

Asian Breeze

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KITAKYUSHU FORUM ON ASIAN WOMEN (KFAW) November 2016 Triannual Publication

Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2016 (A)



Government Officers from various countries (From left, two from Bhutan, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, and East Timor)



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Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2016 (A)

In Search of Gender Equality: Lessons from a Lifelong Activist Engagement



Aurora J. de Dios

Executive Director, Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College

Ms. Aurora Javate de DIOS

Women's rights and gender equality are the terms that have already become acceptable to many governments all over the world. Translating these important concepts into reality, however, requires more than just documents, laws and policies. It takes active and constant engagement by women activists on the ground working with governments, institutions such as in education, media, religion and culture and even the family to achieve these twin goals. Twenty years after the landmark of World Conference on Women in Beijing, women's situation across the different regions has improved in many areas. There is undoubtedly a greater awareness of economic, political and social-cultural issues affecting women and many viable initiatives and innovative programs have emerged in response to these issues. In the area of women's human rights, the recognition and acknowledgment by governments and the international community of the concept of "women's rights are human rights" stands out as the most important one. Previous to human rights, the concepts did not specifically focus on distinctive forms of violence against women that women experience in the public and private spheres. Domestic violence, trafficking and prostitution as well as persistent inequalities in the valuing women's work and in women's political participation in parliaments and governance; legal and cultural restrictions to women's rights on property and asset ownership as well as in their claims to citizenship are now acknowledged as hindrances and constraints to the full development of women as human beings equal to men.

I was quite privileged to be involved in our country's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality as a young activist of the women's movement and as a government representative at the national, UN and ASEAN levels. I got involved with the group Kalayaan (Freedom), one of many groups that was formed after the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship. This organization pioneered in raising awareness on the issue of violence against women in the late 80s. Its leaders including myself later led in the formation of various pioneering networks in the Philippines such as the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia Pacific, Woman Health, the Women's Crisis Center and the Women's Studies Association of the Philippines. I was invited to work with the government as Commissioner and later as Chair of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino where I worked on three strategic thematic areas of women's human rights, gender responsive governance and women's economic empowerment. During my term as Chairperson, NCRFW was able to push for the passage of two landmark laws - the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, and the Act addressing Violence Against Women. As research and monitoring later showed, laws protecting women, no matter how progressive, are as only as good as their implementation.

At the United Nations CEDAW Committee where I sat for four years as a member examining the reports of over 66 countries, I learned that the situation and challenges faced by women in different countries living in diverse political, economic and cultural settings vary a great deal. As an independent expert, I had the chance to express my opinions and recommendations to the representatives of the countries that were reporting in a frank and substantive way. In my reviews of different countries I realize that the existence of democratic spaces and the activism of civil society particularly of the women's movement are critically important in fighting for women's rights. As a monitoring mechanism supported by stakeholders, such as governments and civil society, UN CEDAW has become an

indispensable tool in advancing women's rights globally. The work of CEDAW is essentially setting norms and standards in the treatment of women and girls in a manner consistent with human rights principles. While the work in CEDAW is significant, I realize in the course of my work, that it can only do so much by encouraging countries to make improvements in the situation of women based on reports submitted to the Committee. The active participation of NGOs through the submission of shadow reports has definitely made the reporting process more dynamic and engaging. It must be noted, however, that the enforcement of CEDAW recommendations at the ground level still remains in the hands of national governments working with civil society and the private sector.

Working with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Women and Children's Rights had a totally different set of procedures compared to UNCEDAW. Although our mandate requires the Commission to promote and protect women and children's rights, our ability to monitor the performance of the ten ASEAN countries in this regard is severely limited. The members are appointed and as such have no independent standing. The members are very careful in offending the sensitivities of ASEAN member countries and are constrained to criticize human rights abuses of women and children. Nevertheless, the ACWC has been quite productive in coming up with norms and standards in addressing violence against women and children, in producing research and reviewing the progress made by countries in promoting human rights and gender equality in the ASEAN. Although regular dialogue, cooperation and collaboration with NGOs in the region still needs to be strengthened and there are serious questions regarding the effectiveness of ASEAN human rights mechanisms in addressing critical human rights issues, the fact is that human rights is now part of the agenda in ASEAN.

