

# Asian Breeze

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The 25th Kitakyuhu Conference on Asian Women



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# Women Today

*We have a long way to go!*

Afghanistan has been in conflict for the past 35 years, the violation of human rights, in particular women's rights continued, during different regimes, unfortunately without accountability and justice, even acknowledgement of sufferings of the victims.

Women in Afghanistan saw the killing and disappearing of their loved ones, the destruction and loss of their properties, sometime the rape of their daughters, and different level of violence during the war, but they survived.

I am going to portray the picture of Afghanistan today, in contrast with 13 years ago, under the Taliban, Afghan women were subjected to systematic discrimination, brutal and inhumane treatment by the government, women were not allowed to go out and work, get an education, or simply walk on the street unless they were accompanied with "Mahram" a close male relative. The situation was as such that women were not treated as human beings! They made Afghanistan a huge jail imprisoning both men and women. But the treatment of women were much harsher.

In contrast, now Afghan women are striving toward a better future, they are able to attend school, get higher education, work and hold offices. They have leading positions in the media and in different industries. They are working as politicians, artists, singers and represent people in the provincial and national elected bodies. They also serve as cabinet ministers, diplomats, civil society organization and NGO leaders.

Our constitution and bill of rights for the first time in our history, guarantees equality between women and men, obligates the state to respect, promote and protect human rights and to work for the improvement of the situation of women and families.

Afghanistan has ratified CEDAW, and our EVAW (elimination of violence against women) law criminalize acts of violence against women. These are huge changes, complemented by the changes that have been brought slowly to the country in policy formation, program implementation in the social, political and cultural arenas.

We can not overlook that due to the presence of the international community and sacrifice of the Afghan people and the international community, the above mentioned improvement have been made.

However, the majority of the improvement has happened in Kabul and few other major cities. Afghan women who live in rural areas have benefited little from the improvements. To make all the improvement and freedom a reality and sustainable for every women in Afghanistan, require a strong political will and joint efforts by all the stakeholders.



Chair of the AIHRC

**Dr. Sima SAMAR**

The challenges the women in Afghanistan still face are:

1. Lack of strong political will by the leadership in the country for protection and promotion of women's rights allows the conservative, fundamentalist small group powerful.
2. Lack of education: Although more than 3 million girls go to school, same number of girls do not have access even to primary education, only 20 % of higher education students are girls, although higher education is a ticket to empowerment and a way out of poverty.
3. Access to health care, in particular reproductive health care is not available for every woman, due to different problems, but one of them is lack of female medical staff. Their access to contraception is limited.
4. Lack of job opportunity makes women depend on the male member of the family. Child marriage and forced marriage are common practice for economical reason.
5. Lack of access to justice due to conservative male dominated culture, and also lack of female staff in the legal system: Afghanistan still lacks a female judge in the Supreme Court council.
6. Women are not part of the important decision making for the country and people, including the peace process.

Finally as we all know that:

Women's recognition, inclusion and support is key to sustainable peace and development.

I would like to call upon our sisters globally that we still have a long way to go, bear with us, do not let us fall again in the terrorist trap.

## Profile of Sima SAMAR

Dr. Sima SAMAR born in Ghazni and graduated from Kabul University as Medical Doctor. Appointed as the inaugural chair of the AIHRC in June 2002. Prior to appointment as the chair of AIHRC, elected as the vice chair of the Emergency Loya Jirga and also served as the deputy chair and Minister of Women's Affairs in the post-Taliban Interim Administration of Afghanistan IAA. Served as UN's Special Reporter on the situation of human rights in the Sudan between 2005 and 2009.

Dr. SAMAR has participated in many international forums on human rights, democracy and transitional justice. Her contributions to the same have been widely recognized and she is the recipient of several prestigious awards.

### Natural Disasters, Gender Equality, and Women's Empowerment (second half)



Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Kitakyushu  
**Masato NINOMIYA**

Professor at Faculty of Law, the University of Kitakyushu. Doctor of Laws. Technical Advisor of Specialist Committee on Monitoring, Council for Gender Equality, Cabinet Office. Member of the Disaster Reduction/Reconstruction WG of the said Committee. In 1994, began to work for the Faculty of Law, Kitakyushu University (as termed at that time), and then served as a visiting scholar at Center on International Organization at Columbia SIPA (School of International and Public Affairs) from 2005 to 2006. In 2006, assumed his current position. In April 2014, became Dean of Faculty of Law. Specializes in international law and international organizations law.

In March 2012, the Japanese government submitted a resolution under the title “Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters” at the 56th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW56), and the resolution was adopted by consensus. This was the first resolution that the Japanese government had submitted to the commission. The resolution showed the country’s strong determination, made one year after the Great East Japan Earthquake, to share its experiences and lessons with other countries and international society, and to never repeat the same mistakes. In addition, after Prime Minister Shinzo ABE delivered an address at the UN General Assembly in September 2013, the Japanese government submitted a follow-up resolution at the 58th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW58) in March 2014, and it was also adopted by consensus.

These two resolutions declare 1) the importance of appropriately identifying needs of women, children, and other people in vulnerable positions, and providing appropriate protection with due consideration given to them; 2) the importance of achieving women’s participation in all the phases of a natural disaster, namely prevention, emergency response, and restoration/reconstruction, in a practical sense; and 3) the indispensability of promoting gender equality and empowerment of women on a daily basis through such participation, in order to establish a disaster-resistant society with resilience (ability to recover from a disaster).

