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WOMEN TODAY.....pp. 1-2

Celebration Message for KFAW's 20th Anniversary

CURRENT ISSUES SERIES.....p. 3

"Malaysia's Bid to Attain Developed Nation Status : Enhancing Women's Role in Economy and its Challenges"

Dr. Ayame SUZUKI, Lecturer, Fukuoka Women's University

FEATURES.....pp. 4-11

The 24th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

The 23rd KFAW Foreign Correspondents' Reports from U.S.A., Indonesia and Pakistan



Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) celebrated its 20th anniversary on October 1, 2013; the organization also made a new start as a public interest incorporated foundation this fiscal year.

We have received many messages celebrating our 20th anniversary from people around the world who have helped us in our efforts. Below are messages from four of those people.

Ms. Arni HOLE (Director General, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion)

Arni Hole is Director General for the Department of Family and Equality in the Royal Ministry of Children and Equality since 2001. She holds degrees in Philosophy and Economic History. Hole has held several Director General positions within public service (5 Ministries) including the Norwegian School of Sports and the Research Foundation of the Oslo Region. She has served on many boards.



Greetings from Norway!

As a long time friend and a supporter of Japanese efforts for promoting gender equality and women's interests, I congratulate KFAW on the 20th anniversary. I honor the achievements and the standing you have reached as an important stakeholder in Japanese society and elsewhere in Asia.

Norwegian experiences show it is paramount that any society has competent NGOs and civil society foundations cooperating with a government. However, the NGOs must sustain their own, independent voices as to make a difference. In regard to gender equality, it

has been vital and decisive for Norwegian politics and the milestones we have reached, to have strong and clever women's organizations.

No society can grow and prosper without women's talents and capacities being included and put to use. Norwegian GNP would have been much lower if women ceased working to the extent they do. Women in Norway have real options to choose both children and career, not being 'forced' to choose either – or of the two. To fulfill women's human rights and full participation in society, on all levels and in all sectors, is in fact smart economy.

Best of luck in the next 20 years.

Mr. Christopher GREEN (Executive Director, White Ribbon Campaign UK)

Chris Green has worked as the Director of White Ribbon Campaign UK since 2006. He has conducted trainings for Oxfam, the British Council, and the European Union. For four years, he was a member of the Council of Europe Task Force to End Violence against Women. He was the Chair of the Coalition of Men and Boys, and sits on the National Institute for Clinical Excellence Program Group on Domestic Abuse, as well as End Violence against Women Coalition. In 2007, he was awarded Ultimate Man of the Year by Cosmopolitan, and in 2012, ran with the Olympic Torch in London. He also took part in The 23rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women in November 2012 as a keynote speaker.

In November 2012, he was appointed as a member of the UN Network of Men Leaders to combat violence against women by Ban Ki-moon.



The work of KFAW is unique. It offers a comprehensive example of what can be achieved locally, nationally and internationally, providing a first class example of co-operation to champion women's rights.

For 20 years it has been at the forefront of promoting gender equality in Japan, in Asia, and throughout the world.

In November 2012 I was honored to be the keynote speaker at the 23rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women hosted by KFAW, and to have the opportunity to share experiences with staff during Panel Discussions

at the conference and during visits and meetings after the conference.

I salute the pioneering staff of KFAW, and offer thanks to those who have worked there in the past.

There is still much to do to achieve a world of equality, freedom and respect for all. KFAW helps to provide a vision of the way ahead.

I look forward to this important work being supported, recognized and celebrated during the next twenty years of the existence of KFAW.

Mr. KIM Min Bae (Former President, Incheon Development Institute, Korea)

Former President of Incheon Development Institute in Korea. Graduated from Inha University with a Ph.D. in law. Professor at Inha University Law School and a member of the Korean Association for Industrial Technology Security advisory committee.



김민배

Congratulations on the KFAW's 20th anniversary! The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) and the Incheon Development Institute (IDI) have maintained a cooperative relationship and sought mutual development through exchange programs. Both institutions have shared their wisdom and knowledge through reports and presentations in conferences and seminars in such areas as women and child-care. Both institutions have worked together to promote a shared vision for Asian societies and search for solutions to current challenges that Korean and Japanese societies are facing in the areas of women, child-care, families and culture.