Women's human rights and gender equality remain seriously contested terrains in many societies. To be sure, the record in the last ten years have been quite uneven and in some areas have shown evidence of regression. Since promoting women's rights and gender equality is part of social change processes in general, there are a number of challenges that need to be noted. One is the political will and commitment of governments to implement programs and advocacies on women at the national and local levels. Second, the emergence of fundamentalist/regressive forces that seriously threaten to reverse the gains that have already made by women. The issue of continuing relevance is the third issue that I am concerned about. New generations of young women and men who are used to the fast pace of the ICT age, may not be as enthusiastic and committed to

Biography of Ms. Aurora Javate de DIOS

Professor Aurora Javate de Dios is currently the Executive Director of the Women and Gender Institute at Miriam College, the Philippines. She is also currently the Philippine Representative to the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Women and Children's Rights, one of the human rights bodies of ASEAN. She heads the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International and she is Co-Convenor of the Women's Peace Collective. She was also Commissioner and Chair of the National Commission on Role of Filipino Women and served as a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

continuing the work of the women's movement as they do not see this as relevant to their lives. More engagement and education is needed to establish the transition from old generation of the women's movement to the new, modern and young generation to continue the struggle for gender equality.

My lifelong engagement in fighting for women's human rights and gender equality in formal policy spaces at the national and regional levels has taught me that social change which includes the achievement for gender equality and women's human rights does not

happen overnight. These goals are contested terrains that are constantly challenged by regressive/fundamentalist forces and factors that continue to hinder the advancement of women. Women must, through their individual and organized efforts, continue to interrogate and challenge ideas, institutions and leaders that deny and deprive them of their rights and in the process build alternative narratives and institutions of empowerment for women and girls in the present and future generations. It is a lifelong journey that women need to take.

Current Issues Series

Globalization of Gender Inequalities: Discussions from the Perspectives of Foreign Domestic Workers (Part 1)



Associate Professor, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies, Kyushu University

Ms. Reiko OGAWA

Prof. Reiko OGAWA assumed her current position after working in the field of international development in Southeast Asia. She served as a co-researcher at the National Museum of Ethnology and as a visiting researcher at the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women. Her publications include: *Social Issues and Policies in Asia: Family, Ageing and Work* (Co-authored, Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

Child care and elderly care are an integral part of our lives. The children who are loved and nurtured by their family and community can grow up without anxiety. Also, senior citizens would like to live in dignity and maintain their own lifestyles until the last moment in their lives. Many women, however, are concerned about striking the best balance between their career and private life. Some women cannot have children even if they wish to do so. Other women hesitate to take parental leave worrying about pressure from the workplace. And some others have no choice but to stop working because they have to care for their elderly parents. Many of the young generation wish to get married and have children but the social environment is not conducive to do so. The issue of care has now become a part of the political agenda that needs to be addressed.

Almost everyday the media covers stories related to child care and elderly care; children on the waiting list for admission to childcare centers; issues of child poverty and abuse of senior citizens. The studies reveal that one in every six children suffers from poverty, and high rate of poverty has also been experienced among single mothers. These facts makes one wonder whether Japan is truly a developed country. Although some developed countries have improved their total fertility rate, the fact that few women in Japan can achieve a satisfactory work-life balance has contributed to a declining birth rate. Since Japan's social reproduction is declining, it is expected that Japan's total population will fall below 100 million in about 30 years.