Now, let’s look at the adoption process for the resolutions.

Japan was the original sponsoring country, making efforts to draft the two resolutions of the 2012 CSW and the 2014 CSW. However, Japan submitted the 2012 resolution in the form of a joint proposal by 50 Member States, and the 2014 resolution in the form of a joint proposal by 79 Member States (both figures include Japan). This means that 49 countries and 78 countries agreed with Japan and provided joint support to realize the adoption of the resolutions of 2012 and 2014, respectively. Although CSW resolutions do not legally bind Member States and other parties, this process suggests that as the country that submitted the resolutions, Japan has a responsibility for achieving what is sought in the two resolutions. In particular, I feel that Japan is heavily accountable to the 78 countries with which Japan submitted the resolution, in light of legal principles in general, such as the principle of good faith and the doctrine of estoppel, both of which are often referred to in discussions on sources of international law.

Did you know that Japan has been actively engaged in fostering a world movement regarding gender mainstreaming in the field of disaster risk reduction? I hope that as members

of Japanese society, you will remember that Japan has proposed specific measures to the world, and that the country has succeeded in gathering many supporters under the initiative of the Prime Minister to realize the resolution of 2014.

Next, let’s look at this issue more deeply from the perspective of a sincere response to what is demanded by the resolutions.

For example, the two resolutions emphasize the importance of collecting, analyzing, and using data according to age, gender, and other characteristics. What is the situation of Japan regarding this? I used to belong to the Specialist Committee on Monitoring, Council for Gender Equality, Cabinet Office. At the fourth meeting of the committee’s Disaster Reduction/Reconstruction WG (February 18, 2014), a concern was raised over the method of performing household surveys in the reconstruction process. In the manner of surveys that gathered opinions of evacuees regarding their future temporary housing, there was discussion about the necessity of collecting data from all members of each household in view of gender equality, rather than collecting household data. The household data of these surveys most likely reflected the opinions of only the heads of households. At the meeting it was noted that although complicated work would be required, it would be better, from the perspective of women’s active participation in all the processes, to adopt a survey method through which women and children could express opinions individually as well as the survey organizers could identify them individually. These discussions suggest that the above resolutions and their contents have not been fully shared yet within the government. Thus, a future challenge is how to secure consistency between diplomatic policies and domestic policies, namely to share recognition. In addition, it is also important to disseminate the contents of the above discussions, along with the guidelines that I mentioned last time, in order to ensure that they are referred to by local governments when preparing their regional or area disaster risk reduction plans. I believe that this will serve as an important evaluation standard in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the same mistakes.

Finally, I would like to stress that the 2014 CSW resolution demands that the discussion on gender mainstreaming carry over to the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai in March 2015, as well as to the UN General Assembly regarding the post-2015 development agenda, to be held in New York in September 2015. I’m very interested in what will be discussed at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

I hope that this article will stimulate your interest in future discussions reported through newspapers and other media.

# 25<sup>th</sup> Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

**Date & Time:** December 6 (Sat.), 2014, 13:30 – 16:00

**Venue:** Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

At the conference, Ms. Keiko OSAKI from the UN spoke about an international initiative to identify women's entrepreneurship statistically, based on the discussion during the UN expert group meeting on gender statistics held right before the conference in Kitakyushu. Subsequently, Ms. Eriko YAMAGUCHI, the founder of Motherhouse Co., Ltd., shared her experiences as a female entrepreneur.

The subsequent panel discussion introduced the example of the Philippines, one of the most advanced countries in the world in terms of empowerment of women, as well as measures promoted in Indonesia and Kitakyushu City.

## ■ Keynote Lecture 1

### **Ms. Keiko OSAKI**

(Assistant Director, Statistics Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)



## **UN Gender Statistics Program**

From December 3 to 5, a UN expert group meeting on gender statistics was held here at the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE. Today, I would like to share with you what was discussed at the meeting.

It has come to be known that statistics are indispensable in the process of decision making in any field. The use of statistics has become increasingly common to objectively examine a wide range of social and economic phenomena and formulate an appropriate evidence-based policies. Although there are a wide variety of statistics, the UN considers that gender statistics are the area where much improvements are needed to monitoring progress in gender equality and women's empowerment at the global level.

The UN has long been engaged in increasing people's awareness of the significance of gender issues around the world. In order to capture the social and economic situations of men and women and their changes over time in a holistic manner, the UN identified a set of 52 gender indicators and is encouraging each country to collect such data. Although you may feel that the indicators are too many, they are a minimum set to identify the current gender situation from various aspects. In doing so, it is extremely important to assess whether the collected data can be used for international comparison. Categorizing the gender indicators into three groups in terms of conceptual refinement and data availability, the UN provides technical support for national statistical offices in the fields where countries lack a capacity to produce reliable and internationally comparable data on a regular basis. Such fields include women's entrepreneurship and asset ownership, which were the themes of the meeting held the other day. In this regard, the UN Statistics Division and UN Women have launched a special three-year joint project, called "the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative", with the purpose of collecting and compiling gender statistics that can be used for international comparison, refining statistical concepts, developing a method to collect statistics, and preparing appropriate guidelines as necessary.