Women, multi-culture, families, equality and human rights are common issues that all Asian countries are currently dealing with. Koreans are much interested in how Japan has responded to such challenges and presented practical solutions to them. I know that KFAW has surely played a leading role in pursuing solutions to those challenges in Japan. All the IDI members have admired the KFAW's endeavors and achievements in the course of addressing those challenges in Japan.

In a similar context, the city of Incheon and the city of Kitakyushu have maintained a sister city partnership

and collaborated to promote friendship between the two cities. Over the last decade the city of Kitakyushu have set the standard for other Asian cities in the issues of environment, women, and culture. Especially the KFAW's effort and passion in such issues as woman, family, multi-culture and community have shown what kind of vision the city of Incheon should create in those areas.

There is a Korean saying that captures the essence of our future relationship; "If you want to go farther, go together with a friend." I urge that the KFAW and the IDI work together to come up with specific action plans for citizens by examining urban issues from citizens' perspective. In so doing, we hope that cooperative relations between the KFAW and the IDI, between the city of Incheon and the city of Kitakyushu, and between Korea and Japan will mature and expand in the coming years. We also hope that the KFAW continues to take a leading role in the efforts of Asian community to tackle challenges in the areas of women, families and community.

I wish all the best for the 20 year-old KFAW, and all its members and their families. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sjamsiah ACHMAD (Chair, Indonesian Center for Women in Politics (ICWIP))

Ms. Sjamsiah ACHMAD graduated from New York University School of Education in 1962 and has undergone numerous trainings in the fields of education and science, politics and management, both in Indonesia and at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and Vienna on the United Nations policies and administration.

She retired from the United Nations in 1988 and appointed as Assistant Minister for Education, Office of the State Ministry for the Role of Women in Indonesia (1988-1995); Member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2001-2004); Member of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (2003-2006 and 2006-2009); Chair of the Indonesian Center for Women in Politics (ICWIP) (2004-present).



Sjamsiah Achmad

I am privileged to have been invited to join the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of KFAW. I was one of the overseas guests during its inauguration 20 years ago and am pleased to congratulate KFAW on its outstanding contribution to Asian women.

There is no doubt that women studies lecturers and women activists have benefited from KFAW's programs and Asian Breeze newsletters. They demonstrate a wide range of women issues in Asian countries and their interdependence with the global issues.

I, however, wish to suggest that in the future KFAW gives priority to the enhancement of networking among

women / gender study centers and graduate programs on women / gender studies within Asian region. This is to provide comprehensive evidences about the negative impacts of gender based discrimination and the advantages of gender equality and justice for all women and men, young and old.

The distribution of such evidences through ICT will no doubt enhance public awareness and commitment about the needs to eliminate gender based discrimination and to enhance efforts towards the realization of gender equality and justice in our daily life, from within our respective family, national and Asian environment up to the global context.

“Malaysia’s Bid to Attain Developed Nation Status: Enhancing Women’s Role in Economy and its Challenges”



Lecturer, Fukuoka Women's University
Ayame SUZUKI

Ayame SUZUKI is a Lecturer in the Fukuoka Women's University, Japan. She holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Tokyo. She was a Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and served as a researcher at the University of Malaya before assuming the current position. Dr. Suzuki's substantive research on politics and law in Malaysia was published as *Freedom and Order in "Democracies": Reconsidering Malaysia's Political Regime* (Kyoto University Press, 2010).

In Malaysia, Southeast Asia's second largest economy after Singapore, female leaders are very active. Governor Zeti Akhtar AZIZ of the Central Bank of Malaysia is often selected as the most excellent governor of a central bank by the U.S. *Global Finance*. Another example is Rafidah AZIZ, who is renowned in Japan as well for her dedication to forming a closer economic relationship between Malaysia and Japan. She long served as the Minister of International Trade and Industry from the time of the Mahathir administration. There are many young female politicians who are attracting wide attention for their influential voices and actions.

These female leaders, however, are exceptions. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2013* released by the World Economic Forum, Malaysia ranks 102nd out of 136 countries surveyed in terms of gender gap index. The country is the lowest among the five ASEAN countries: the Philippines (5th), Singapore (58th), Thailand (65th), and Indonesia (95th). (Malaysia is above Japan at 105th.)