Interestingly, if we look back, exactly 30 years ago, Japan had an opportunity to shift towards a more equal, diverse and inclusive society. The Equal Employment Opportunity Law was established after the Japanese government ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Before the establishment of this law, there had been no laws prohibiting gender discrimination at workplace. In this regard, this law represented great progress because it called for gender equality in the labour market. However, to ensure that women can endure long working hours and accept transfer offers as men do, there is a need to develop a social structure to support the care burden. Although 30 years have passed since the enactment of the law, no fundamental measures have been taken since then to decrease the care burden placed on women. Furthermore, the gender gap has also not been reduced. In the Global Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum, Japan ranks 111th out of 144 countries, even further down from 80th in 2006. In addition, Japan ranks the third lowest of all OECD countries

in terms of gender and wage disparity. Sixty percent of working women quit their job when they have their first child and 53.8% of them are not regular workers. This data indicates that only a little has been achieved over the past 3 decades in terms of gender equality. These trends show that Japan is a country where women still face many difficulty in their lives. If they are required to bear the full burden of household chores and care work while working as men do, how can a women 'shine' or 'demonstrate their capabilities to the fullest possible extend'?

Meanwhile, the Japanese government is trying to introduce long term care workers from abroad as "Technical Intern Trainees" to prepare for the aging of baby boomers rather than seriously reviewing its previous policy failures. Furthermore, in the designated National Strategic Special Zones, the government is also attempting to introduce foreign domestic workers in order to encourage Japanese women to enter the labour market. What will happen if elderly care, childcare and household chores are outsourced to migrant women from other Asian countries while gender "inequality" and the work-life "imbalance" continue? Such migrant workers are, of course, foreigners, and many of them are women leaving their country and families because of an economic gap. After entering Japan as care/ domestic workers, this places them in an even more disadvantaged position than that of Japanese women. In some Asian countries and the Middle East, the violation of human rights of live-in migrant domestic workers is becoming a serious problem. Although the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), Japan has not yet ratified it.

Feminism has not only problematized gender inequality but also revealed the differences among women according to class, ethnicity, religion and sexuality. Today, without drastic improvement to address the gender inequality in the Japanese society, the government is trying to outsource care work to migrant women, whose position is more vulnerable than that of Japanese women. This means that Japanese women and migrant women from other Asian countries will meet as employers and employees, respectively. When Japanese women marginalized from society meet migrant women placed on a more disadvantaged position than themselves, the lingering question is, will this lead to a new solidarity and advocacy or will they simply transfer discrimination and exploitation to more disadvantaged women?

The 26th KFAW Foreign Correspondents Kick-off Activities!

In 1991, the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) established a foreign correspondents system to broadly network with people overseas, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Past and present foreign correspondents are 292 people in 41 countries in total. This year, 7 persons from 6 countries are selected and work as KFAW foreign correspondents. Through this network, KFAW will keep providing up-to-date information from various parts of the world. The profiles of the correspondents and other reports are available at the KFAW website (<http://www.kfaw.or.jp/correspondents/index.html.en>).



Bangladesh

Mr. Bablu RAHMAN
Journalist and Peace Provider



Hong Kong

Ms. Yin Wah Amelia LO
Trainee (HK) and Attorney (NY)



India

Ms. Swapna MAJUMDAR
Freelance Journalist



Indonesia

Ms. Sholihatun KIPTIYAH
Social Researcher



Nepal

Ms. Bharati POKHAREL
Freelance Journalist and Consultant



Sri Lanka

Ms. Mallikarachchige Thilini Nayanarasi WIJETUNGE
Lecturer in English, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka

Ms. Vindyha WEERATUNGA
PhD candidate, University of New South Wales

Foreign Correspondents' Reports

Community Aspirations for Children's Education in Sri Lanka

Ms. Mallikarachchige Thilini Nayanarasi WIJETUNGE (Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka has been maintaining a very high record in literacy which is more than 90 percent, for years because of the long standing free education and positive social policies prevalent in the country. There is no gender discrimination in the education system either. Consequently, majority of the parents at present know the importance of education and are keen to provide a good education for their children disregarding the gender. Because of that, parents prefer to send their children to good schools. Although the school network is available throughout the country, there are regional disparities in the school system. National schools located in cities are considered as good schools, because they are provided with facilities and good teachers. Compared to facilities available in urban schools, however, those in remote schools located in economically poor regions are very limited.