## **Significance of Measuring Women's Entrepreneurship Statistically**

Statistical identification of gender gaps in entrepreneurship

can reveal differences between male and female entrepreneurs, for instance, in motivations for entrepreneurship, management styles and business performances, and success criteria. Hence, such statistics can serve as a base to create mechanisms to foster and support women's entrepreneurship.

There is much to be improved in internationally comparable statistics to reveal gender gaps in entrepreneurship. However, it is clear even from the existing data that there are clear gender differences in the experiences of entrepreneurship. It is therefore essential to support entrepreneurs and promote appropriate policies from a gender perspective.

## ■ Keynote Lecture 2

### **Ms. Eriko YAMAGUCHI**

(CEO and Chief Designer, Motherhouse Co., Ltd.)



## **Establishment of Motherhouse – I Had No Intention to Start a Business –**

Although I was asked to speak about entrepreneurship today, I had originally no intention to start a business or become an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, I founded a company at the age of 24 about nine years ago. Now that I have about 250 staff members and 20 shops, I feel that I have rushed through these nine years. During this period, various events occurred. Many times I have regretted that I have started the business, or I did not want to go to my own office. However, I'm still continuing the business because of my very strong motivation. A strong passion has enabled me to continue moving forward.

## **"Create a Worldwide Brand from Developing Countries"**

The mission of Motherhouse is creating a worldwide brand from developing countries. My story regarding the establishment of the company began when I had the opportunity to work for the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington. While working part-time entering budget data at the bank, I wanted to know how financial aid was delivered to developing countries. Hoping to know more about the real situation, I decided to go to Bangladesh, a country that appeared in my Web search result after I had entered the keyword "the poorest country in Asia." Hearing that an education visa would allow me to stay in the country for two years, I entered a local graduate school. This was when I started to think about establishing Motherhouse. At first, feeling that there was nothing that one person could achieve alone, I considered returning to Japan. Then I happened to know jute (golden fiber) in Bangladesh. Jute was used as a

material for coffee bean bags, 75 cents each. Aiming to make products more quickly at a lower cost than plants in China, one bag manufacturing plant employed many teenage girls. Seeing them work, I strongly felt there must be something else that the girls could do to fully demonstrate their capabilities, and I thought that the bags would sell better if they were of higher quality. An idea occurred to me. It would be good to add some value to the products to make them so adorable and cool that people would want to buy, rather than the products to simply process raw materials, or rather than the ones like fair-trade-style that people would buy because they felt sorry for those making them. Discovering what I really would like to try, I felt that the door to the future had finally opened.

### **Future of Motherhouse**

I am proud that I have developed my staff members into craftspeople for the last nine years. When joining my company, they were unskilled, and I needed to teach them the basics of everything. Many problems worried me, including a high production failure rate. Nevertheless, I never gave up, and continued working patiently with the Bengali staff. Now they do a good job so that our production failure rate has declined to 0.8%. Encouraged by their sentiment that “Motherhouse is like home,” I would like to establish workshops of Motherhouse around the world. This is my present dream.

### **► Panel Discussion**

#### **<Panelists>**

- **Ms. Eriko YAMAGUCHI**  
(CEO and Chief Designer, Motherhouse Co., Ltd.)
- **Ms. Lina V. CASTRO**  
(Interim Deputy National Statistician, Philippine Statistics Authority)
- **Ms. Gloria ARLINI**  
(Co-Founder and Director, Nusantara Development Initiatives, Singapore)
- **Mr. Hidetoshi YOSHIMURA**  
(Professor, Institute for Urban and Regional Policy Studies, University of Kitakyushu)

#### **<Coordinator>**

- **Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI**  
(KFAW President)

### **Entrepreneurship of Philippine Women**

#### **- Ms. Lina V. CASTRO**

Using specific figures from the perspective of statistics, Ms. Lina V. CASTRO spoke about the current situation and challenges of women’s entrepreneurship in the Philippines, an advanced country in terms of gender equality, as well as about the establishment of an appropriate environment and the provision of support from the national and local governments to achieve women’s economic participation. She indicated that although a wide variety of support was provided to women and the rate of women’s entrepreneurship was higher than that of men, female entrepreneurs tended to run small-scale businesses and had difficulty in securing long-term business continuation and growth. She also indicated that this was mainly due to household chores and child-rearing.

However, she stated that women’s entrepreneurship was

important in that the growth and development through the launch of such small-scale businesses would activate the entire economy, promote gender equality, and spur social development, ultimately contributing to improving the quality of life and reducing poverty.

### **Women’s Entrepreneurship in Rural Villages in Indonesia**

#### **- Ms. Gloria ARLINI**

Ms. Gloria ARLINI, an Indonesian co-founder of an NPO in Singapore, spoke about the training program that the NPO established for women in rural villages in Indonesia to start businesses using solar lamps. The purpose of the program is to develop their skills and potential, thereby promoting empowerment of women. After going through the training program, women supply solar lamps to people living without electricity, and endeavor to increase the living standard of such people. Currently, 21 women are active as entrepreneurs, supplying solar lamps to as many as 12,000 people so far. The NPO does not carry out the training program on a temporary basis, but conducts follow-up, with due consideration given to the situation of each individual. Thus, the NPO has a support system for women to start businesses and provides follow-up for them to continue their businesses. She stated that the program has helped women in Indonesia sparkle.

