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The 26th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women – Kitakyushu
“Promoting Active Participation by Women - In Cooperation with Asia”



Ms. Asako OSAKI
Keynote speaker



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Women Today

Can the Sustainable Development Goals Act as a New, Effective Measure for Achieving Gender Equality?

In September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in New York by leaders of the United Nations member states. Based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which previously served as guidelines for world development, the SDGs have resulted in excellent progress in the world development agenda. Unlike the MDGs, which set sustainable development as their main goal with focus on developing countries, the SDGs have been developed with consideration given to participation and action by all types of countries, including poor, rich, and middle-income countries. The SDGs clearly indicate that the root cause of poverty cannot be corrected without comprehensive development in a wide variety of fields, including not only economic development, but also the improvement of social systems and services, and the establishment and operation of governmental organizations.

The 17 goals in the SDGs represent the philosophy of comprehensively and tenaciously tackling both new challenges regarding development (economy, education, health, social security, employment opportunities, gender equality, climate change, environmental protection, inequality, infrastructure, energy, consumption, biodiversity, oceans, and industrialization) and existing problems that have been preventing sustainable development so far.

As well as the MDGs, which incorporated gender equality as one of their eight goals, the SDGs also include a goal that is exclusively dedicated to gender equality. SDG 5 is to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,” however, the road to the adoption of this as a separate goal was far from straight. Many thorough discussions were held among an extensive range of stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, and United Nations organizations.

Gender equality is covered by other goals as well, for example, by SDG 10: “Reduce inequality within and among countries.” Despite that, gender equality has been established as an individual, separate goal in SDG 5. Behind this is a concern that the focus of gender discrimination and inequality, almost exclusively against women, could be blurred if placed in the big framework of “sustainable development.” Considering that such discrimination and inequality remain deeply entrenched in society, economics, and politics, it is necessary to set a clearly specified goal with a straight focus on the problem.

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, held



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Gender Advisor for Asia & the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Ms. Koh MIYAOI

in Beijing in 1995, the recognition that gender equality is a prerequisite to development and peace has been growing on a global level. This growth is partly thanks to the MDGs, and accordingly, there has been a gradual improvement in women’s human rights regarding equality. Compared to the other development goals, however, the speed of improvement is slower, and the improvement varies widely depending on the country. It has now been 20 years since the conference in Beijing. Still, gender equality has continued to be set as an individual and separate goal, and one of the reasons for this is a strong determination never to waste the results that have been achieved so far.

As indicated by the evolution from the MDGs to the SDGs, problems regarding development are becoming more and more complicated. So are the synergy generated by interaction between such problems is also becoming more and more complicated. The SDGs have been established based on the perspective that to comprehensively address development problems, which cover a broad range of fields, is the best way to sustainable development. The effective way to a general achievement of the SDGs is not to separate the 17 goals and strive to attain each one, but to analyze and clarify the connections between the factors behind each goal and use that knowledge effectively. In this process, the achievement of gender equality will serve as a critical driving force for accomplishing not only SDG 5, but also the other goals.

This generates the innovative effects of the SDGs. Gender inequality prevents sustainable development. To abolish such inequality, it is necessary not only to set a goal exclusively dedicated to the problem, but also to adopt the approaches of incorporating gender equality as a driving force to solve various problems. By doing so, I believe that the expectations of the world on the SDGs will be fulfilled in a tangible manner.

Biography of Ms. Koh MIYAOI

After graduating from University of East Anglia with Bachelor of International Development and Master of Gender Analysis in International Development, Ms. Koh Miyaoi has been working for promoting gender equality in several institutions of the United Nations from 1996. She currently works as Gender Advisor for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from December, 2014.

The Past 10 Years and the Next 10 Years in Cambodia



ANGKOR COOKIES CO., LTD, President
Ms. Sachiko KOJIMA

Began working as a Japanese-language instructor in 1999 in Cambodia. Established ANGKOR COOKIES in 2004 to provide employment opportunities for women in Cambodia. The firm currently employs about 100 local staff members, and manufactures confectionery using domestic ingredients and sells them as souvenirs, such as cookies shaped like the World Heritage site Angkor Wat. Built the company's farm in Siem Reap in 2013, thus launching a project of developing agriculture in Cambodia into a so-called "sextiary industry."

When I was a junior at university, I traveled to China, where I was truly stimulated by the exciting atmosphere typical to Asia, and made me feel like experiencing the chaos of the region even more, and working in a foreign country. Taking a year's leave of absence from school, I obtained a qualification as a Japanese-language instructor.

My original plan was to begin working as a Japanese-language instructor under a program of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) immediately after the graduation from university. In reality, however, I continued to fail the program's examination, so I decided to save money and use it to go abroad. After graduation I began working not as a full-time employee, but as a part-time worker, and actually I had a few part time jobs at the same time. While working that way I was able to join a local Japanese-language school as an instructor, and my long-cherished desire was fulfilled.

However, while working as an instructor in Japan, my passion to work in a foreign country continued to grow. Though I had a job, I took the examination for a JOCV program several times, but continued to fail. A few years had already passed since graduating from university, but I was still in Japan. Compared with my friends from university, who were demonstrating their capabilities as full-time employees at their companies, I totally lost my confidence. In this situation, I decided to apply for a position at a private Japanese language school, rather than continue taking the examination for the JOCV program. At age 26, I felt this was my last chance to do so.