In Sri Lanka there is a huge competition among parents who belong to upper, upper middle and middle level of social classes to get their children admitted to good schools located in major cities of the country. Affluent parents often prefer to admit their children to reputed schools situated in Colombo which is the capital of the country since they are aware of the fact that these schools have a lot of facilities and good teaching staff. Also they know that most of the educated people in the country happen to be the products of these schools and they would like to take pride in sending their children to the same reputed schools. While providing quality education, the parents ensure that their children will grow up with students in the same background.



The rural school children of Sri Lanka

Profile

After obtaining my BA (Hons) from the University of Kelaniya in 2008, I joined the Department of Modern Languages in the same university as an Assistant Lecturer in French. In the meantime, I followed my Master's in Linguistics at University of Kelaniya and also obtained a Master's in International Relations from University of Colombo. After completing two years of service at University of Kelaniya, I joined Kotelawala Defence University as a lecturer in English in 2011 and have been here to date. Currently, I am pursuing my M.Phil degree at University of Colombo.



Nevertheless, schools available in major cities are not adequate to meet this demand. In response to this demand a number of private schools have emerged in the country in the recent past.

When parents fail to admit their children to well-known reputed schools, they send their children to private schools which are known as international schools, because children of expatriates also attend these schools. Since the medium of instruction is English in these schools, some parents are happy to see their children studying in English medium. Having known that knowledge of English is essential to secure a job in the present job market, many parents prefer to send their children to such international schools.

Situation is much different when it comes to economically disadvantaged rural areas. Despite the substantial expenditure incurred by the government on education, many rural schools do not have necessary facilities and teachers to provide quality education to the children. Some schools have only one dilapidated building with only one or two teachers. Many schools have the difficulty in retaining teachers as they lack accommodation and other facilities in those areas. In some schools, children are compelled to sit on the floor as they do not have even desks and chairs. Many schools also lack water and sanitation facilities. Only parents belonging to lower social strata send their children to these schools as they cannot afford to send them to better schools situated in nearby cities.

Girls are most vulnerable to this situation due to the



The urban/ international school children in Sri Lanka

combination of a couple of common factors. Poverty is a major reason. Many girls are forced to leave schools while others never have the opportunity to go in the first place. Many parents do not wish to send their daughters to far away schools due to security concerns. Everyday newspapers carry stories about rape and sexual abuses. Girls are more prone to sexual violence in rural areas. Although there was a big protest against the perpetrators, this kind of incidents occur very frequently.

There are also other reasons associated with poverty which have negative impact on girls' education. In poor rural communities, many mothers tend to go abroad as domestic servants because of their poverty. In the absence of mothers',

older girl children have to sacrifice their education as they are supposed to assume household responsibilities.

Despite the above drawbacks, girls excel in education once they are given the opportunity. It has been revealed that the number of girls who succeed in higher education is much higher than that of boys. Women's population in the country is more than 50% and girls in urban areas have equal access to education with more facilities than what is enjoyed by their rural counterparts. These reasons affect the achievements of girls in higher education. In view of this situation the State has to take more positive measures to promote education in Sri Lanka.

Imas : Girl's Power

Ms. Sholihatun KIPTIYAH (Indonesia)

Her name is Siti Masruroh, or is simply called Imas or Uroh. I would rather call her Imas. Imas is a 19-year-old girl coming from a Ketanggungan, a small village in Brebes, a county located in Central Java. She has been in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia for about 5 years, since her graduation from a junior high school.

When she first came to Jakarta, she worked as a housekeeper of wealthy family in North Jakarta. She was there for about a year, then she moved to Warung Kifana, a small food stall nearby my place. I made friends with her when I started eating at her work place. I got to know about her life and her family. She is the oldest of the four children, of whom all are girls. Her mother sells snacks by bike. Her father works as a kind of junk collector. When she was on the second grade of a junior high school, her father got a bank loan, but was unable to pay the loan easily. As a result, Imas started working while schooling to pay for school's supplies and stuffs. Imas worked in the field as a labourer, or sold snacks at school during the break time. Imas also could not go to high school.

