parent Family Center	We Are One
2017	Busan Single-Parent Family Center	Beyond the Leap: Turning Dreams into Reality
2019	Boston People	We Need Families beyond Blood and Marriage
2020	Doing Social Cooperative	Wherever You Stand, We Will Be Connected
2021	Doing Social Cooperative	Wherever You Stand, We Will Be Connected
2022	Korean Womenlink	Rebuilding “Family”: Laws, Institutions, and Culture
2023	BB Social Cooperative	Advocating for Women’s Housing Rights and Establishing Women-Centered Residential Communities
2024	BB Social Cooperative	Advocating for Women’s Housing Rights and Establishing Women-Centered Residential Communities

5) Older Women: Liberating Old Age from Narratives of Loss and Decline

The most fundamental challenge facing projects involving older women was to liberate old age from narratives of loss and decline. And that liberation began with documentation. These projects brought diverse older women into view—from women who had been denied an education and never learned to read or write, to creators in the digital age and readers of feminist literature. They showed that old age is not a time of loss, but a time for women to reclaim their own language and become agents in their own lives.

(1) Reframing Old Age: A Time of Transition, Not Loss

In 2015, Korean Womenlink’s *Becoming Fabulous Grandmothers Project* provided women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s with a space to examine the gendered anxieties surrounding old age and develop alternative visions of aging based on independence and solidarity beyond traditional family structures. Through the *Imagining Old Age Party*, the project explored the potential for solidarity among women across generations and redefined old age not as a fate to be endured alone, but as a stage of life that women could shape together. In 2018, Feminist Journal Ilda documented women’s

sexuality, including the experiences of women in their 60s. By bringing sexual expression and desire in old age into public discussion, the project challenged the stereotype that older women are asexual.

“When I first took on the project, my greatest challenge was that I had no clear sense of what old age meant. Around that time, I attended a school reunion and met up with friends my age whom I had not seen in a while. As we caught up, I asked them, ‘What do you think life will be like in your seventies?’ Their face got dark immediately. One asked why I had to bring up something like that on such a nice day. Another said, ‘The thought of becoming an old woman is so depressing. I don’t want to live past forty.’ Despite their different responses, they all reflected the same belief: that growing old meant becoming miserable and unhappy I felt the same way. Why did we react like this? When we stop and think about it, the images associated with old women are remarkably fixed: an old woman collecting waste paper, wearing baggy work pants, or sitting in front of the television all day with nothing to do—not to mention the coldhearted mother-in-law. In short, an old woman is imagined as either poor, with nothing meaningful to do, or overly attached to her family. That was why, when planning the project at the end of the previous year, we gave it the deliberately paradoxical subtitle, ‘Imagining an Old Age Full of Possibilities and Free from Money Worries.’”[\(Korean Womenlink, 2015 Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program\)](#)

(2) Women Denied the Chance to Learn: Claiming Their Own Voices

In 2015, the Catholic Women’s Center offered literacy education to women who had been denied the opportunity to attend school because of poverty and gender discrimination. As they learned to read and write, participants also developed a greater understanding of gender equality and began to take ownership of their lives. Writing their own names for the first time was far more than an educational achievement. It was a declaration that they were reclaiming their own language after a lifetime of having their lives shaped by the words of others. Their learning extended beyond literacy. Through theater, participants brought their own life stories to the stage and became active participants in local gender–equality campaigns.

Their stories show that discussions about older women cannot be reduced simply to the experience of aging. Their lack of access to education was not a matter of individual misfortune, but the result of a discriminatory social structure in which daughters from poor families were not sent to school. The project brought this structure into view and documented the growth of women who, even later in life, had finally found their own voices.

“While providing gender–equality education for illiterate women, we tried a wide range of activities, including a gender–equality campaign, the renovation of a book café, the formation of a theater group, and a talk concert on gender equality. We worked hard to make the program as meaningful and enjoyable as possible within the available budget. At the same time, the process left us with many questions and challenges about what it truly means to help women with limited literacy rethink gender equality and engage in feminist practices. Was this what the participants wanted? Were they happy? What impact were we actually having? Amid all these questions, there was one principle we did not want to lose sight of: we wanted every woman who took part to become the central figure in her own life. Even if change did not come immediately, we hoped this project would mark its beginning.”(Catholic Women’s Center, 2015 *Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

(3) Becoming Creators of New Culture and Education

In 2020, Utopia, a feminist photography group, launched a smartphone photography project that offered a creative response to digital exclusion. Older women in Chuncheon—including the oldest participant, who was in her 80s—used photographs they had taken themselves to create an exhibition titled *My Own Flower Garden*. The project presented older women not as passive consumers of digital culture, but as active creators.

That same year, Munhwa Gihoek Dal organized a feminist reading group for women in their 60s in Namwon. As participants learned concepts such as “backlash” and began to look at their own lives through a more critical lens, the project that older women could transcend generational boundaries.

In 2017, the Iksan Women’s Hot–Line launched the “Storytelling Grandmothers” initiative, in which middle–aged and older women rewrote traditional folktales and legends from a gender–equal perspective and shared them with children. Rather than ending as a one–time project, the initiative developed into an affiliated organization called Somnigol Story Guardians, creating a new employment model for middle–aged and older women as gender–equality educators. The project achieved two outcomes at once: it planted the seeds of gender equality in the next generation through storytelling, while also helping the women who told the stories develop into capable activists.

(4) Rethinking Care in Old Age, Within and Beyond Residential Care Facilities

From 2021 to 2022, Okhee Salon, a Lifestyle Culture Research Institute, carried out a project that documented and interpreted women's experiences of care within and beyond residential care facilities from a feminist perspective. Through a photo essay book and an online exhibition, the project reframed the creative care practices carried out by care workers as forms of "civic practice," presenting them not simply as service providers, but as skilled care professionals in their own right. The project also moved beyond familiar narratives of care in old age as an expression of "filial duty" or "self-sacrifice," portraying it instead as a complex part of life. It challenged the binary of "care at home versus institution" and brought into public discussion the fact that dignity in old age and dignified care cannot be achieved without fundamental changes to gender structures and family norms. Workshop participants said that writing about what they had been carrying inside helped them sort through their thoughts and find comfort. Through this process, they began to regain their sense of agency as citizens.