The Japanese language school, located in Cambodia, opened the door to realizing my dream of working abroad and served as the starting point of my current career. In 1999, shortly after the end of the country's civil war, I came to Siem Reap, Cambodia at age 26; the country was still in a chaotic situation. After doing a wide variety of jobs such as a Japanese-language instructor and a tour guide, in 2004 I established ANGKOR COOKIES. Siem Reap, where I live now, is a historic city with the World Heritage site Angkor Wat. Since it was expected that the city would draw more sightseers in the future, I decided to set up a company to make souvenirs for sightseers.

Behind this decision was a phrase from a young Cambodian man I met when working as a Japanese-language instructor. He told me that there was no future for poor people. For a long time I could not forget the phrase,

which motivated me to found the company. I wanted to create an environment where people born in poor families without education could become independent and demonstrate their capabilities, as long as they had motivation.

At that time I focused on establishing a company rather than an NGO. I believe that people feel confidence and pride in themselves when they realize that they are of use for society. I wanted people in Cambodia to live their lives by working and earning, rather than by receiving support from NGOs and volunteers. Poor people in Cambodia lack educational opportunities, but they have excellent potential and capabilities, and are far from being incompetent. With opportunities, they can become independent and live more fulfilling lives.

Since I would like to especially help women become independent, I have been actively employing women from rural areas. Currently, my company employs 90 people, more than 90% of whom are women. Nothing pleases me more than seeing people who joined my company in their teens get married, have babies, and sustain families. Since most employees at my company are women, pregnant women are always present. A few years ago I established an in-house nursery to enable female employees to work without worrying about their children. I feel that a company where you can hear children laughing or crying is very energetic.

Now that more than 10 years have passed since establishing the company, and the company has stabilized, I have launched a new project for the next 10 years. Although there are employment opportunities in urban areas, farmers and others in rural areas suffer from low income and live hard lives, which force many of them to go to neighboring countries to find jobs. The country's economic development ironically has made it tough for people in rural areas to live their lives.

To help such farmers live richer lives, I would like to develop agriculture into a so-called "sextiary industry," thereby processing local specialties into attractive items and selling them after proper branding. Although it will take some time before I present a successful case, I firmly believe that I can do it. A firm belief in yourself can pave the way to realizing your dreams. Now, I feel incredibly happy that I can live in Cambodia and contribute to the country.

the 26th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

Date: Saturday, October 31, 2015, 13:30 – 16:00

Venue: Large Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE

In her keynote address titled “Promoting Women’s Active Participation - In Cooperation with Asia,” Ms. Asako OSAKI, an expert on development policies and gender issues who is active in a wide variety of organizations, including a government-affiliated body, an international organization, an NGO, and a research institute, spoke about current problems future visions and regarding women’s active participation in Japan and other Asian countries.

Afterwards, panelists from foreign countries (specifically, Hong Kong and Vietnam) gave presentations on the reality of women’s active participation in Asia. In addition, Japanese panelists spoke about their experiences and the reality of women’s active participation in Japan. These presentations helped the audience understand better what should be done to promote women’s active participation.

► Keynote Address

Ms. Asako OSAKI

(Visiting Professor, School of Policy Studies,
Kwansei Gakuin University / Director, Plan Japan)



International Society’s Common Targets from a Global Perspective

The title of today’s address is “Promoting Women’s Active Participation.” It is said that women’s active participation is a global issue, which means that it is an issue being tackled not only in a certain region, but all over the world.

Presently, common targets for international society include gender equality and women’s empowerment. Behind this trend are activities promoted by the United Nations. The main pillars of the United Nations’ activities are 1) peace and security; 2) development; and 3) human rights. Of the three, “development” seeks to ensure that each individual can fulfill his/her own innate potential and live a life of dignity as a member of society.

Women’s Empowerment – Essential Element for Development Assistance

After the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the main focus of efforts related to development was placed on support for reconstruction from the war. In the past 20 years, however, the focus has shifted to human development. What is necessary for realizing development is to ensure that human rights as well as health, education, and means of livelihood are respected, and that people can participate in politics and society. In short, the key to this lies in commitment, which will give people power, or empowerment.

Women’s Empowerment based on Economic Rationality

To realize this basic principle (ideal), a wide variety of international frameworks regarding women have been established. Motivations for promoting women’s active participation include, of course, the principle itself and the international frameworks, but the most influential motivation is economic rationality. It is expected that women’s active participation will lead to an increase in the workforce, improvements in competitiveness and investment effects, and the generation of a ripple effect. Over the past 15 years, the focus has been placed on women’s active participation from an economic perspective.

International Society’s Common Challenges in 2015

In 2015, international society’s common challenges include how to redistribute the burden of unpaid care labor (such as unpaid household chores, child-rearing, and nursing care of the

elderly and the sick) in households and society as a whole, as well as how to promote women’s participation in the development of social infrastructure. The perspective of gender equality has not yet been incorporated in all economic measures, which has resulted a gender gap in terms of labor wages and labor conditions.

What is Necessary for Women to “Shine” in a True Sense?

To enable women to actively participate in society “without any concerns,” it is necessary to ensure that both men and women equally share their family budget responsibilities and family responsibilities in general. This will promote gender equality, which will attract more investment from foreign investors who regard gender equality as an investment index, and will result in a positive economic effect.

In Japan, the government has set the target of having 30% of leading positions occupied by women by 2020. Certainly, it is said that if people with a certain attribute try to affect decision making, it is necessary to ensure that at least 30% of decision making positions are occupied by people with that attribute. Nevertheless, the important thing is not just to secure a sufficient number of people, but to promote gender equality from the viewpoints of laws, government policies, budgets, and people’s awareness. Furthermore, it is also integral to develop young female leaders who will address social problems in the future.