### **Current Situation of and Support for Entrepreneurs in Kitakyushu City and Japan**

#### **- Mr. Hidetoshi YOSHIMURA**

In Japan, currently, the rate of non-regular employment is high. In particular, many women work as non-regular employees. Amidst this situation, a shift from a passive working style, namely being employed by companies or other organizations, to becoming entrepreneurs is now gaining attention as one of the work style options. Mr. Hidetoshi YOSHIMURA explained that a wide variety of support for producing and developing entrepreneurs is available presently in Kitakyushu City and Japan, in the forms of consultation and guidance, human resource development, and financing.

On the other hand, he indicated that when compared internationally, the young people of Japan have little interest in entrepreneurship. He stated that in order to foster young people’s enterprising spirit, it was necessary to provide entrepreneurship education at universities and other institutes.



At the panel discussion

# UN Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics

**Date:** December 3 (Wed.) — December 5 (Fri.), 2014  
**Venue:** Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

The UN expert group meeting (attended by 36 participants from 14 countries) was held jointly by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, at the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE.

The official name of the meeting was the “Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative Mid-term Review Technical Meeting”

Launched in 2013, the EDGE Initiative incorporates a

gender perspective into official statistics of each country. Aiming to establish and standardize gender statistics, this worldwide project will run until 2015.

Inviting statistics experts from target countries of this project, the meeting held in Kitakyushu City featured analyses on the results of the pilot surveys performed so far on “individual-level asset ownership” and “women’s entrepreneurship” from a gender perspective, as well as discussions on the preparation of practical guidelines to identify these aspects statistically.



At UN meeting

## Women’s Organizations in Kitakyushu City Visit Korea

From October 20 (Mon.) to 22 (Wed.), 2014, KFAW visited Incheon Metropolitan City, Korea, together with 12 representatives from women’s organizations in Kitakyushu City. This was in reciprocation for the Incheon Council of Women’s visit to Kitakyushu City in November, 2013. Aiming to learn about gender-related facilities in Korea and activities promoted by women’s organizations in the country, we visited gender-related organizations and facilities, participated in a seminar, and attended an interactive event.

### Participating Organizations from Kitakyushu City

The Council of Women’s Groups of Kitakyushu; Kitakyushu Council to Promote Better Eating Habits; Kitakyushu Association of Nursery & Kindergarten Teachers; and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs of Japan, Kitakyushu

### Schedule

- October 20:** Departure from Fukuoka to Incheon  
Participation in a seminar held by the Incheon Council of Women  
Visit to the Incheon Foundation for Women and Family to learn about its programs, other
- October 21:** Visit to a workplace childcare center  
Visit to the National Intangible Heritage Center, and cultural experience  
Visit to Wolmido Island
- October 22:** Visit to Songdo area  
Departure from Incheon to Fukuoka

### Main Activities

#### Participation in a Seminar

We first participated in a seminar with the theme of the environment. While the campaign of the so-called 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) is common in Japan, there is an active campaign of the 5Rs (plus Renewable Energy and Revitalization) in Korea.



At the discussion (Far right: Chair OISHI)

The seminar featured a lecture and discussion on the 5R campaign and women’s roles. As the representative of the members from Kitakyushu City, Chair Kiyoko OISHI of the Kitakyushu Council to Promote Better Eating Habits presented a report on the activities promoted in Kitakyushu to improve people’s eating habits.

### Interaction at a Dinner Party

On the first night, we were invited to an interactive event held by the Incheon Council of Women. The event began with a cooking demonstration of cold pork *bulgogi* and other Korean dishes. In the latter half of the event, members from Kitakyushu City gave



All the members interacting in a circle

a chorus performance of *Furusato* as a token of their appreciation, and also performed *Hyakuman-odori* dancing as an encore. Korean members also sang a song and performed Arirang dancing, making the event even more exciting.

#### Visit to Workplace Childcare Center (Incheon Metropolitan City Office)

On the second day, we visited the workplace childcare center. In Korea, parents can use childcare centers, regardless whether they have a job or not. Unlike in Japan, the amount of income does not affect the amount of the nursery fee.

After listening to the director of the childcare center, the members of the women’s organizations from Kitakyushu ardently asked many questions on the differences from the Japanese childcare system.

### Conclusion

The purposes of the visit to Incheon Metropolitan City were to promote mutual understanding between the women’s organizations in both cities, and to learn about gender-related facilities and activities promoted by women’s organizations in Korea.

In addition, the visit led to the promotion of mutual understanding and interaction among the women’s organizations in Kitakyushu City. Taking this opportunity, we hope that interaction will be further promoted not only between the women’s organizations in both cities, but also among the women’s organizations in Kitakyushu City.



## Participants of the KFAW Study Tour in the Philippines Launch Activities after Returning to Japan

At the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW), in FY2013, we held a study tour with the theme “Learn International Cooperation in the Philippines,” focusing on the country’s poverty, gender problems, and international cooperation. In the country, participants met many people in difficulties, such as children mentally damaged due to poverty and abuse, children without sufficient education due to a lack of schools and other facilities, and people trapped in a cycle of poverty due to inaccessibility to education. The participants also visited local NGOs and other organizations that provide support for such people, and learned about their activities. On the study tour, they learned a lot through communication with local people.