"Aging and death are difficult subjects, and they felt deeply personal to me. So even the title, 'The Question of Guardianship,' brought up a flood of emotions. In a patriarchal society, this is an area where gender issues are impossible to avoid, and I believe there is still so much work to be done. The realities faced by the people living through these situations are so complex and overwhelming that I still have not been able to sort out my own thoughts. For that reason, I did not feel I had much to add today. Some parts of the presentation on guardianship resonated deeply with me and felt comforting, while the discussion of the realities of care in old age left me feeling frustrated and weighed down. Thank you for all the work you put into this. (Okhee Salon, a Lifestyle Culture Research Institute, 2022 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Korean Womenlink	<i>Becoming Fabulous Grandmothers</i>
2015	Catholic Women's Center	Gender Equality Awareness Program for Women with Limited Literacy
2017	Iksan Women's	Gender-Equal Storytelling with Middle-Aged and Older Women

Year	Organization	Project Title
	Hotline	
2018	Feminist Journal Ilda	Expanding the Discourse on Women's Sexuality
2020	Feminist Photography Group Utopia	Photography Project for Older Women and Adolescent Girls in Rural Communities: <i>My Own Flower Garden</i>
2020	Munhwa Gihoek Dal	Feminist Culture Salon "Riding the Wolf"
2021	Okhee Salon	Living Through Disaster and a Gendered Care Crisis
2022	Okhee Salon	Living Through Disaster and a Gendered Care Crisis

6. Local and Global: Wherever We Are and However Far We Reach—from Grassroots Action to International Solidarity

The Foundation's gender-equality movement expanded beyond public squares in Seoul and online spaces to local community halls and the meeting rooms of international organizations. This shift signaled that the movement was beginning to engage with a wider range of lived realities. Local projects created hubs for grassroots organizing in communities often overlooked by feminist discourse centered on the Seoul metropolitan area. Global projects broadened the movement's reach by using international channels to advance issues that had stalled at home, sharing Korea's experiences with the wider world, and building international solidarity. These two directions may appear different, but both ultimately posed the same question: How far can the gender-equality movement reach?

1) Local Movements: Feminist Organizing Beyond Seoul

The first challenge facing local projects was to overcome isolation and build solidarity. Women engaged in feminist work outside the Seoul metropolitan area had greater difficulty finding like-minded peers, faced more deeply entrenched patriarchal power structures in their communities, and had access to far less institutional support. These projects began by breaking through that isolation.

(1) The Power to Change Institutions: Policy Monitoring and Governance

In 2014, Changwon Women's Living Community monitored gender impact assessments and participated in the enactment of local ordinances. From 2015 to 2016, a nationwide gender-responsive budgeting network analyzed gender-responsive budgets across 15 metropolitan cities and provinces and connected activists working in different regions. Together, these efforts showed that local initiatives could become a tangible force for institutional change.

"The women we met while carrying out this year's project were interested in gender-responsive policy but often unsure how they could participate or make their voices heard. By taking part in the year-round activities of the National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network, known as GenderNet, they said they were able to explore the roles they could play in their own communities. Women serving on local councils also reported that GenderNet's ongoing provision of information and resources helped them address these issues in council questioning, five-minute speeches, and administrative audits. When we submitted information disclosure requests concerning gender impact assessments to metropolitan and provincial governments, their responses generally conveyed a certain tension—as though they had assumed that no one was paying attention and were now beginning to consider what impact an NGO's request for information might have. This made us realize that NGOs must continue to demonstrate their interest in gender-responsive policy to local governments."([National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network, 2015 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2015, Northeast Seoul Womenlink ran the "Grassroots Women's School" in Dobong, Seoul. Through the program, local women directly monitored childcare centers and adult day care centers, attended district council meetings, and participated in policymaking as active agents. From everyday care facilities to the local council, the project offered a model of grassroots politics in which women exercised oversight and made their voices heard.

From 2017 to 2018, the work of Gyeongnam Women's Associations United provided one of the clearest examples of how local initiatives can bring about institutional change. Its policy monitoring efforts led to the reinstatement of the Gender Equality Fund—which Gyeongnam had been the only local government in the country to abolish—and paved the way for the establishment of the Gyeongnam Women and Family Foundation. Activists from Changwon, Gimhae, and Jinju worked together to monitor local

government ordinances and submit policy proposals, demonstrating that local civil society can bring meaningful change in local governance.

In 2017, Jinju Womenlink partnered with Gyeongnam Women's Associations United on a media monitoring project that analyzed television commercials commonly seen by the public through a gender-equality lens. The findings were presented at a local public forum. In 2018, the organization supported feminist study groups for people in their 20s and 30s and, in the lead-up to the local elections, ran a political academy aimed at expanding women's political participation and promoting gender-responsive work in local councils. Through these efforts, it fostered activists who could analyze elections and the media through a feminist lens in the relatively conservative region of Gyeongnam.

(2) The Power to Change Everyday Life: Feminism Beginning in the Community

In 2014, Gunpo Womenlink launched the "Real Feminist Project," which brought together some 1,400 residents of Gunpo, Anyang, and Uiwang to produce a collection of stories about challenging patriarchal culture and hold a feminist community festival. By bringing the language of gender equality into everyday life through a community festival and not flyers or lectures, the project showed that feminism could become part of a shared community culture in which anyone could participate, rather than something practiced only by a select few.

In 2016, Munhwa Gihoek Dal organized a feminist campaign in a patriarchal rural community. The campaign at times faced hostile protests and physical obstruction from male residents. Rather than responding to these incidents individually, the organizers turned to collective solidarity and public discussion. In the process, they were able to identify and connect with fellow feminists in the region.