► Panel Discussion

<Panelists>

- Ms. Asako OSAKI

(Visiting Professor, School of Policy Studies, Kwansei Gakuin University / Director, Plan Japan)

- Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET

(Vietnam / Vice President of Hanoi Women’s Union)

- Ms. Clarie LO

(Hong Kong / Member of the Steering Committee of the Hong Kong Basic Law, Member of the Appeal Board of the Financial Disputes Resolution Council)

- Ms. Masako KATSUKI

(Sales Manager, Kitakyushu Head Office, the Nishinippon Shimbun)

- Mr. Harumichi YUASA

(Deputy President & Professor, Institute of Information Security / Director, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women)

<Coordinator>

- Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI

(President, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women)

Activities in Hanoi to Realize Gender Equal Society ***Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET***

The Vietnam Women's Union is an organization for women aged 18 or over. With the involvement of representatives from governmental organizations and related government agencies, the organization carries out various activities for women's equality, development, and progress. In the country's capital Hanoi, the organization's action policy is implemented by the Hanoi Women's Union. Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET, Vice President of the Hanoi Women's Union, shared with the audience the results of the organization's activities.

According to her, the major results include the implementation of political measures to realize a gender equal society, the creation of employment opportunities through vocational training and financial support, an increase in life expectancy through the provision of medical care services and reproductive health care services, and the improvement in women's education and morals through the spread of educational activities.

At the same time, there are such challenges that prejudice against women and belief in the superiority of men over women still exist in society, as well as that some women are still satisfied with their low self-esteem and do not believe in their own capabilities.

Current Situation of Women in Hong Kong ***Ms. Clarie LO***

Ms. Clarie LO shared with the audience the current situation of women in Hong Kong, especially in terms of education and employment.

Regarding employment, there is a concern in Hong Kong about the low employment rate for women. She spoke about measures conducted when she worked for the government, in order to increase the female workforce participation rate. One of such measures is the relaxation of regulations on foreign workers. Currently, approximately 300,000 foreign people work in Hong Kong, and serve as essential support for working women. According to her, this support has led to the improvement of the female workforce participation rate, and even to an increase in the number of women promoted to higher positions.

Nevertheless, the number of women engaged in top-level decision-making is still very small. She insisted that it was necessary to implement measures to develop young female leaders both in the public and private sectors.

Women's Active Participation : Current Situation and Challenges Seen from a Newspaper Company ***Ms. Masako KATSUKI***

Ms. Masako KATSUKI from the Nishinippon Shimbun has blazed a trail as a female manager in a local company. Based on her own experiences, she spoke about the current situation and challenges regarding women's active participation.

She joined the company in the following year after the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. She was the only woman among the 27 new employees at the company. In those days, there were no role models or career planning for women at the company, causing her to face many problems and emotional conflicts. Based on this experience, she spoke about how she felt about her younger female coworkers.

She has decided to sacrifice herself for her younger female coworkers. According to her, she continued to request the company to develop career plans to enable them to feel hopeful about their futures and raise their children without any concerns while working. The percentage of female newspaper reporters, accordingly, has increased to 15.6% (as of October 1) at the company. In addition, career plans are being developed so that each female worker can be promoted in her own field of expertise. Furthermore, women's voices are now being reflected in the contents of the newspaper, gradually leading to fair reporting without gender bias.

She insisted that if female employees at the company continued to speak up, they could change the company and contents of the newspaper, and eventually eliminate gender bias around the world. She also indicated that to increase the number of female managers, it was important for women to continue to work and to develop cross-sectional networks among them, as well as for companies' top management to receive trainings and awareness raising programs to change their attitude about the promotion of women.

Current Situation on Women's Active Participation in Kitakyushu ***Mr. Harumichi YUASA***

Based on the previous progress and current situation regarding women's active participation in Kitakyushu, Mr. Harumichi YUASA suggested future challenges and measures to be taken.

Using statistics, he explained the following facts: compared with other ordinance-designated cities in Japan, Kitakyushu has been making advanced efforts toward a gender equal society; and Kitakyushu has shown the most outstanding progress in gender equality among all ordinance-designated cities in the country.

Despite this situation, the problem is that the percentage of women taking leadership positions is still low, resulting in insufficient participation of women in decision-making regarding policies and courses of action. In addition, it is expected that in the near future, the Japanese population structure will become an inverted pyramid, which means that a small number of those in younger generations need to support a large number of those in senior generations.

Based on these problems, he said that the key lied in how to consider the relationship between child-rearing support and gender equality. He concluded by indicating as follows: realizing a society where people can raise their children while working is not exactly the same as promoting a gender equal society, but it is important to act with consideration given to the balance, relation, and overlapping part of the two themes.



At the panel discussion

Interaction between the Hanoi Women's Union and Women's Organizations in Kitakyushu

On Sunday, November 1, we held an interaction program between Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET, Vice President of the Hanoi Women's Union, Vietnam, along with two other senior members of the organization, and women's organizations in Kitakyushu. Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET had participated in the 26th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women, held on Saturday, October 31, 2015, as a panelist.

The interaction between the Hanoi Women's Union and KFAW started in 2013 when the Union participated in a seminar held by KFAW. In FY 2015, the participants in the study tour organized by KFAW visited the Union's headquarters in Hanoi. This was followed by the above-mentioned international interaction program held in Kitakyushu between women's organizations in Kitakyushu and the Hanoi Women's Union.