After returning to Japan, some participants said that they would like to provide continuous support from Japan to the people in the Philippines, leading to the launch of the following activities by volunteers among the participants. Although they have just begun, the KFAW will continue to support these volunteers to promote continuous civic activities.

### Cooking Class under a Female Filipino Instructor Living in Kitakyushu

**Date & Time:** October 4 (Sat.), 2014, 11:00 – 14:00

**Venue:** Kitakyushu Women’s Community Center, YAHATA

The first activity was the cooking class “Let’s Learn More about the Philippines through Cooking,” under a female Filipino instructor, with the purpose of providing an opportunity for citizens of Kitakyushu to know more about the Philippines. By cooking curry using coconut milk and preparing dishes using vegetables, the instructor and participants learned



30 participants joined cooking class with an interest in the Philippines and international interaction

more about each other’s culture. Over the dishes they also shared the current situations of poverty and other topics in the Philippines. The instructor commented that although she was living in Japan, she usually had few opportunities to communicate with Japanese people, and that the interaction was very significant.

### Sales of Fair Trade Dried Mango

The PREDA Foundation, one of the destinations, protects child victims of sexual abuse, unjustified imprisonment, and commercial/sexual exploitation, and provides support for them to live in an appropriate environment. This local NGO is also engaged in the fair trade movement as a project to support indigenous people living in poverty to get economically empowered. At an international exchange event held in Kitakyushu, fair trade products from the PREDA Foundation were sold. The proceeds were used for the activity discussed below.



### Donation of Picture Books and Stationery to the Aeta

The indigenous Aeta in the Philippines still maintain their traditional lifestyle. Few households have gas and water systems, and children cannot go to school in the community after finishing the fourth grade due to insufficient school facilities. Students in the fifth and subsequent grades must cross the river and walk to the faraway school. In the rainy season, the river rises, frequently preventing children from going to school. In addition, textbooks, stationery, and other items for students are also insufficient. Thus, the children’s educational environment is very far from being appropriate. For these children, an activity to donate picture books and stationery has been launched.



## Visit to Vietnam (Haiphong and Hanoi)

From November 1 (Sat.) to 8 (Sat.), 2014, we visited some organizations including Haiphong Department of Foreign Affairs and Hanoi Women’s Federation to discuss future exchange programs. Haiphong is the sister city of Kitakyushu since April 2014. The Hanoi Women’s Federation had paid a visit to the KFAW last fiscal year, participating in a seminar and visiting a welfare facility.



## Girls, not Brides

Ms. Doulot MALA (Bangladesh)

### Profile

I am working as Special Correspondent of The Financial Express. I am pursuing journalism for one decade. My specialization in reporting includes economic and developmental issues, women, tax and business issues. I completed Masters Degree in Journalism from Dhaka University in 1996. My career goal is to contribute to the economic and women development in the country through constructive write-up.



“There is a need for building social awareness to check early marriage. Poverty and social insecurity of girls is the main reason for child marriage in Bangladesh. Girls face serious health and psychological problem due to early pregnancy,” said Dr. Sifat E. Syed, Psychiatrist of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Child marriage is like a ‘Paradox’ in Bangladesh’s globally praised development story. The country was able to upscale its performance indicators in the field of politics, business, social empowerment of women in this region. Frustratingly, rate of child marriage is highest here.

The rate of eradication of child marriage is slow in Bangladesh. Around 66 per cent of the girls get married before the age of 18, according to the data of UNICEF. Over one-third of girls get married before the age of 15, who are mostly victims of dowry and face serious health risks due to early pregnancy.

Poverty, illiteracy, security concern, tropical social custom are the major reasons for early marriage of school-going girls. They face long-term health problem, psychological pressure to carry out the responsibility of child and family.

Physicians and psychologists said early marriage was a major cause of depression of middle-aged women. It is a socially-sensitive challenge that the country is trying to tackle.

In rural areas, child marriage is prevailing in an alarming form that has no actual data due to poor trend of marriage registration. Some family members prefer early marriage of school-going girls being concerned over their social security. Teen pregnancy and single young mother family is not so usual in the Bangladesh’s society. Family members consider early marriage as alternative to keep girls protected within the union of marriage before bearing a child.

Amid the situation, a recent move of the government to lower minimum age for marriage in the draft of early marriage prevention act-2014 raised concern among the members of civil society.

There is a proposal, made in the recent Cabinet meeting, to lower minimum age for marriage to 16 years for girls and 18 years for boys. Currently, the minimum age of marriage for girls is 18 years and for boys 21 years.

The Citizen’s Initiatives on CEDAW, Bangladesh (CIC-BD), the platform of 47 non-government human rights and other like-minded organizations, have raised its deep concern over the move, citing United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children and Bangladesh Children Act that defined boys and girls below 18 years as children.

As eliminating child marriage is one of the major challenges for the present government, it should stay away from the move of lowering marriage-age. Child marriage is also a globally developing concern. In the first-ever Girl

Summit-2014 in the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made firm commitment to eliminate child marriage by taking necessary steps.

Increasing literacy of girls is necessary to check early marriage. Bangladesh has made remarkable progress over the past two decades in increasing primary enrolment of girls so that over 95 percent go to primary school and more girls than boys now complete their primary education.

The Bangladesh Government is already working to strengthen national legislation and policy frameworks to eliminate child marriage. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 is going to be revised under current context by incorporating heavy penalties for violation of the act.