When Imas started working at Warung Kifana, she got more time to relax between serving customers. She also enjoyed chatting with many customers, listening to their conversations, which is enriching her knowledge. One day, a customer told her to go for high school diploma through a vocational program. Imas arranged her work schedule in order to attend the school. She now holds the certificate that is equivalent to high school graduate.

Imas said that her dream was to be better than her parents. She wanted to pursue her dream and enjoy her youth. In her village, many girls get married so young, at 17 or 18 years old. Imas prefers to delay getting married a little. Besides enjoying her youth, she is determined to send her younger sister to high school. Her younger sister is now at junior high school and same as Imas, also earns money by selling snacks at school. Every month, Imas sends some money from her salary, to help her mother pay some bills. Besides working at the restaurant, Imas, on her day off, also works as a cleaner in an apartment complex near the

Profile

I graduated from Nagoya University with a degree in International Development. I consider myself a social wanderer with a passion for seeing what is going on in the world. My wandering activities sometimes lead me to places where I can see how people live their lives. I often hang out in vegetable shops, which is really useful for me since I can get business insights there. I got to know there are some business opportunities in those places such as papaya supplying business. Discussing empowerment is one of my hobbies.



restaurant. She has about 3 clients there.

The village where Imas came from is quite traditional although it is not located in a remote area. The people there still consider women as "second class" human being. Many girls only graduate from elementary school, and go to big cities to work as maids or baby sitters. Some of them went abroad to become migrant workers, especially maids. The mindset exists in her village that girls should not get higher education, because eventually they will only become housewives. In fact, few girls get higher education.

Imas tries to visit her hometown every four months. Whenever she comes home, her parents ask about her plan to get married, her neighbors also irritate her about her single status despite her age before twenty years old. When Imas was seventeen years old, her family arranged a marriage for her, but she refused. She is determined to enjoy her journey and her youth before getting married. It is obvious that Imas is not an extraordinary woman. But her determination is already influencing her younger sister who is currently at junior high school. Her sister will go to high school and also make a journey of life before settling down.

I might say that Imas story is not a common story. But it is happening. Many underage children, work to earn money and are unable to pursue higher education. In the case of Imas, she is lucky that she is in the environment, in Jakarta, where people support her determination. Living in Jakarta with minimum wage, Imas manages to make her life enjoyable. She has the girl's power, the power to be better.

Although Imas is not a community leader, she already shows an example to be followed by her sister. I say, therefore, that Imas is a leader, on her own world.



Imas, wearing hijab, working on night shift in the restaurant.

Under a commission from the Kyushu International Center of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) holds an annual seminar for central and local government officials in developing countries who are in charge of gender mainstreaming policies.

The purpose of the seminar is to foster government officials who can promote gender mainstreaming policies comprehensively and effectively in developing countries, toward a gender-equal society.

This year, the seminar was held from Monday, June 6 to Monday, July 4, with nine Participants from eight countries: Bhutan, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, and East Timor.

The Participants first presented their country reports to describe the situation and problems that their home countries face when addressing gender mainstreaming, thereby sharing the problems with other Participants.

Designed to help Participants comprehensively understand the concepts, methods, and theories involved in gender mainstreaming, the seminar provides a well-balanced mix of lectures, workshops, site visits and presentations. In particular, the workshops and presentations are organized to serve as opportunities for interactive learning for both instructors and Participants.

This year's session on gender mainstreaming in rural areas included a wide variety of curriculums, taking advantage of the features of Kitakyushu City, the venue of the seminar. Specifically, on top of attending a lecture on the city's efforts to increase incomes of workers in agriculture, forestry and fishery industries, the Participants visited a female farmers' group

engaged in processing, development and sales of local specialties in the city, as well as the shop where such items were sold. When visiting the female farmers' group, the Participants sampled miso and dressings as examples of processed products. They thus learned about the cooperative activities that exists between the city and female farmers through the lecture and the visit site.