► Participants

Ms. Nguyen Thi TUYET
(Vice President, Hanoi Women's Union)
Ms. Le Thi Thien HUONG
(Vice President, Hanoi Women's Union)
Ms. Duong Thi Ly ANH
(Chairperson of Law and Policies, Hanoi Women's Union)



At the interaction program

Representatives of Five Women's Organizations in Kitakyushu
(Two to four representatives from each organization)

Council of Women's Groups of Kitakyushu
Kitakyushu Council to Promote Better Eating Habits
Kitakyushu Association of Nursery & Kindergarten Teachers
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Japan, Kitakyushu
Training Network for Leaders of Lifelong Learning

► First Session: Interaction Meeting

(Venue: Conference Room, 3rd floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE)

Report on Activities Implemented by the Hanoi Women's Union

The Hanoi Women's Union explained mainly about its organizational structure and main duties. The Union implements a wide variety of activities for women's equality and development, with its duties including a wide range of responsibilities, such as providing employment support and encouraging women to participate in social activities.

Report on Activities Implemented by Women's Organizations in Kitakyushu

Using slides, DVDs, and leaflets, each organization gave an easy-to-understand explanation on its activities. This served as a good opportunity for not only the Hanoi Women's Union, but also the women's organizations in Kitakyushu to recognize one another's activities once again.

► Second Session: Lunch Meeting (Venue: Harmonie Cinq Hotel)

The interaction meeting was followed by a lunch meeting.

With the attendance of the Mayor of Kitakyushu City, the lunch meeting was held in a friendly atmosphere. The participants exchanged comments on various topics. The Japanese participants asked questions about the details of the activities carried out by the Hanoi Women's Union, as well as about women and families in Vietnam. The Vietnamese participants answered that Vietnamese women wanted to have many children, three generations lived together in many families, and many families in urban areas employed household helpers (maids). Sharing a wide variety of information, the participants were able to have a better understanding of one another.



Commemorative photograph taken at the lunch meeting venue

Career Development Program for University Students

KFAW prepares a career development program for university students, and provides on-site seminars. This fiscal year, we held seminars under the program at the following four universities in Kitakyushu. In addition, we ran a seminar featuring a female company manager as a



Lecture at Kyushu International University (Ms. TSUCHIYA from Zenrin)

model for female working professionals. Moreover, as part of our newly developed program for high school students, we held a model seminar at Wakamatsu High School in cooperation with Kyushu International University.

The photograph shows the career development program held at Kyushu International University, with the invited guest speaker Ms. Kazuko TSUCHIYA from Zenrin Co., Ltd. To encourage students to consider the importance of a work-life balance and diversity, Ms. TSUCHIYA spoke about her career, as well as about her difficulties in striking the right balance between work and family, and how to overcome such difficulties. She also talked about her company's strategies regarding diversity and human resources development.

Participating students commented in line with the following:

- She seems to be enjoying both her work and family life very much, making me feel that I want to be like her.
- I'm impressed that she went to university even after giving birth, and is still going to university. I also would like to work hard.
- From her talk, I've learned that it is better to prepare your life planning at an early phase.

■ Seinan Jo Gakuin University

Dates: Monday, June 15, 2015, 14:40 - 16:10, No. of participants: 173
Friday, June 19, 2015, 14:40 - 16:10, No. of participants: 167

■ Kyushu Kyoritsu University

Dates: Monday, June 29, 2015, 10:45 - 11:30, No. of participants: 203
Tuesday, June 30, 2015, 14:50 - 15:35, No. of participants: 242

■ Nishinippon Institute of Technology

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2015, 09:00 - 10:30, No. of participants: 30

■ Kyushu International University

Dates: Tuesday, June 23, 2015, 16:20 - 17:50, No. of participants: 34
Friday, December 25, 2015, 13:00 - 14:30, No. of participants: 47
14:40 - 16:10, No. of participants: 47

■ Wakamatsu High School

Date: Thursday, August 6, 2015, 9:30 - 11:30, No. of participants: 30

Report on KFAW Research Program

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) conducts research on women in Asia, with the purpose of promoting the realization of a gender equal society. This fiscal year, KFAW's Chief Researcher carried out research on "Activities Performed by Women's Organizations in Local Communities." In addition, two teams of visiting researchers worked on the themes of "Support for DV Victims in Taiwan, Province of China and Malaysia," and "Nepalese People Living in Japan - Their Capabilities and Living Conditions." Below is a summary of the research conducted by KFAW's Chief Researcher on "Activities Performed by Women's Organizations in Local Communities."

In Kitakyushu, women's organizations carry out various activities in a wide range of fields, such as welfare, the environment, economics, and education, thereby supporting the development of their communities. Of particular note is the anti-pollution campaign Aozora-ga-hoshii (We Want a Blue Sky), launched in the 1960s by a women's organization in Tobata ward. This campaign is highly regarded by the United Nations as a good example of mobilizing the government and private sector companies to take necessary actions, resulting in solution of the industrial pollution problems with the involvement of all related sectors, namely citizens, government, and business.

To promote a gender equal society, it is important for women's organizations to advance their activities, to play an active role in developing their communities, and to produce local female leaders through their activities. In this regard, as a reference for women's organizations to promote their activities, the research explored the factors behind the success of the Aozora-ga-hoshii campaign. The research also examined activities promoted by women's organizations both within and outside Kitakyushu, as well as in Indonesia, and analyzed their roles, challenges, and future prospects.