The new Children’s Act, passed in 2013, provides enhanced measures to redress child marriage as well as to support child brides.

Bangladesh launched a new nationwide campaign titled “Girls, Not Brides” to accelerate actions against child marriage.



In addition to updating laws, the government aims to have a National Action Plan on Prevention of Child Marriage with time-bound targets.

“The government is looking forward to ensuring that, by 2021, no girl under 15 will be getting married as well as eradicating all child marriage within a generation by 2035,” the PM said in the Girl Summit.

The country’s policymakers need to focus more on creating awareness for marriage registration and also educate opinion leaders so that they can raise voices against child marriage.

According to the study of Bangladesh Women Parishad, all of the victims of child marriage are school-going girls. The survey found that the minimum age of the victims was 10 year-old girl. Physically, psychologically and socially, child brides face detrimental consequences. They are neither physically matured for bearing a child nor taking care of them properly.

Child marriage slows down country’s development into a healthy and prosperous nation. Bangladesh is moving towards to expedite eradication of early marriage.



# The Gender and Education Situation in Cambodia

Mr. Houn PHORN (Cambodia)

Today, gender inequality, simply described as the unfair and inequitable treatment between men and women, is seen in many aspects of Cambodian society especially education in rural areas. It is a fact that in Cambodia women outnumber men; however, women's illiteracy rate is higher than men's. The school enrollment rate of female students is lower than that of male students. Although school enrollment of girls is increasing lately, most do not complete basic education of grade 9 of secondary school, so the gender gap grows greater at secondary and high school level. There are many reasons behind the wide gap between males and females in terms of access to education.



Lack of educational facilities

It is the traditionally-based parental notion towards sons and daughters. Customarily, parents consider boys more important than girls in a way that boys can go out to work, while girls have to stay at home and take care of household chores. Also, girls, after getting married, are expected to be fed by their husbands so they do not need to do any job. Thus, the majority of parents find it pointless to let their daughters get high education as sons.

In the old days, it was also believed that daughters would become very stubborn if they were educated. Moreover, they would know how to write love letters to men, so in order to prevent disgrace in the family, the girls should not be sent to school. In contrast, the boys are usually breadwinners; thus, getting more knowledge would gain good reputation for their family. As a result, in poor families, if they can afford for only one child to go to school, then it will be the boy who gets the opportunity to access to education.

Another factor is that girls are needed in the house or at the fields. Most Cambodian families, around 80%, are farmers, so they need a lot of labor force to assist in the fields because Cambodian farmers are still applying the old traditional ways of farming. Therefore, the girls should stay at home to cook or to work in the fields rather than go to school.

## Profile

I grew up on a farm in rural Cambodia in a family of low economic status. I had four siblings. I obtained the bachelor degree in law at Pannasastra University of Cambodia. In 2013, I became a Prison Researcher at the Cambodian League for the Promotion of Defense and Human Rights (LICADHO). In the present time, I get scholarship to pursue master of international human rights law at Pannasastra University of Cambodia which is supported by Sweden.



Alike, some parents would think that formal education is not that crucial; they would likely let their daughters gain some skills or go to the city and work at a garment factory. Some villagers say that there is no reason for their daughters to attend school, for they are poor and unable to get a job even with the education. Besides, the distance to school is another barrier for female students to have access to education. It is not a big problem in the city in which there are plenty of schools, but in rural areas, schools are hardly found and security is not good enough.

Lack of latrines and sanitary facilities are also the reasons why female students do not attend school. Female students find themselves uncomfortable at education centers where clean toilets are not available. In this case, if they want to use a toilet, they have to go to a forest or a big wood nearby. For this reason, girls will feel better to stay at home enjoy proper facilities.

Gender in social status, more to the point, social status of women in Cambodia is really a serious concern. Cambodian culture, which is very restrictive and hierarchical, gives more value to men. As one Khmer saying puts it, "Men are gold; Women are cloth". Cambodian women have to follow all the social rules in order to become good women accepted by the society. Without compliance with the Khmer codes of conduct, women are singled out by her family, relatives, friends, and the outsiders.

In short, Cambodian people are very conservative and traditional, promoting gender equality is like changing their culture, which most of them strongly oppose. However, the government should introduce some reforms to the educational sector, for example by providing scholarships for poor students. Also, it should build more schools which are equipped with clean toilets in rural areas or build school dormitories, which make it easy for female students to go to school in order to encourage them to enroll in class.



Children in Cambodia

## If she can do it, so can you! The story of Clarie, a female leader in Hong Kong

Ms. Amelia LO (Hong Kong)

*"Life is a combination of choices and sacrifices. I count my blessings and try my best."* —Ms. Clarie Ku.

How to balance your work and life is a question faced by more female professionals in Hong Kong. Many of those in Hong Kong have realized the impossible demands made on working mothers, which many have been a significant contributing factor to the decreasing birth rate. It is indeed a pity that more than half of those women who joined the workforce at a junior level quit because of difficulties in balancing the tasks of motherhood and work.

Ms. Clarie Ku is a shining example on how one can be both a successful career woman and a beloved mother. A graduate of elite universities including Stanford and Oxford, Clarie previously served in a number of senior positions in the Hong Kong Government, including Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Commissioner for Narcotics and Deputy Director of Housing. She received commendation for her Outstanding Government Service and is one of the few Hong Kong Government officials who received the Service Award from Singapore Minister of Home Affairs.