“We decided that, rather than confronting people individually, we would build collective solidarity and bring the issue into public view. We came to this approach while publishing a series about the campaign in Feminist Journal Ilda. By taking a problem within the village beyond the village itself, we discovered that we could build a wider base of support that would sustain the campaign. Women interested in moving to rural areas, women who had faced similar experiences in rural communities, and feminists from across the country offered support and encouragement whenever our team felt discouraged. In rural communities, people often hesitate to speak out or challenge conflict because their daily lives depend so heavily on personal relationships. Building support outside the village and then bringing it back into the community not only raised awareness of the campaign, but also gave individuals the confidence to act on their own convictions rather than be held back by existing relationships. After that, whenever we faced criticism or attacks, we made them public through social media and talked through each incident with other women, building a shared understanding of the issues at stake.”(Munhwa Gihoek Dal, 2016 *Final Report on the Gender–Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2020, the Korean Women Peasants Association launched an initiative to revise the village bylaws that form the foundation of local governance, approaching them from the perspective of young women farmers. In five villages across Gangwon, South Gyeongsang, North Gyeongsang, North Jeolla, and Jeju Provinces, the organization identified gender–discriminatory provisions and initiated discussions on their revision, helping to shift the perceptions of men serving as village heads and other community leaders. Based on a survey of 1,235 women farmers, it also convened a policy forum at the National Assembly and brought issues such as the establishment of a dedicated unit for rural affairs into public debate. This marked a significant achievement in translating the agenda of the rural women’s movement into institutional and policy reform.

The following account comes from Jeju, where the Village Bylaws Initiative was in its second year. With the initiative under way and the village meeting yet to be held, those involved gathered to share their reflections on the process. The following remarks were made at a gathering attended by community members ranging from older men to young women farmers: “In many villages, I learned that each household is given only one vote. In our village, however, every resident has one vote, and women also serve on the village development committee. That made me realize what a remarkable community we have. I hope this initiative will help our village become an even more inclusive community where women and men can live together in greater harmony.”(Korean Women Peasants Association, *Final Report on the 2020 Grantmaking Program for Building a Gender–Equal Society*)

In the same year, the Rural Feminism Research Group developed gender equality education materials tailored to the realities of rural communities, while also addressing the challenges faced by migrant women farmers. Rather than treating women who had migrated through international marriage merely as program beneficiaries, the group recognized them as “women farmers who are producers in their own right” and brought public attention to the dual oppression they faced: viewing international marriage as merely a transaction and the patriarchal sexual norms prevalent in rural communities. This marked a moment when the scope of rural feminism expanded beyond Korean women to include migrant women.

(3) Local Networks of Young Feminists

In 2018, BOSHU in Daejeon brought together young feminists across the region through the feminist football team FC Women’s Playing. In 2019, the Chungbuk-based feminist group Feminist in Action held the “Feminist Assembly,” bringing together activists from an earlier generation and a new generation of young feminists, thereby carrying forward the legacy of the local feminist movement. In the same year, BRIDGE in Busan compiled a timeline of the women’s movement on university campuses in the Busan area from 1985 to 2005 and interviewed 30 activists, tracing the movement’s history across generations.

“We went through many ups and downs, but I am still grateful that BOSHU was able to keep going under the same name until 2025. That in itself has given us a great deal of strength. [...] I think many local activists would choose to stay and continue their work here if they had the right opportunities and support. I would not say that they should be expected to take responsibility for the women in the region, but we do need to think more seriously about what would enable them to remain here and build lives alongside other women in the community. [...] Just as the Foundation has designated issues such as care and sexual violence as grantmaking themes, I believe it should also consider doing the same for regional activism..”⁵⁾

These locally based initiatives challenged patriarchal power structures, documented the voices of marginalized women in local communities, and fostered solidarity among local activists. They showed that feminism was not

5) Interview with an activist, December 2025

confined to Seoul, but was also taking root at a village festival in Gunpo, on a playing field in Daejeon, in a village hall in Jeju, at an outdoor film screening in Jinju, and in a factory in Masan. The most important role of these initiatives was to support and sustain that growth.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Changwon Women's Living Community	Gender Equality Is Achieved through Participation and Action, Not Institutions Alone
2014	Gunpo Womenlink	<i>The Real Feminist Project: Making Feminism Part of Everyday Life</i>
2015	National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network	Strengthening the Effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming by Serving as a "Gender Bridge"
2015	Northeast Seoul Womenlink	Grassroots Women's School for a Gender-Equal World
2016	Munhwa Gihoek Dal	Rethinking Sexual Culture in Rural Communities: "Let's Stop Letting Things Slide"
2016	National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network	Building a Platform to Support Participation in Local Gender-Responsive Policymaking: "Gender Mainstreaming Knows No Boundaries"
2017	Gyeongnam Women's Associations United	Gyeongnam Feminists, Let Us Be Ivy—Climbing over Walls toward a World of Equality and Shared Flourishing!
2018	Gyeongnam Women's Associations United	Gyeongnam Feminists—Let's Meet! (Encountering Strong Feminism in Everyday Life)
2018	BOSHU	Femi Sports: Women Come Together, Bodies Come Alive
2018	BRIDGE	Special mission, find your sister!
2019	Feminist in Action	In Search of Feminists, Far and Wide
2020	Korean Women Peasants Association	Envisioning Gender-Equal Villages: A Blueprint by Women Farmers and Young Women
2020	Rural Feminism Research Group	Building Rural Feminists' Capacity to Create Gender-Equal Workplaces and Communities

2) Global Engagement: Opening New Paths Abroad When Progress at Home Was Blocked

The global initiatives undertaken during this period served two main purposes. The first was to counter rollbacks in gender equality policy at home by mobilizing pressure through international institutions. The second was to share the experiences and language of Korean feminism with feminists in other

countries and build transnational solidarity. In different but complementary ways, these two strands broadened the horizons of Korea's gender equality movement.