In Indonesia, the system of neighborhood associations that was established when the country was occupied by Japan during the Second World War still exists. In addition, during the period of New Order, women's activities called PKK were conducted across the country under the leadership of the government in order to mobilize women for development projects. Even after the democratization, these also still exist as local activities. In a local community in the suburbs of Jakarta, where the research was conducted, PKK serves as an opportunity for women to get the information from the city authority, and to carry out neighborhood activities. At the PKK meeting, information from the government is communicated, and a mutual financing association called Arisan is also held.

The research results by the KFAW Chief Researcher and visiting researchers will be available in *Asia Josei Kenkyu* (in Japanese) Vol. 25, as well as in *KFAW Working Paper*.



At a meeting of a women's organization in Indonesia

KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminar

**Seminar: Acceptance of Foreign Care Workers
(KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminar 2015)**

In this age of globalization, the flow of people, goods, and information is becoming more and more active across national borders on a global scale. With this as a background, Japan's conclusion of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Southeast Asia is leading to the country's acceptance of more foreign nurses and care providers. In the field of elderly nursing care, due to the increase in the aged population and the decrease in the number of care workers, it is becoming more difficult to secure excellent human resources, and therefore, greater expectations are placed on foreign care workers. At the seminar, Associate Professor Reiko OGAWA from Kyushu University explained what was going on at facilities that had accepted foreign care workers, as well as what kind of system would be appropriate to an international flow of care workers. In comparing Japan to

Taiwan and Indonesia, Prof. OGAWA provided the audience with much food for thought.

Date: Wednesday, November 25, 2015, 18:00 - 20:00

Venue: Small Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Otemachi Building

Lecturer: Ms. Reiko OGAWA

(Associate Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Social and Cultural Studies, Kyushu University)

No. of participants: 29



“Study Tour 2015 in Viet Nam and Cambodia” Conducted

We conducted a study tour to Viet Nam and Cambodia from September 5th to 12th, 2015 to provide opportunities to learn about gender/poverty issues and international cooperation in these countries. Responding to the invitation we extended to the general public mainly in Kitakyushu, 16 people took part in the tour. Representing the participants, Ms. Asami SUGIMOTO and Ms. Sae YUMURA, students at Kyushu International University, report on activities during the tour.

Schedule

September 5 (Sat.)	Depart from Fukuoka for Hanoi
September 6 (Sun.)	Interaction with students at Hai Phong Private University
September 7 (Mon.)	Visit to Hai Phong City Hall, volunteer work
September 8 (Tue.)	Visit to Hanoi Women's Union and the TYM Fund
September 9 (Wed.)	Visit to JICA Viet Nam Office and TOTO Viet Nam
September 10 (Thu.)	Visit to primary schools in Cambodia and JVC Japan International Volunteer Center) Cambodia
September 11 (Fri.)	Visit to Angkor ruins
September 12 (Sat.)	Leave Hanoi for Fukuoka

Report on the study tour in Viet Nam

(Ms. Asami SUGIMOTO, Junior, Faculty of International Studies, Kyushu International University)

For the first four days of the study tour, we engaged in activities in Viet Nam. With the mercury hitting around 32 °C, it was pretty hot mainly because the country was in the midst of rainy season in September. Putting the climate aside, I very much enjoyed pho (noodle soup) and spring rolls, the two best known Vietnamese dishes, three times during my stay.

On the first day, we kicked off the tour in Viet Nam with an event to socialize with students at Hai Phong Private University. We interacted with them by cooking cuisines of our counterpart countries one another and playing traditional Vietnamese games. As a representative dish of Kitakyushu, we taught them how to cook yakiudon (noodle dish), while they gave us directions for preparing deep fried spring rolls, the typical Vietnamese cuisine. Then, we had a wonderful time trying out the country's traditional bamboo dance and listening to current popular songs. Despite the limited verbal communication among us, I felt their strong willingness to nurture our friendship as well as their warm and compassionate hospitality.

On the morning of the second day, we carried out volunteer work of cleaning up Do Son Beach in cooperation with local high school students. In the afternoon, we made a courtesy visit to Hai Phong City Hall representing the citizens of Kitakyushu, as the two cities had concluded a sister city agreement in April 2014. There, an official of the Department of Foreign Affairs gave us explanations about the city's history, industries, culture and others. Currently, the City of Hai Phong is proceeding with a project to expand the airport by incorporating international airlines, with a view to facilitating further economic advancement. In addition to this, a Japanese company is undertaking the construction of highways connecting Hanoi and Hai Phong. When completed, the new highways will cut the travel time between the two cities from two and a half hours to one hour. In addition



to the highways, the improvement of public transportation infrastructure will enable the reduction in the number of motorcycles, the primary mode of transport in the



country, thereby contributing to the solution of the emission gas issue. Through these measures, Viet Nam is expected to advance in the right direction in the course of tackling the environmental problems.

On the morning of the third day, we paid a courtesy call on Hanoi Women's Union. It is a public institution whose mission is to protect women's rights by advocating the development of relevant legal systems and providing support for education, in a bid to improve the living conditions of women in Hanoi. We observed activities at a job-training center for women located within the headquarters of the union. The center offers women trainings for acquiring cosmetic/hairdressing and cooking skills, with which they can find employment. I was glad to see firsthand the field where generous assistance was given to women for the facilitation of their employment. In the afternoon, we visited the TYM Fund, a microfinance institution, and its recipients. The TYM Fund was founded by Vietnam Women's Union, the umbrella organization of Hanoi Women's Union, to help implement the government's poverty alleviation programs. It provides women mainly in rural areas with unsecured micro loans. By encouraging women who use the microfinance services to set up repayment plans through weekly meetings, the institution has proudly achieved a repayment rate of 99%. It also implements various support programs, such as providing loans to households that have lost primary breadwinners, offering free health checkups to impoverished people, and giving access to scholarships to households with school-age children.

