

GENDER EQUALITY WORK MI

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

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In July 2021, Mekong Institute (MI) and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) rolled out its third international online training program on “Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: Sharing Good Practices and Experiences” as part of continuing efforts to enhance governance and accountability towards gender balance. Over 80 participants from Algeria, Bahrain, Botswana, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam participated—making the 10-day activity among the highest- attended online programs in MI’s history. Get to know how the gender development sessions were received by Ms. Sandra Thompson, Prevention Programmes and Education Officer of the Gender Affairs Bureau at Guyana’s Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, by reading her interview.

1. HOW WILL THE PROGRAM HELP PROMOTE GENDER BALANCE IN YOUR COUNTRY?

Fresh perspectives and approaches from Thailand and those from the other 25 countries widened my gender lens. Recommendations that are applicable in my country such as setting up sounding boards and accountability mechanisms will influence the reconstruction of our training manuals and department practices.



2. WHAT WERE THE CORE LESSONS YOU LEARNED FROM THE TRAINING PROGRAM?

The importance of intersectionality and women’s participation in the development of policies were my key takeaways. I also had a deeper understanding that lasting sustainable development can only be secured if gender development is applied and embedded across all spheres of our socioeconomic efforts.

3. HOW WILL THESE LEARNINGS BE APPLIED IN YOUR LINE OF WORK?

From the sessions, I have learned to pay closer attention to gender balance in the strategic design of our programs. This includes requiring fair male and female representation in project implementation, as well as women’s active participation in the development of their communities. Overall, it has made me be more considerate of and responsive to the perspectives, interests, and needs of both women and men.

4. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE STRENGTHS OF THE MI AND TICA PROGRAM?

MI and TICA's ability to draw in a diverse and multi- sectoral group of international participants is a strong advantage. This allowed us to exchange and learn more about the ideas, experiences, and approaches of others.

5. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO TRANSFER THE KNOWLEDGE YOU GAINED TO OTHERS IN GUYANA?

A detailed report of MI and TICA's sessions will be shared to my colleagues. I will also speak of my experience with the hope of raising the discussion on our shared responsibility in promoting and protecting gender equality.