(1) Cooperation and Solidarity with the UN and Other International Institutions

One of the earliest landmark achievements in engagement with international institutions came from the Youth Feminism Group, the predecessor of Youth Feminist Network Witty. In 2019, the group consolidated the demands of students who had come forward through the School #MeToo movement and submitted a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Through this process, demands that had been repeatedly blocked by schools and local education authorities in Korea were brought to the international stage and ultimately reflected in formal recommendations to the Korean government.

From 2023 to 2024, the Korean Women's Associations United directly briefed members of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) in Geneva on attempts to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the regression of Korea's institutional framework for advancing gender equality. These efforts helped secure concrete recommendations from the Committee. In 2025, marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the organization prepared a civil society report and shared it with international advocacy networks, including APWLD, thereby amplifying Korea's gender equality agenda globally. Another significant initiative was Women Making Peace's 2021 *Women's Korea Peace Appeal*, which expanded a declaration for peace on the Korean Peninsula, grounded in women's perspectives and the realities of everyday life, into a global peace initiative.

(2) Transnational Solidarity among Survivors of Sexual Violence

Efforts to build solidarity in response to transnational gender-based violence were another significant achievement of the global initiatives during this period. In 2015, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan convened an international symposium featuring

survivors of conflict-related sexual violence from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and activists working with women in military base communities in the Philippines. The symposium underscored that the issue of the Japanese military “comfort women” was not merely a matter of history, but was deeply connected to the conflict-related sexual violence that continues to occur around the world. It also demonstrated that solidarity among survivors could extend across national borders.

“We organized a symposium that brought a survivor from the Congo. It was the first symposium we had held to invite a survivor of conflict-related sexual violence from Africa to Korea. We also wanted to address the issue of militarism in the Philippines, so we invited a woman activist from there as well. Looking back, I sometimes wonder how we managed to make it happen. Even securing visas was difficult, and we faced challenges at every stage. Still, the symposium marked a real turning point in how the issue of the Japanese military ‘comfort women’ was understood within international solidarity movements. The perspectives of survivors of wartime sexual violence also changed significantly.”⁶⁾

In 2025, field research conducted in Vietnam by the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea examined how online sexual exploitation driven by Korean men intersected with offline exploitation in Vietnam. By revealing these links, the research laid the groundwork for a transnational response to gender-based violence.

(3) The Unexpected Global Reach of Online Feminist Content

Korean feminist content reached global audiences in unexpected ways. Between 2023 and 2024, the Beyond the Rainbow Foundation’s *Queering K-Pop* attracted a growing international audience through English subtitles, with viewers outside Korea accounting for 40 percent of its total viewership. In doing so, the project brought Korean queer feminist discourse into broader transnational conversations and networks.

During the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, the Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center worked toward establishing Asia’s first Pride House. By engaging with LGBTQ+ networks in Shanghai, Taipei,

6) Interview with an activist, February 2026

Tokyo, and elsewhere in the region, it helped bring issues of sexual and gender diversity in sport onto the global agenda. The achievements of the Queer Women's Games were subsequently presented at the 2019 ILGA Conference and shared with queer feminist activists from around the world.

The same trend can be seen in Feminist Journal Ilda's efforts to make its articles available in English and share them with feminist communities worldwide. Sustained by the dedicated contributions of professional translators, Ilda has maintained its English-language website over the years. While readership varies from article to article, its English-language content has attracted considerable attention from feminists based outside Korea.

One contributor—a foreign national based in Korea with professional expertise and a background in women's studies—has been translating or reviewing our articles for nearly ten years. At first, the work was entirely unpaid. We now offer some compensation, but it is still very modest. The contributor initially became involved in the hope of encouraging more foreign residents in Korea to engage with these issues. As it turns out, however, the people who make the greatest use of the articles are Koreans living abroad. Researchers in particular find the English-language site useful because it gives them an accessible way to introduce Feminist Journal Ilda to others. The English-language site has also helped us connect with more contributors overseas. Some have offered to translate articles themselves, while others have become involved as writers or sources of information. With so many Koreans now living abroad, the potential readership has grown considerably. Some articles are also shared widely among international readers, and once an article begins to circulate, it can sometimes generate a great deal of attention."⁷⁾

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan	Global Women's Action Network
2017	Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center	PRIDE HOUSE: Gender Equality in Sport
2018	UNNInetwork	Sports for All: 2018 Queer Women's Recreational Sports Games (Tentative)
2019	Youth Feminism Group	School #MeToo Changes Schools
2021	Women Making Peace	Women's Korea Peace Appeal

7) Interview with an activist, February 2026

Year	Organization	Project Title
2023	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	Reading Popular Culture through Queer Feminism: <i>Queering K-Pop</i>
2023	Korean Women's Associations United	From Local to Global : Linking Local, National, and Global Action through Gender Equality Agendas
2024	Korean Women's Associations United	9th Periodic Review of Response Activities in Korea at the 88th UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
2024	Beyond the Rainbow Foundation	A Global Gender-Equal Rainbow: A Visiting Platform for Queer Feminists
2025	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Preliminary Field Research to Inform Responses to Transnational Online Sexual and Racial Exploitation and Rape Culture
2025	Korean Women's Associations United	Carrying Forward the History of the Korean Women's Movement to Mark the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action

7. Activist Capacity-Building and Networking: The Power that Sustains the Movements

The sustainability of a gender equality movement cannot be secured by the strength of its agenda alone. Activists need the support necessary to avoid burnout and isolation and to pass the movement on to the next generation. The Foundation's activist capacity-building and networking initiatives were designed to create these conditions: helping isolated activists find peers and enabling those experiencing physical and emotional burnout to return to the movement. These initiatives were not about shaping the content of the movement, but about creating the conditions that make sustained activism possible. Ultimately, movements are sustained by people, and the role of these initiatives was to create an environment in which activists could find one another, offer mutual support, and grow together.