During the approximately one-month seminar period, the Participants climbed Mt. Sarakura and visited Kokura Castle on their days off and cultivated friendships with each other. They lived and spent some time together on their days off, enabling them to understand each other's home country and discuss gender equality at leisure. Accordingly, at the action plan presentation on the final day of the seminar, they exchanged opinions in a lively atmosphere, making the event even more significant.



On a visit to the female farmer group



Workshop



Lecture



Participants' Messages and Impressions

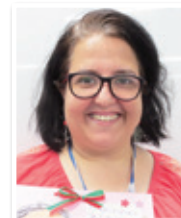
■Ms. YANGZOM Tashi (Bhutan)

I was finally able to realize my dream of visiting Japan, and my experience in the country was so wonderful that I will never forget it for the rest of my life. When I was in Japan, I felt as if I were in my home country. Japan is a second home country for me. I learned a lot not only from the well-organized, excellent seminar curricula, but also from many other things in Japan. What impressed me most was the country's safe environment and friendly Japanese people. Even strangers whom I happened to meet in the street were nice to me.



■Ms. WAHBA Arwa E.Y (Palestine)

I studied together with Jaya, Becky, Milana, Lis, Kemey, Tshewang, Tashi, and Barreto. All of them are new friends that I met here in the safest country in the world. In this country, there is no need to worry about explosions or the fear of death. I was able to live at ease and enjoy a new experience. In Japan, together with those with different cultural backgrounds, I learned what it is like to live in calm and peace.



KFAW recruits visiting researchers annually in order to expand the fields and geographical area of our research and encourage experts from a wide variety of fields to conduct research on gender and women. Two pairs of researchers will conduct research for two years based on the following themes:

Human Rights of Sexual Minorities and Civil Society in Asia: Focus on Comparative Study of Singapore, Taiwan, Province of China and Japan

Keiko Tsuji-TAMURA
Professor, Faculty of Law of the University of Kitakyushu

Kyouko HIKITA
Associate Professor, Kagoshima Prefectural College

Presently, issues involving the expansion of human rights of sexual minorities (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, called "LGBT") are being included on the political agenda not only in the West but also in Asia. In Japan, in 2015, Shibuya Ward and Setagaya Ward began to issue to same-sex couples certificates recognizing their partnerships as equivalent to marriage. Discussions on same-sex marriage and other issues involving sexual minorities, as well as trial measures for sexual minorities, have just been launched in this country.

This research will feature a comparison between Singapore, where same-sex marriage and sexual intercourse between men are illegal; Taiwan, Province of China, which is moving toward the establishment of a law on same-sex marriage; and Japan, where discussions on same-sex marriage have finally begun. The research will reveal the features of each country by highlighting the movements for the expansion of human rights of sexual minorities, and focusing on members of civil society serving as an important element in such movements, especially women's organizations.

Human Resources Management for Foreign Care Workers in Japan: A Gender Perspective on Recruitment and Training

Rie KAGE
Research Fellow, Saga Women's Junior College

Yukari MAEYAMA
Associate Professor, Saga Women's Junior College

Although the Japanese government had been cautious in introducing foreign workers into the country, it recently began to receive those who aimed to work as qualified care workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam under Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). Behind this is the government's desire to address a decline in the country's workforce and a shortage of care workers resulting from an increase in the aging population. In addition, the government is planning to receive foreign domestic workers in some of the National Strategic Special Zones. Receiving foreign workers is thus becoming an important issue to be discussed.

This research will focus on the measures that the Japanese government has introduced for receiving foreign care workers (to take care of senior citizens or support household chores), thereby clarifying the Japanese gender structure and the position of foreign workers in the labor market. The research will also analyze the current situation and problems regarding how to secure and develop such workers.

KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminar Report

▶ Development of Tobata/Kitakyushu and the History of an Anti-Pollution Campaign Headed by Women's Organizations

Date: Sunday, April 17, 2016, 13:00 - 15:30

Lecturers: Atsushi KAJIMA (Professor, Department of Creative Engineering, National Institute of Technology, Kitakyushu College)
Satoko KANZAKI (KFAW Chief Researcher)

Participants: 54

As one of the four major industrial zones in Japan, Kitakyushu long underpinned Japan's post-war restoration and economic growth. On the other hand, the city paid the heavy price of severe industrial pollution, which destroyed the citizens' healthy daily lives. Amidst this serious situation, the Tobata Women's Association launched an anti-pollution campaign, which moved the government and companies to take necessary action to overcome the pollution. This seminar served as a good opportunity for participants to consider pollution through the history of Kitakyushu based on the two different perspectives of companies/engineers and women/citizens.

Researcher Kanzaki indicated that women in those days had taken action with a strong belief that nothing had been more important than family health, which moved the government and companies to implement necessary measures, and that such women had served as the driving force to proceed with efforts to overcome the pollution. Professor Kajima explained that the engineers in those days had felt torn between

the necessity to establish and operate more power plants to cover power shortage in the industrial zone for the country's post-war restoration, and the fact that the establishment and operation of the plants had caused their families and local residents to suffer from pollution.



▶ Marriage Hunting in Iran – Social Changes and Marriages in Iran

Date: Sunday, May 29, 2016, 10:00 - 12:00

Lecturer: Toyoko MORITA (Specially-Appointed Associate Professor, Kagoshima University Global Initiative Center)

Participants: 30

In Iran, where most citizens are Muslims (Shias), Westernization was introduced after the end of the Second World War. Also, the Family Protection Law, which was designed to protect women from Sharia law, was established on the initiative of congresswomen. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, however, operation of the law was suspended, followed by the Islamization of the country, as indicated by the issuance of a mandate for women to wear a hijab in public.

Traditionally, most women in Iran married partners whom their families introduced to them, and they did so in their teens. Today, an increasing number of women have a high educational background and participate in society, while many young people are unemployed. Accordingly, it is no longer true that almost anybody can get married as it was in the past. To address the problems of a tendency to marry later, a decline in the birth rate, and an increase in divorces, the government established a new version of the Family Protection Law. When this law was established, women who had a strong faith in Islam and women who liked Westernized culture cooperated with each other in asking for improvements.

Associate Professor Morita stressed that women in Iran did not merely allow themselves to be oppressed, but tried to be involved with society on their own initiative and thus change society.



Debriefing on Participation in the 60th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60)

- Date** Thursday, May 19, 2016, 18:30 - 20:00
Venue Small Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE
Speakers Mitsuko HORIUCHI (KFAW President)
 Yuka MURASHIMA
 (participant in BPW's program to send interns to the CSW60)
Participants 35

We held a debriefing on the 60th Commission on the Status of Women 2016 (CSW60), held in New York from March 14 to 24, 2016. The meeting began with KFAW President HORIUCHI reporting on CSW60's priority theme "Women's Empowerment and Its Link to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." This was followed by Ms. MURASHIMA's report on the side events that she had joined and been impressed most. She mentioned her observation that active participation of younger generation including herself would be the key to create a gender-equal society in Japan. In the Q & A session after the report, participants asked many questions in a very lively atmosphere.