In 2001-02, Clarie was selected as President of the Financial Action Task Force, the leading global governmental organization working to address anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing issues. In 2007, Clarie helped the former HKSAR Chief Executive Hon. Tung Chee Hwa to establish the China-United States Exchange Foundation and became the founding CEO. In 2011, she was named Executive Director of one of the major banks in Hong Kong and is currently Managing Director of a private company.

One of her most memorable achievements was her journey to the United States almost immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, during which she led world leaders to cooperate to legislate new laws to curb and prevent terrorism financing. Risking antagonizing her then young children for being constantly absent, Clarie put on a brave face and boarded the plane that would lead her to the Washington D.C. less than a month after the 9/11 attacks. She steered the Task Force in the formulation of the Eight Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing post



Clarie encourages her children to believe in themselves and pursue challenges for personal growth

### Profile

I serve as committee member in the Youth and International Group of the Hong Kong Federation of Women and the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers and was privileged to be involved in the first ever Stop Dating Violence Ambassadors Program at HKU. As a United World College graduate who studied and lived in mainland China, USA and UK, I have been fortunate to meet talented and unique women from different walks of life. I hope to empower women by revealing their thoughts, dreams, concerns and feelings through the power of words.



9/11. Her work was openly praised by US Treasury Secretary O'Neill, Attorney General Ashcroft, UK Chancellor Gordon Brown and other officials around the world for outstanding, effective leadership amidst the global crisis.

When recollecting about the event, she recounts: "Some say I was heroic for saving the world, some say I was foolish to risk my life when I could have easily delegated the task to other colleagues. Like many working mothers, I felt a mother's guilt when I had to miss out on many important occasions in my children's life as a result of my many overseas meetings. But that's part of being a responsible leader, and a leader has to be strong in uncertain times, and cannot cave into fear and insecurities."

As far as being a mother is concerned, Clarie says she tries to put quality before quantity, and tries her best, with the limited time she has, to make her children feel loved and valued. She makes sure that her children are well-looked after, and cultivates in them the core values of responsibility, dedication and hard work and impresses on them the importance of helping those less fortunate in society by inviting them to join volunteer events with her.



Ms. Clarie with the Formar Chief Executive of Hong Kong

Balancing the life of a mother and a female leader is rarely easy, she admits. Time is a scarce commodity, and good time management is key, but even with good time management, prioritization and sacrifice is unavoidable. And since helping others live a better life is something that speaks to her as a person, Clarie finds time despite her busy schedule to help others at a global and local level. She has been appointed as a member of the Steering Committee of the Hong Kong Basic Law, a member of the Appeal Board of the Financial Disputes Resolution Council, and serves on a number of NGOs boards on US-China relations, anti-drug, youths and women issues.

So for those new or aspiring working mothers out there, have faith in yourself, if she can do it, so can you!

*"When my children ask me why I work so hard, I reply, I work hard because I choose to, I love my family and I love my work, you are both my priorities."* —Ms. Clarie Ku

## Gender Analysis in Sexual Abuse against Children: How Far Have We Gone?

Ms. Marisna YULIANTI (Indonesia)

Earlier this year, Indonesia witnessed an uproar of horrifying violent crime against children. The public was shocked with the unfold of sexual assault incidents against children as young as 6 years old at a presumably one of the most well-established educational institutions in Indonesia, Jakarta International School (JIS). Almost within the same time span, another case emerged where a man was accused of sexually molesting more than 80 children in Sukabumi, West Java. Perhaps the most troubling case was the sexual abuse and dismemberment killing of 6 children in the Province of Riau. Perpetrators are all male and majority of these abused children are boys.

Indonesia National Commission for Child Protection claimed that throughout 2013 there have been 1620 cases of violence against children. 19% of them is identified as emotional abuse, 30% is physical abuse, and the highest figure comes from sexual abuse incidence which accounts for 51% of the total number of cases. While it is a widely accepted fact that victims of sexual violence are mostly women and girls, sexual abuse evidently also happen to men and boys. According to a survey on violence against children conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia together with the State Ministry of National Development and Planning, Statistics Indonesia, UNICEF and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA, in 2013, among respondents aged 13-17 years who had experienced physical violence, emotional and sexual abuse in the past 12 months, approximately 3 million boys or 1 in 4 boys, admitted to have experienced physical violence of some sort, while 1 in 12 boys and 1 out of 19 girls were found to have experienced sexual violence.

In Indonesia, parents and adults in general perceive girls are being more vulnerable than boys and therefore the society tends to be more protective of girls. This is said to be one of the reasons behind the high number of incidence of sexual violence against boys. The long-existing gender stereotyping that boys are stronger and unemotional, causes embarrassment for male victims of sexual abuse to come out and speak up which makes it even more difficult for the law enforcers to unveil the cases. As most perpetrators are male and there has been a great deal of research findings that say experience of child abuse may increase the possibility to become adult offenders, it is therefore crucial to integrate gender analysis that focus on the needs and the interests of boys and girls in coming up with preventive actions.