1) Identifying and Empowering New and Next-Generation Activists

In 2014, Feminist Journal Ilda recruited 30 young women and, through a feminist journalism course, helped them grow into activists who documented their own lives. That same year, the Korea Women's Hot-Line trained women in their twenties as gender-equality activists through its "Dating

Task Force,” enabling them to take the lead in promoting healthy dating cultures on university campuses. Both initiatives were guided by the same principle: to recognize young women not as passive recipients of education, but as agents of the movement.

In 2016, Haengbok Nuri provided activists in their second year of work in regional cities with training in history and public policy, as well as opportunities to monitor local councils. The project recognized that the second year is often the most difficult stage for activists, as their initial enthusiasm begins to fade and the realities of the work become more apparent. Strengthening their professional capacity to analyze institutions and public policy was seen as a way to help them remain engaged in the movement.

Another important achievement of this period was the development of a model in which those directly affected became experts in their own right. In 2016, the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea trained migrant women as professional counselors specializing in sexual violence, putting into practice a model of human rights protection led by migrant women themselves. The initiative challenged the entrenched hierarchy in which non-migrant Koreans were positioned as teachers and migrants as learners, creating opportunities for dialogue and solidarity on equal terms.

“When we were accepting applications for the ‘Sexual Violence Counselor Training for Migrant Women’ program, we received one from a migrant woman who listed her address as Cheongju, Chungcheongbuk-do. At first, we wondered whether she had entered her address incorrectly or had applied without realizing that the training would be held in Seoul. [...] Even after the program began, we worried about whether she would be able to complete it. Yet from the first day to the last, she proved to be the most dedicated participant in the class. To attend the sessions, which began at 9 a.m., she took an early-morning train and traveled between Chungcheongbuk-do and Seoul every Friday and Saturday. She not only arrived earlier than anyone else, but also participated actively in every session. People around her expressed concern about the strain of traveling such a long distance, but she explained that she had previously provided interpretation at immigration offices and police stations and continued to assist with counseling conducted in Vietnamese. Through these experiences, she had come to feel an urgent need for professional training. She said that, as a migrant woman herself, she wanted to develop greater expertise so that she could better support other migrant women.”*Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, 2016 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*

From 2020 to 2021, members of Witty's youth feminist instructor team developed their own curricula and lead the sessions themselves, growing as program designers and educators in the process. The most significant change produced by these initiatives was the shift from recipients of learning to producers of knowledge.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Feminist Journal Ilda	Documenting the Work and Identities of Women in Their 20s
2014	Korea Women's Hot-Line	The Dating Workshop: Toward Healthy and Equal Relationships
2016	Haengbok Nuri	Feminist Human Rights Activist Training Program: Advancing Equality through Human Rights
2016	Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea	Human Rights Protection for Migrant Women, Led by Migrant Women: Sexual Violence Counselor Training Program
2020	Youth Feminist Network Witty	So That Our Talk Continues
2021	Youth Feminist Network Witty	So That Our Talk Continues

2) Strengthening Professional Expertise: Analyzing, Documenting, and Educating

A series of initiatives helped activists move beyond intuitively identifying problems in the field by equipping them with the professional skills to analyze those problems structurally and document them in socially intelligible terms.

From 2015 to 2016, the National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network brought together activists from across the country and helped them develop expertise in analyzing local government budgets from a gender perspective. By developing the ability to identify structures of gender discrimination within the seemingly neutral and technical language of public budgets, the initiative gave activists a basis for making evidence-based demands of local governments.

The local gender-equality policy monitoring initiatives undertaken by the Changwon Women's Living Community in 2014 and the Korean Women's Associations United in 2023 gave activists from newly established organizations practical experience in drafting formal comments on proposed

ordinances and conducting comparative analyses of policies across all 17 metropolitan and provincial governments. These initiatives demonstrated that policymaking is not the exclusive domain of experts, but a field in which citizens can actively participate.

Professional capacity-building also extended to visual media. In 2014, Zoomanett helped cultivate a collective of women video makers, while in 2018, the Korea Women's Hot-Line trained translators specializing in feminist audiovisual content. Both initiatives sought to build within the movement the media expertise needed to broaden the reach of gender-equality discourse. The latter initiative helped develop feminist audiovisual translation as a specialized field in Korea, where expertise had previously been scarce, and connect practitioners working in the field, thereby building the infrastructure needed for Korean feminist content to reach international audiences. In 2023, People and Peace offered an advanced training course for instructors specializing in sexual rights education for people with disabilities. Designed to meet the specific needs of special education classrooms, the course deepened instructors' expertise and strengthened their ability to respond effectively in the field.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Changwon Women's Living Community	Gender Equality Is Achieved through Participation and Action, Not Institutions Alone
2014	Zoomanett	<i>Women Who Left Home</i> (Tentative): Video Production Workshop and Screening
2015	National Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network	Making Gender Mainstreaming More Effective: The Gender Bridge Initiative
2016	Korean Gender-Responsive Budgeting Network	Building a Platform to Support Local Engagement in Gender-Responsive Policymaking: "Gender Mainstreaming Knows No Boundaries"
2018	Korea Women's Hot-Line	Promoting Gender Equality Awareness through the Distribution of Women's Human Rights Films and Training Women Practitioners in the Cultural Sector
2023	Korean Women's Associations United	From Local to Global: Linking Local, National, and Global Action through Gender Equality Agendas

Year	Organization	Project Title
2023	People and Peace	Understanding Sexual Rights, Reframing Sexual Rights: Sexual Rights Education for People with Disabilities Using Picture Books

3) Intergenerational Dialogue and the Building of Nationwide Solidarity Networks

Helping activists find one another was sometimes the most powerful form of capacity-building. In 2014, Feminedu Busan published The “*Rude Activist*” Dictionary, an e-book designed to help older and younger generations of activists understand differences in the language of the movement and to lay the groundwork for dialogue. By directly addressing generational tensions within the women’s movement—where senior activists were often perceived as patronizing and out of touch, while younger activists were dismissed as disrespectful—the project represented a rare effort by the movement to reflect critically on itself. It grew out of a concern that without intergenerational dialogue, the movement’s history and accumulated knowledge could not be passed on, leaving each generation to begin again from scratch.