On the morning of the fourth day, we visited JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Viet Nam Office located in Hanoi, whose activities were the largest in scale among JICA offices in the Asian region. We were explained that the primary feature of JICA's technical assistance was “teaching beneficiaries how to fish, instead of just giving them fish”, metaphorically speaking. This means that JICA's approach places importance on human resources development to enable people in recipient countries to acquire technical knowledge and pass on know-how to future generations, instead of providing technical assistance just once and end it. We visited TOTO Viet Nam Co. Ltd. in Hanoi in the afternoon, and observed the production line of sanitary ware.

The impression I gained while visiting Viet Nam in person is that the country's urban areas are developing rapidly and

will undergo accelerated westernization in the near future, whereas there are still many impoverished people who manage to make ends meet by borrowing money in rural areas. The greatest benefit I reaped in this study tour is having seen with my own eyes the existence of disparities in lifestyle habits and standards of living between the rich and the poor even within the same country.

Through this tour, I also gained the sense of affinity with Viet Nam after learning the country received significant assistance and technical cooperation from Japan.

Report on the study tour in Cambodia
(Ms. Sae YUMURA, Sophomore, Faculty of International Studies, Kyushu International University)

From September 9th to 11th, we stayed in Cambodia visiting primary schools, farmers and a food-processing factory that received assistance from JVC (Japan International Volunteer Center) Cambodia, and Angkor Wat and other ruins. Throughout the stay, I spent quality time and each experience was quite fulfilling.

Kyushu International University is carrying out Book to Read Project to donate picture books to primary schools in Cambodia. In this study tour, we visited Thnal Datch Primary School, a recipient of the book donation, and Ou Samaky Primary School, a prospective recipient. The libraries in both schools have only a limited number of books, and are in need of more. The needs of these two schools, however, are not exactly the same, due to various factors such as different frequencies in the use of the libraries depending on the children's educational environments and age groups, and the number of books stocked in the libraries. When we asked them what kinds of books they needed, the pupils at Thnal Datch primary school said they would like to have books with a lot of illustrations, whereas those at Ou Samaky said they also needed books with more text. The valuable lesson I learned from this experience is that we need to see and talk with recipients of assistance in person to get a clear picture of their needs, instead of taking a cookie-cutter approach.

At the primary schools, we played with the children introducing Japanese traditional toys such as origami, kendamas, jump ropes, and rubber band slingshots. Despite the absence of verbal communication, we enjoyed the interaction with the children explaining how to play with the toys using body language. I was deeply impressed by big smiles on the children's faces when they played well.

Following that, we visited JVC Cambodia Siem Reap Office, a Japanese NGO that provides assistance to Cambodian children and women living in rural areas. There, we observed a food processing factory and a kitchen garden, both of which were supported by JVC. Agricultural land in Cambodia is in harsh conditions for vegetables to grow as its soils are poor in nutrient. We tend to assume that any crops can be cultivated as long as we have land. But this is not true. Actually, I was surprised to know that ordinary vegetables such as carrots and squashes were cultivated only on large-scale farms with an abundant supply of water and fertilizers. Against this backdrop, JVC provides farmers with assistance in taking approaches they wish to try, giving advice on crops and methods well suited for the land. I realized the key to success in making the activities sustainable was the implementation of appropriate support,



taking into consideration the actual situation of the field.

In addition to these sites, we visited the ruins of Angkor, a famous World Heritage Site. Elaborate carvings on the walls of the corridors and temples are very dynamic, leaving overwhelming impression on viewers regardless of the distance from them. As the name suggests, the ruins of Angkor are comprised of multiple temple ruins scattered on the vast area of land, so the visitors need to travel by bus even within the site. On top of its vastness, walking in the hot weather made me exhausted. In contrast, our tour guide was vigorous and gave us in-depth explanation about the history and characteristics of each ruin. I strongly felt the need to learn from our tour guide's example in terms of both physical strength and extensive knowledge. Although the ruins of Angkor are popular sightseeing spots that attract many foreign tourists, there are many problems concerning their conservation such as the crumbling stone structures and the ruins covered with overgrown tree roots. Hearing that many countries including Japan, France and the United States have joined the restoration efforts, I came to realize that international cooperation could be carried out in various ways. This was also a precious experience for me.



I learned a lot from the interaction with the local people, not to mention the experiencing of the different cultures and languages, which will be useful in considering the future

outlook of international cooperation. Although I am fully aware of the importance of classroom learning, observing with my own eyes what is happening in the world is equally important. I, therefore, have determined to make the most of the international way of thinking I acquired through this study tour in real life from now on.

Opinions and Comments from Participants

- I experienced a world utterly different from Japan, which has broadened my perspective and knowledge.
- In this study tour, I got a firsthand look at the actual situation of rapid growth in Viet Nam. I also realized the country still had a lot of problems to solve.
- I found that there were many things I fully understood only by talking with the local people in person.
- I had valuable experiences listening to stories and admiring sceneries in those countries, which was impossible without leaving Japan. The study tour was very inspiring for me.

KFAW Study Tour Debriefing

Date: Sunday, October 11, 2015, 14:00 - 15:30

Venue: Small Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE

No. of Participants: 30



We held a debriefing on the KFAW Study Tour to Vietnam and Cambodia. From among the tour participants, ten people gave an outline of the facilities that they had visited, and also spoke about what they had learned through the tour.