In the aftermath of the incidents, sex education, or sex ed targeted on children became the trending topic in every discussions. Child psychologists and activists started to openly speak about the importance of sex education that had been considered taboo and inappropriate for public consumption before. Responding to the issues, government of Indonesia has also recently launched National Movement

### Profile

Gender and child issues have been the core of my interest. I have been working in the area through my involvement in projects engaging communities, civil societies, the government and the donors. The experience has enabled me to see women's issues in a bigger picture. From this point onwards, I would like to continue being part of the global movement and expand my contribution in making the world free from gender-based discrimination through writings and research.



of Anti Sexual Crime against Children (Gerakan Nasional Anti Kejahatan Seksual terhadap Anak/GN-AKSA) to combat sexual violence against children with the involvement of relevant ministries, civil society, parents and public in which sex education was mentioned as one of the key aspect of prevention.

Apparently parents are still caught up with the myths that misplaced sex education as merely a means for teaching children and young people to have sexual intercourse and hence increase the possibility for them to be engaged in free and unprotected sex. Instead, it actually aims at increasing awareness on the difference of characteristics that make up male and female sexuality, sexual development and reproduction, and the different religious and cultural views on sex so that people can make informed decisions about their behavior and protect themselves from negative outcomes of sexual behavior such as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and sexual assault/abuse. It is also worth noting that sex education should be age-appropriate which takes into account child development stage in determining the best and most suitable educational materials and methods. For instance, children can be taught to recognize their reproductive organs and to know which areas in their bodies are sensitive and not allowed to be touched by strangers. It is also important for parents to become aware of gender stereotyping that still exist in the society. Gender-based stereotype that says boys are not supposed to wear pink or to cry creates certain expectation for them to behave accordingly. Boys need to be encouraged that it is ok for them to be more open and not to be ashamed of their feelings and emotions.

Finally, let us consider this as a reminder that gender issues are also about men and boys. How many of us have been caught in the wrong perception that gender-based discrimination only affect women and girls? A lot, I am sure. Gender analysis focuses on the differences between men and women and seek means to address the needs of both sexes to be able to equally access to, control, participate in and benefit from development. Hence gender issues concern not only women but also men and how both could achieve substantial equality in various spheres of life. The correct understanding of gender will create means to improve the full enjoyment of rights of men and women including the right to be free from sexual coercion.



Indonesian Children (Courtesy of *Gerakan Indonesia Mengajar* or Indonesia Teaches Movement available at [indonesiamengajar.org](http://indonesiamengajar.org))

## KFAW Consulate Series 4 “Human Resource Development in Australia”

**Date & Time:** September 10 (Wed.), 2014, 14:00 – 15:00

**Venue:** Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

In the fourth round of the KFAW Consulate Series, seminars given by consuls of consulates located in Fukuoka, we invited Mr. Tom YATES from the Australian Consulate General in Fukuoka, who spoke about human resource development in Australia.

Australia, which is often referred to as the most globalized country in terms of living and educational environments, takes first place in the rankings of “the world’s most livable cities,” as well as “the most livable countries and regions for expatriate workers.” Behind this are the country’s willingness to receive immigrants and the government’s subsequent practical human resource development. In addition, by promoting education and legal legislation for the employment of women, the country is pushing forward the development of female leaders as one of its policies.

Although there is a widespread concern in many countries over the negative effects of globalization, Australia, a country of immigrants, has established an environment that is livable for everyone. There must be many things that Japan can learn in order to realize a diverse society.

The lecture was followed by an active Q & A session, in which many participants expressed their opinions.



## Career Development Program for University Students

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) has established the career development program for university students in Kitakyushu City. This fiscal year we held lectures for a total of 1,233 students of the following five universities in the city:

**- Seinan Jo Gakuin University**

**Date:** June 2 (Mon.), 2014,  
14:40 - 16:10, 200 students  
June 6 (Fri.), 2014,  
14:40 - 16:10, 173 students

**- Kyushu Kyoritsu University**

**Date:** June 23 (Mon.), 2014,  
10:45 - 12:15, 171 students  
June 24 (Tue.), 2014,  
14:50 - 16:20, 228 students

**- Nishinippon Institute of Technology**

**Date:** July 3 (Thu.), 2014,  
09:00 - 10:30, 37 students

**- Kyushu Women’s University**

**Date:** September 22 (Mon.), 2014,  
16:35 - 18:05, 167 students

**- Kyushu International University**

**Date:** December 12 (Fri.), 2014,  
13:00 - 14:30, 117 students  
14:40 - 16:10, 140 students

This photograph depicts the career development lecture at Kyushu Women’s University. We endeavored to help each student draw up a specific plan regarding their own career development, by using PowerPoint and inviting a female worker as a guest for a Q & A session. At another university, we held a lecture, which incorporated small-group work sessions, based on the theme of stereotyped gender role awareness.

Comments from the students include the following:

- The lecture was very helpful. I’ve learned about the real working world of women.
- The lecture has made me think about what independence is.
- I’ve learned that a difference in the way of working leads to a big difference in the amount of lifetime earnings.
- I’ve found that there are many options regarding the way of working.



### Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

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#### KFAW

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) was established in October of 1990 with a special government fund for revitalization projects. Subsequently, in 1993, the KFAW was recognized as a foundation by the Ministry of Labour (the present Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare). The purpose of the KFAW is to promote the improvement of women’s status through various projects as well as their mutual understanding and cooperation in Asia.