International Understanding Seminar "KFAW Consulate Series 8" "Consul General of the Vietnamese Consulate-General in Fukuoka Talks! Present Situation in Vietnam and the Role of Women"

- Date** Thursday, August 4, 2016, 15:30 - 17:00
Venue Small Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE
Speakers Nguyen Phuong HONG
 (Consul General of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Fukuoka)
Participants 56

Consul General Nguyen Phuong HONG provided an outline of Vietnam and spoke about how women in the country demonstrated their capabilities in society from the aspects of labor, education, politics, and economics. Of particular note was women's involvement in the country's politics, which was highly praised by the UN, saying that the country's percentage of women participating in political activities was the highest in the world. The consul general also explained that the percentage of female members of the National Assembly was 26.8%, and that both the incumbent Chair of the National Assembly and the incumbent Vice President were women. Vietnamese women play extremely important roles not only in domestic but also in international sphere. In addition, many of them work while taking care of their children and household chores like Japanese women. The consul general stressed the importance of Vietnamese women in all aspects of Vietnamese society.



Kitakyushu Town Meeting as a Follow up to the 1st WWAS International Conference – Women's Capabilities in an Aging Society and Local Communities

- Date** Friday, July 8, 2016, 13:30 - 16:30 **Participants** 160
Venue Large Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

Keynote Lecture

Women's Capabilities in an Aging Society and Local Communities

Keiko HIGUCHI
 (Chairperson of the Women's Association for a Better Aging Society)

Report on the 1st WWAS International Conference

Suggestions toward Positive Reform

Miyuki MATSUDA
 (Vice Chair of the Steering Committee of WWAS 2016 International Conference)

Panel Discussion

Women's Capabilities in an Aging Society and Communities – Future of Kitakyushu City

<Panelists>

Keiko HIGUCHI
 (Critic and Chairperson of the Women's Association for a Better Aging Society)

Noriaki SEKI
 (Director of the SATOYAMA Active Viewers of a Sustainable Society)

Chikako OBA
 (Department Director in Charge of the Special Zone, Regional Revitalization

Promotion Office of the Planning and Coordination Bureau, Kitakyushu City)

Stephanie WESTON
 (Professor at the Faculty of Law, Fukuoka University)

<Moderator>

Miyuki MATSUDA
 (Vice Chair of the Steering Committee of WWAS 2016 International Conference)

Featuring the theme of women demonstrating their capabilities in a rapidly aging society, this town meeting was held as a follow-up to an international conference held in Fukuoka City. The meeting was designed for panelists and participants to discuss the problems of and future prospects for local communities in an aging society.

In the keynote lecture, Ms. HIGUCHI stressed that it was important for women to participate in the decision-making process in local communities, so that they could overcome various problems, especially women's poverty and many difficulties that they face when taking care of senior citizens. In the panel discussion session, the panelists presented their activities and efforts in their respective positions. The session concluded with the confirmation that in order to realize a better aging society for all citizens, it was important for women to work in an age-appropriate way and play an important role in supporting their local communities, and that it was necessary to accomplish positive reform that would enable everybody to develop his/her full potential.



Panel discussion

The 27th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

"Leave No One Behind" – What Can We Do to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In the keynote lecture, Ms. Yoko HAYASHI, the first Japanese Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, will provide an outline of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which need to be addressed on a global scale. She will also speak about the relationship between Goal 5 of the SDGs (Gender Equality) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as about related efforts.

In the panel discussion session, panelists will exchange opinions regarding the current situation in Japan and other Asian countries, as well as future action to be taken to achieve the SDGs.

- Date** Saturday, November 26, 2016, 13:00 - 16:00
Venue Large Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE
Capacity 150 (on a first-come-first-served basis), free of charge
Childcare service Available. 500 yen per child (reservation required)

Keynote Lecture



Ms. Yoko HAYASHI

(Lawyer, Chairperson of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)

Special Guest

Ms. Kyoko HOKUGO (Director, Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

Panel Discussion

<Panelist>

- Ms. Yoko HAYASHI (Lawyer, Chairperson of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)
- Ms. Kyoko HOKUGO (Director, Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)
- Ms. Koh MIYAOI (United Nations Development Program [UNDP] Gender Advisor for Asia & the Pacific)
- Mr. Tomohide NAKAMURA (Assistant Manager, Central Children's Counseling & Guidance Center, Child and Domestic Affairs Bureau, Kitakyushu City)

<Coordinator> Mitsuko HORIUCHI (KFAW President)