Presentation Summary (Excerpts)

- At an interaction program with the students of Haiphong Private

University, we cooked Japanese and Vietnamese dishes. The students actively helped me cook the dishes, and I was surprised that the male students in particular cooked with enthusiasm.

- I feel that the gender issues explained at the Hanoi Women's Union are found not only in Vietnam, but also in Japan and other countries. I believe that it is necessary to solve women's problems through international cooperation.

- In Cambodia, educational levels and systems vary depending on the elementary schools. There are also differences in the academic environment and the number of books stocked in libraries. I feel that this is why it is important to meet directly with local people and understand their actual situation before providing support.

Seminar on DV Prevention, and Follow-up Seminar for Facilitators of Dating DV Preventive Education

Date: Saturday, September 19, 2015,

10:00-12:00 (First Session), 13:00-16:30 (Second Session)

Venue: Small Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Otemachi Building

First Session: Seminar on DV Prevention – To Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women and Children

Lecturer: Ms. Fumie KURATOMI

(Director, NPO Fukuoka Gender Research Institute)

No. of Participants: 45

On Saturday, September 19, we held a seminar on DV prevention with the invited guest speaker, Ms. Fumie KURATOMI, Director of the NPO



Fukuoka Gender Research Institute, under the title "To Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women and Children."

Ms. KURATOMI stated that DV was a problem regarding not human relationships, but human rights, and that DV was a problem regarding the social structure, which could not be solved through personal efforts. She also indicated that some people felt that victims should also be blamed, and felt that perpetrators used violence because they were abnormal. She insisted that these ideas expressed people's mentality that they just would like to feel secure from violence. According to her, there is a concern that this mentality will eventually multiply the damage caused by violence.

To prevent creating a DV victim, it is critical for a person to do the followings in their daily life and local community: 1) to realize the prejudice that they have; 2) to release themselves from gender-related restrictions; 3) to form mutually respectful relationships with partners on an equal footing; and 4) to become even more sensitive to

a wide variety of forms of violence found in society. Ms. KURATOMI concluded her seminar by indicating the importance of these things.

Second Session: Follow-up Seminar for Facilitators of Dating DV Preventive Education

Coordinator: Ms. Fumie KURATOMI

(Director, NPO Fukuoka Gender Research Institute)

Lecturer: Ms. Izumi MORI

(Counseling Staff of NPO Asian Women's Center)

Lecturer: Ms. Hiromi KAWABUCHI

(Director, Counseling Office, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE)

No. of participants: 24

In the second session, we held a follow-up seminar for facilitators of dating DV preventive education. Ms. Izumi MORI, a counseling staff member



of the NPO Asian Women's Center, and Ms. Hiromi KAWABUCHI, Director of the Counseling Office of the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE, delivered lectures based on the theme "Actual Situation of Counseling for Victims," referring to actual cases.

In the latter half of the second session, all the participants in the seminar, including members of the Dating DV Prevention Fukuoka (Ripple Fukuoka) and the DV Prevention Kitakyushu Maple Leaf, engaged in a group discussion. Referring to textbooks used for dating DV preventive education, they discussed the possibility of better descriptions in the textbooks, based on what they had learned in the first half of the second session.



Daejeon Women's Association United in Daejeon-Gwangyeoksi, South Korea visited MOVE

On August 21, 2015, a group of nine observers headed by Ms. Chae Gyesoon, Director of Daejeon Women's Association United, visited the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center (MOVE) as part of a project by Daejeon International Center in Daejeon-Gwangyeoksi, South Korea.

Daejeon Women's Association United, comprised of seven women's groups in Daejeon-Gwangyeoksi, made a visit to our organization as they have a keen interest in the City of Kitakyushu's efforts to promote gender equality.

After giving an overview of MOVE and its main undertakings, we had a very fruitful interaction through a lively exchange of opinions about activities by the women's groups in Daejeon-Gwangyeoksi, among other things.

“Mothers’ Group”, light of hope for rural women in Nepal

Ms. Yojana POKHAREL (Nepal)

Profile

I have MBA degree with key subjects of management and marketing. Previously I worked as a coordinator at Ambe Murari Sewa Kendra (AMSK), a non-profit organization and was in charge of coordinating, managing and reporting activities for donors. I also act as a resource person for yoga training at various clubs and organizations and help schools develop yoga curriculum for primary and secondary school kids.



Sita Thapa, 18, shared her bitter experience about her alcoholic uncle when she had been in Lahachok VDC of Kaski district. He grabbed all the hard earned money by his wife who worked in the field with wages normally 25% less than those paid to men. He became incredibly irresponsible and wild once he was drunk. His small kids were forced to spend their nights with empty stomach.

But I noticed hope and relief in Sita’s voice when she shared about Mothers’ Group (MG), a non-political group formed by Gurung Women, who played a significant role on women’s empowerment and mobilization at grassroots. The women here are taking small yet crucial steps to make their society a better place to live in. The social group has been named “Aama Samuha” that is the group of mothers.

Mothers’ Group has become a popular women’s organization all over the country for women’s development. In remote areas Mothers’ Group (MG) are raising the voice against excessive sales of alcohol and are successful in declaring some of the districts as dry zone for alcohol.

Women are rated as a weaker sex. In case of rural Nepalese women, their standing in society mostly depends on their husbands’ and parents’ social and economic positions. They have limited access to education, health care, markets, productive services, and local government and suffer from malnutrition, poverty.