“The meetings between senior and junior activists were organized around a shared recognition of the need to bridge the generational divide. Although the participants occasionally disagreed, they came to better understand one another’s perspectives by the end of the project. At the final presentation, as they reflected on their experiences, the senior activists acknowledged that they, too, had once been ‘rude activists,’ while the junior activists recognized that they themselves would eventually become senior activists.”(Feminedu Busan, *2014 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

In 2016, the Korean Women’s Associations United launched “Da.Da.Da,” an initiative to develop a new vision for the women’s movement. Working with activists from across the country, the project reviewed the movement’s approaches and practices over the previous three decades and explored ways to broaden its reach through focus group interviews and workshops tailored to different types of organizations. The process involved intensive internal discussions that generated more than 300 pages of verbatim transcripts and ultimately identified “empathy and change” as its guiding concepts. It also launched “Di.Ma.Fe,” short for “Dear My Feminism,” an online forum designed to connect with new actors in the movement.

In 2017, Gangnam Station Exit 10, followed by the Pan-Feminist Network in 2018 and UnivFemi from 2020 to 2021, connected small feminist groups made up of people in their twenties and thirties, as well as feminist organizations at universities across the country. Through these networks, they formed coalitions that could respond collectively to shared issues, creating the collective strength needed to confront backlash and misogynistic hostility that would have been difficult to face alone. Similarly, the nationwide network of regional women's film festivals established by the Incheon Women's Film Festival in 2014 and the Seoul International Women's Film Festival in 2017 created a system through which festival organizers working tirelessly in their respective regions could share experiences and support one another.

"After the training workshop, representatives of the Tongyeong Women's Film Festival said that they wanted to continue the conversation about women's film festivals, so we arranged a separate meeting to discuss the issues we had not had time to cover. As they were preparing to launch their first women's film festival that year, they faced many difficulties and unresolved questions and were unsure how to proceed. They began by saying how valuable it was to have the opportunity to speak with the Seoul International Women's Film Festival, which had extensive expertise in organizing such events. We had an in-depth discussion of the key elements involved in running a film festival, from film selection to audience outreach. We remained in contact after the workshop and continued to provide various forms of support to help preparations for the Sacheon Women's Film Festival move forward. Although our time together had been brief, I found it deeply rewarding, as the workshop facilitator, to see the organizers build a relationship with the Seoul International Women's Film Festival and draw on that network as they prepared for their own festival. Seeing organizations develop and strengthen their work through these regional workshops reaffirmed the importance of the initiative."([Seoul International Women's Film Festival, 2017 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

These various strands of networking came together in a symbolic moment at the 2024 nationwide workshop for frontline activists responding to violence against women, organized by Korea Women's Hot-Line. Bringing together approximately 400 activists from 204 organizations, the workshop provided an opportunity to develop strategies for responding to the government's rollback of policies addressing gender-based violence, redefine the vision of the women's rights movement, and reaffirm a sense of solidarity among fellow activists. For activists who had often felt isolated in their respective fields, the gathering offered a tangible sense that they were part of a much larger movement.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Feminedu Busan	Rewriting the Language of the Women's Movement: The " <i>Rude Activist</i> " Dictionary—Reframing the Language of Patronizing Senior Activists
2014	Incheon Women's Film Festival	Connecting Feminism with Local Communities through Film
2016	Korean Women's Associations United	Once More, toward a Gender-Equal Society: Da.Da.Da
2017	Seoul International Women's Film Festival	Strengthening Regional Women's Film Festivals through a Film Archive
2017	Gangnam Station Exit 10	Establishing the "Kkol-Fem Union" (Tentative): An Alliance of Young Feminist Groups
2018	Pan-Feminist Network	Strengthening the Pan-Feminist Network Nationwide
2020	UnivFemi	2030 University Feminist Networking
2021	UnivFemi	2021 University Feminist Networking
2024	Korea Women's Hot-Line	We, Connected: A Great Step Forward—National Workshop for Frontline Activists Responding to Violence against Women

4) Preventing Burnout and Fostering a More Egalitarian Culture

What often leaves activists exhausted is not external hostility, but isolation and hierarchy within the movement itself. The following initiatives confronted that reality directly. In 2014, the Working Women Academy's "Donghaeng" program helped activists revisit their personal visions and build a foundation of mutual support through stress management and mindfulness. The program began with the recognition that a step back from the demands of the movement and care for their own bodies and minds are essential conditions for sustaining long-term engagement in the movement.

"This project addressed a need that I felt keenly myself as an activist in my fifth year. Self-organization is a process of reflecting on one's current work and reassessing and restructuring one's values and vision. Exhausted by poor working conditions and job-related stress, I needed a form of healing that would allow me to remain active in the field. [...] The sessions on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy were particularly helpful in practice, especially those on responding to negative thoughts, clarifying values, developing medium- and long-term action plans, and overcoming obstacles to living in accordance with those values. Meeting the other women activists was also a source of strength. As we shared our current concerns and visions, I found reassurance in realizing that we were facing similar challenges under difficult circumstances."(Working Women Academy, 2014 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

In 2016, the Guro Women's Association organized a restorative retreat for grassroots women activists struggling to balance their activist work with the demands of everyday life. The initiative showed that, more than formal training, simply having time to rest and talk together could provide a foundation for communication and network-building.