Major contributions of Mothers’ Group in the community development (1994 in Okanmura, 1999) in Syangja district are as follows: construction and repairing of village trails and road, construction of Buddhist monasteries and temple, construction of toilets, plantation of trees, assisting in the construction of a school building and furniture, managing literary classes, collection of common utensils, stopping alcoholism and gambling, and establishment of child care centre.

From the year 1988/89, Mothers’ Group got wide popularity after receiving a training to prepare women community health volunteers known as Female Community Health Volunteers (FVHVs) conducted by the Department of Public Health.

Currently there are nearly 50,000 FCHVs who cover all 75 districts of Nepal and 97% are working in rural areas. They receive no salary, only a token incentive of about \$40 per year, a bicycle and a sign that declared they are FCHVs. Since 1995, these dedicated women have visited every home in community twice a year to give doses of Vitamin A to breastfeeding women and children up to age 5. They also collect data on each household, and provide de worming pills, immunizations, family planning materials and information on sanitations, nutrition and infant care.

The program now reveals 94% of children between six months and five years of age, whose mortality rate has

dropped from 94 per 10,000 to 52. At least 12,000 lives have been saved.

Mother’s Group has contributed a lot to women’s health in Lahachok. Women’s awareness on health has improved drastically in sanitation, hygiene and treatment. They are convinced that the education brings about a lot of change in the society. As a result, they have started sending their children to school without discrimination between boys and girls while selecting the schools.

Similarly, Mothers’ Group played a vital role for developing awareness of income generating activities, economic influence on health, mental health, traditional ideology and caste as restriction against girls and the issue of dowry.

The rural women of Nepal are challenged with poverty and lack of basic facilities. They have a lot in their basket, such as looking after the house, family and also in the field. Besides their hectic schedule they managed to invest time in MG. It has been found that the Mother’s Group has been successful in making women’s life easier to some extent.

No matter how many the obstacles were against the villagers, they are coming up with hopeful ways to fight against the poverty and illiteracy. Mother’s Group is one of such groups initiated by the women who to some extent, have been successful in becoming a light of hope for the villagers.



Members of Mothers’ Group attending awareness training on women’s health related issues.

Foreign Correspondent's Report

TV Says You're Ugly: The Problem with the Media's Unnecessary Beauty Standards in the Philippines

Ms. Aiko SHIMIZU (The Philippines)

Most people, especially girls, grow up having insecurities about their bodies. For a lot of them, these insecurities remain even when they become fully grown women.

According to DoSomething.org, a non-profit organization for young people and social change, approximately 91% of women are unhappy with their bodies and resort to dieting to achieve their ideal body shape. Yet body shape is just one aspect that women are concerned about. There are also issues on the facial structure, nose, eyes, and skin color.



There might not be a universal idea of beauty for all countries. It's hard to have one because we all have different physical features based on our ethnicities. Nevertheless, despite cultural and ethnic diversity across the globe and even in America, Hollywood has

set impossible beauty standards for every woman of any race. For Hollywood a perfect woman is slim and tall with big round eyes and straight nose, and is most definitely white. Of course these standards are impossible to achieve, especially when you are a woman of color.

Since the Philippines was once a colony of Spain and afterwards America—some would argue that it is still under the lingering influences of the US—it somehow has the same standards of beauty.

The evidence of colonial mentality in the country can be seen in TV shows, infomercials, and magazines nationwide. There are numerous skin whitening products offered to Filipinas promising that they will look like the celebrities they aspire to be. If that is not enough, just a look at the

Profile

I am half-Filipino and half-Japanese, and was born and raised here in the Philippines. I graduated from Miriam College with a degree in International Studies with a major in development studies, a minor in gender studies in 2014, and authored an undergraduate thesis titled "His Side of the Story: Storylines, Speech-acts, and Positions of Husbands Who Have Experienced Spousal Abuse" with Ms. Arisa Junio. I previously worked for the Philippine Air Force as a researcher from June to December 2014. I am now an Outreach and Innovations Coordinator at Youth at Venture, an NGO that helps young Filipinos start business ventures.



Philippine showbiz industry would make you think we are in a western country because of all the half-white women dominating it.

If there are celebrities with darker skin tones, that we locally call "morena," they usually still have straight noses. That is why there have been needs of celebrities or non-celebrities to undergo cosmetic surgeries just to become conventionally good looking.

What is more aggravating is the Philippine media's insistence that having a dark skin, a flat and big nose or curly hair means you are "ugly." One example is the TV drama "Bakekang" which aired on GMA 7 in 2006 and was based on a comic novel written by Carlo J. Caparas. In the story, Bakekang, the female protagonist, has been scorned all her life because of her physical appearance. She has dark skin, a big nose, and ugly teeth. At the start of the show her goal was to be impregnated by a white man only to have a "beautiful" white-looking daughter. I could say that even though this show was aired almost a decade ago, its ideas are still present in today's Philippine society.

I believe that it is time the media changed its female champions. An actors like Eugene Domingo, who played the lead in films such as *the Woman in the Septic Tank* (*Ang Babae Sa Septic Tank*) and *Kimmy Dora* and through whose pure talent became widely known in the country, should be the type of women the Filipino audience looks up to. She does not have a straight nose, a slim body, or Caucasian-like skin, but she has won numerous awards and gained international recognition because of her excellence in performing arts.

This way, I hope women in the Philippines and all over the world will realize that their worth does not come from how white, how slim or how conventionally good looking they are but through their own beauty that will shine just by being who they are.