In 2021, FADO experimented with an organizational model based on horizontal teamwork rather than hierarchical relationships, enabling individual activists to develop a sense of belonging within the team while contributing their professional expertise. The collaborative process of creating *Now Fado*, a feminist self-defense training workbook, showed that a non-hierarchical organization could be both more creative and more sustainable.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2014	Working Women Academy	"Donghaeng": Self-Organization and Network-Building for Women Activists
2016	Guro Women's Association	Building a Network for a Gender-Equal Guro: Connecting with Grassroots Women's Groups
2021	FADO	Acting Like FADO!

8. Documentation and Archiving: What Goes Unrecorded Cannot Become History

The documentation projects shared a common conviction: what is not recorded cannot become history, and what is excluded from history is liable to be repeated. From 2014 to 2025, the documentation and archiving initiatives supported by the Foundation put this conviction into practice. The lives of women workers who developed occupational diseases while working in factories, the voices of women who lived in red-light districts, the names of local women who sustained their communities, and the struggles of activists who raised their voices in public squares—all might have disappeared without a trace had they not been documented. The 76,925 archival records, thousands of photographs, hundreds of interviews, and dozens of archival volumes produced through these initiatives constitute an invaluable body of knowledge for the Korean women's movement and give future generations a stronger foundation from which to begin. These initiatives demonstrate that documentation is itself a form of activism.

1) Documenting Women's Labor and the History of the Labor Movement

The history of women's labor long remained outside the official record. The names of women workers were often absent from both corporate histories and accounts of the labor movement. The following initiatives sought to restore their place in that history.

In 2015, the MasanChangwon Women Workers Association recorded the oral histories of women who had worked in the Masan Free Export Zone in the 1970s and 1980s and produced the documentary film *Voices of the Women Who Came Before Us*. By recovering on film the struggles that official history had failed to preserve, the project documented the roots of today's women workers' movement and showed where it had come from.

From 2018 to 2019, Zoomanett published *A Collection of Women's Work Experiences*, comprising alternative résumés and video essays in which women reflected on their experiences of work. The project used new forms of documentation to capture the work experiences of full-time homemakers, women with interrupted careers, part-time workers, and others whose work could not be adequately represented in conventional résumés. In doing so, it brought forms of labor that had long remained invisible into public discourse.

"At first, some participants appeared slightly uncomfortable, but they gradually became absorbed in the writing process and began to put their work experiences and memories into words. During the sessions, everyone listened closely to one another's stories. They became angry together, offered advice, and sometimes simply waited in silence when someone burst into tears. Then, one day—perhaps the topic was the people they had encountered at work who had either helped or hurt them, or perhaps one participant had finally completed an overdue assignment to create a story using three photographs—a participant's eyes began to fill with tears as she read her work aloud. Her voice caught before she could finish the paragraph, and she asked the person beside her to continue reading. The next person began calmly, but soon she too was in tears. The text was then passed from one person to the next, with each participant reading a paragraph as the tears spread around the room. By the end of the reading, the classroom was filled with the sound of quiet sobbing. The piece itself was not particularly sad. Even as they cried, the participants seemed puzzled by their own reactions, asking, 'Why am I crying?' In that unexpected moment of emotional resonance, the text no longer felt like one person's private story, but rather a story shared by everyone in the room. The participants left that day looking somehow relieved. From then on, reading one another's work aloud became a regular practice within the group." ([Zoomanett, 2018 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program](#))

In 2025, the Korean Women Workers Association analyzed 76,925 counseling records accumulated over three decades, empirically documenting changes in the structures of gender discrimination in the Korean labor market. The focus of these cases shifted over time—from working conditions in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, to maternity and paternity rights, and later to sexual harassment and workplace bullying. This trajectory demonstrated how individual counseling records can become a valuable source of data for understanding broader social structures.

In the same year, SHARPS interviewed 15 people, including workers affected by occupational diseases in the electronics industry and bereaved family members, and published *Beyond the Circuit*, a collection of their life histories. The project documented occupational disease from a gender perspective, using the testimony of those directly affected to reveal how industry had treated women workers' bodies as expendable.

The small-group format allowed for close discussion and detailed questions and answers, although I also wished that more people had been able to attend. I participated in the documentation project both as a documenter and as a member of the project staff. What remains most vivid in my memory is sharing the written account with one of the workers affected by occupational disease whom I had interviewed and receiving her feedback during the review process. I had sincerely hoped that this documentation would hold meaning not only for SHARPS, but also for the narrators who had given their time and shared their stories. Seeing that it did brought me a sense of relief.”(SHARPS, 2025 *Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program*)

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	MasanChangwon Women Workers Association	<i>Voices of the Women Who Came Before Us: Women Workers, Living Histories</i>
2018	Zoomanett	Creating Alternative Résumés Together: Recovering and Documenting Women's Work Experiences
2019	Zoomanett	Creating Alternative Résumés Together II: Documenting and Sharing Women's Work Experiences
2025	Korean Women Workers Association	Thirty Years of the Equality Hotline: Structural Gender Discrimination and Women Workers' Responses

Year	Organization	Project Title
2025	SHARPS	Activism and Documentation to Advance the Right to Health of Women Workers in the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries

2) Documenting the Anti-Prostitution Movement and the Closure of Red-Light Districts

The effort to preserve what was disappearing took on particular urgency in the documentation of red-light districts. When a red-light district closes, the traces of the women who lived there disappear with it. These initiatives sought to preserve those traces in the historical record.

From 2020 to 2021, the National Solidarity against Sexual Exploitation of Women collected materials relating to the fatal brothel fires in Gunsan in 2000 and 2002. It published a white paper and launched the Women in Prostitution Human Rights Archive website. Through this work, the names and memories of the women who had died in the fires two decades earlier became part of the official record.

“We had long felt that we needed to produce white papers on the Daemyeong-dong and Gaebok-dong fires and preserve the relevant records. It was one of those unfinished tasks that was always hanging over us. But we had neither the funding nor the time, so it remained on our agenda for years while we continued our other work. Ever since the tenth anniversary, we had kept saying that it needed to be done, but it continued to be postponed. After much deliberation, we decided to organize the materials as an archival project and submit a proposal to KFW. We applied to the Grantmaking Program and received funding.”⁸⁾

During the same period, Sonya’s House, Women’s Rights Counseling Center, collected 2,211 photographs of the Cheonho-dong red-light district, along with oral histories, maps, and other materials. It published these materials in an archival volume titled *Memories and Records of the Vanished Cheonho-dong Red-Light District*. Created in collaboration with local residents and artists, the project went beyond the collection of archival materials. It transformed the site of the former red-light district, and the stories of the women who had lived there, into part of the historical record.

8) Interview with an activist, February 2026

“The Foundation’s support made an enormous difference, and we were deeply grateful for it. Without that support, I do not think we could even have imagined undertaking this project. Documentation is especially important in the field of violence against women. Red-light districts are places that people simply want to demolish, turn away from, and bury as though they had never existed. That is precisely why we believe records must be preserved. If everything is erased and buried as though it never happened, there is no way to properly document the women who were victimized there or the history of what took place.”(In-depth Interview, Case 11)

In 2025, Saenal, the Gyeongbuk Women’s Field Counseling Center in Pohang, collected the oral histories of 15 women affected by sexual exploitation and local residents ahead of the closure of the red-light district. These accounts were published in a volume titled *Pohang Daeheung-dong “Her” Story*. Grounded in the belief that the history of sexual exploitation must be documented to prevent its repetition, these projects demonstrated that archiving can itself be an act of resistance. Efforts to document the Seoseong-dong red-light district in Changwon are also underway in 2026.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2020	National Solidarity against Sexual Exploitation of Women	2000-2002 Nabi Jari: Documentation Project on the Fatal Brothel Fires in Gunsan
2021	National Solidarity against Sexual Exploitation of Women	2000-2002 Nabi Jari: Documentation Project on the Fatal Brothel Fires in Gunsan
2020	Sonya’s House, Women’s Rights Counseling Center	Documenting the History of Women’s Human Rights in Cheonho-dong: “Records Remember Time”
2021	Sonya’s House, Women’s Rights Counseling Center	Documenting the History of Women’s Human Rights in Cheonho-dong: “Records Remember Time”
2025	Gyeongbuk Women’s Field Counseling Center, Saenal	<i>Pohang Daeheung-dong “Her” Story</i>

3) Archiving the History of the Women's Movement and Feminist Discourse

Documenting a movement is a way of passing its language on to the next generation. In 2019, the Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center produced videos on the history of activism in five areas, including the anti-sexual violence activism and women's labor activism, and published a booklet of interviews with activists. In 2018, BRIDGE in Busan interviewed 30 activists who had participated in women's movements at universities in the region between 1985 and 2005 and compiled a 21-year timeline. By giving contemporary activists an opportunity to reconnect with the roots of their movement, the project helped bring the history of the local women's movement into a broader historical record. In 2025, the Korean Women's Associations United produced a civil society report marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The report examined the development of women's rights discourse, policies, and movements in Korea over the preceding three decades and disseminated its findings both domestically and internationally.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2018	BRIDGE	Special mission, find your sister!
2019	Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center	Feminist Talk Show: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis—Toward an Intergenerational Synthesis of Feminist Movements
2025	Korean Women's Associations United	Connecting the History of the Korean Women's Movement: Marking the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action

4) Documenting Local Communities, Culture, and Women's Lives

In 2020, the Chungbuk Women's Living Solidarity Network published a collection of oral life histories based on interviews with ten local women who had long sustained their communities. The older participants described being deeply moved as they saw their lives take shape in book form. They

regarded the volume as their autobiography and said that the experience had restored their sense of pride. By reconstructing a regional history that had largely been written from a male-centered perspective, the project showed that documentation can also offer a healing experience to those whose lives are recorded. In 2021, the Daegu Women's Association published *Local Communities, Women, and Film: Glimpsing Another World*, an archival volume documenting the ten-year history of the Daegu Women's Film Festival and featuring interviews with women filmmakers from the region. The publication traced the development of the local women's cultural movement.

In 2015, Women Making Peace documented the voices of older women through a series of roundtable discussions. Participants included women who had survived civilian massacres during the Korean War and first-generation women who had fled south during the conflict. By demonstrating the healing power of "speaking out" about experiences that had remained a source of lifelong grief, the project brought women's experiences—long excluded from historical accounts—into the official record.

"It was remarkable to hear these women tell their own stories of 'the incident'—stories they had never shared even with their children. As their voices gradually grew stronger, I came to understand deeply the power of giving voice to one's experiences and the effect it can have on those who listen. I did regret that there were parts I could not fully understand because they spoke so quickly and had so much to say. They spoke at length about the grief of losing their parents in the massacres, the hardships they endured in their marital families, and even the resentment they had felt toward their sisters-in-law. As a staff member, I sometimes felt the pressure of time. Still, we listened without interruption and responded with empathy, hoping that the opportunity to speak would help ease their pain and become part of a healing process." (Women Making Peace, 2015 Final Report on the Gender-Equal Society Development Program)

From 2021 to 2022, Okhee Salon documented the experiences of care workers and family caregivers through in-depth interviews and photographs. The project culminated in a photo essay book and an online exhibition. It revealed how care work had long been taken for granted and left undocumented. Once recorded, care was reframed from a matter of personal sacrifice into a social issue.

※ List of Related Projects Supported by KFW

Year	Organization	Project Title
2015	Women Making Peace	Women Speak: Seventy Years of Liberation and Division
2020	Chungbuk Women's Living Solidarity Network	Women of Chungbuk through Their Life Stories
2021	Daegu Women's Association	Women's Film in Daegu and Gyeongbuk: A Retrospective and Archive
2021	Institute for Life and Culture, Okhee Salon	Living through Disaster and the Gendered Crisis of Care
2022	Institute for Life and Culture, Okhee Salon	Living through Disaster and the Gendered Crisis of Care