The gender gap index is calculated based on scores in the fields of economy, politics, health, and education. In Malaysia, the scores of women's participation and opportunities in the fields of economy and politics are extremely low. This situation is similar to Japan's. For instance, the rate of women among the National Assembly members is 10% (8% in Japan), among the Cabinet Members is 6% (12% in Japan), and among company managers is 25% (9% in Japan). Moreover, the women's labor force participation rate (the rate of those working among the working-age population) in Malaysia is 46% (63% in Japan); and the female working population is 59% of male working population. This means that more than half the women do not engage in the economy as income earners.

The Malaysian government is, of course, well aware of this situation. The Prime Minister Najib Razak, inaugurated in April 2009, announced the New Economic Model (NEM) as a blueprint for transforming Malaysia into a developed country by 2020. The NEM positions the use of women's capabilities for increasing the productivity as one of the important policies.

Behind the development of the NEM is the fact that non-Bumiputera, such as Chinese and Indians, are dissatisfied with the preferential policy for the country's ethnic majority Bumiputera, and that the country's ruling party, National Front, is losing support among the general public mainly due to workers' dissatisfaction about wage depression originating from the flow of low-wage foreign workers. Meanwhile, the government is worried that the country is exposed to competition with neighboring countries that have advantage in low-wage

labors, while Malaysia has not transformed its economic structure from that of low technology and low productivity. To overcome these political and economic challenges, the NEM strives to shift from an economy dependent on low-wage labor to an economy driven by innovation.

As for the necessity of promoting women's labor force participation, the NEM presents two reasons. Firstly, the government aims to invigorate the country's economy by using women's management capabilities, characterized by comprehensive leadership, teamwork, and financial/environmental consideration. Secondly, the rise of women's labor force participation rate can offset the working population decrease generated by the reduced number of foreign workers, who are causing the state of low wage and low productivity.

Specific measures include implementation of flexible working patterns, such as reduced working hours and telecommuting, and establishment of many more nursery schools. In addition, a preferential tax treatment has already been launched for companies' training expenses for female workers who were absent from work due to childcare or other things.

Although the above measures are seemingly reasonable, you can easily imagine that “flexible working patterns” include the employment of many temporary workers. These measures might be helpful for raising women's labor force participation rate, boosting labor input, and encouraging economic growth. However, such measures do not lead to increasing the number of opportunities for women to engage in management as decision makers. On the contrary, the measures might actually end up increasing the number of women in unstable employment. The reality is too far from the NEM's first vision of economic growth by fully utilizing women's management capabilities.

To ensure that women fully demonstrate their potential and contribute to the economy, it is necessary to change the social structure in which only women are forced to balance between household chores/childcare and careers, and also to change people's mindset that forces women to do so. The NEM presents no solution to these fundamental challenges.

It seems that Malaysia and Japan have similar challenges. It is not, of course, easy to change people's awareness of gender roles. Without an vibrant society where both women and men can fully demonstrate their capabilities, however, it may be difficult to get on track for sustainable economic growth. As a Japanese woman studying Malaysia, I would like to consider cooperation between the countries through sharing best practices.

The 24th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

For the two days of Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10, 2013, the Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women was held at the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center (MOVE). This year's conference took place as an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women and the 50th anniversary of the City of Kitakyushu.

On the 9th, the first day, an international symposium titled "Women's Greater Participation in Japan and the World Brings Positive Change" was held jointly by the City of Kitakyushu and the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center (MOVE).

In the symposium's keynote speech, Ms. Yukako UCHINAGA, one of the female business leaders, spoke about the use of women's abilities from the strategic standpoint of companies. In the subsequent panel discussion, discussion was held with reference to the example of Norway, one of the world's most advanced countries where women have been successfully demonstrating their abilities in society, as well as the examples of South Korea and Kitakyushu.

On November 10, a cultural exchange event between women's organizations in the City of Kitakyushu and the Incheon Metropolitan City was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the conclusion of the sister city relationship between the two cities.

In addition, a panel exhibition took place to review KFAW's 20 years of activities.

◆Keynote Speech

"Utilize Women's Abilities as a Corporate Strategy – a Message to Companies and Women –"

Ms. Yukako UCHINAGA

(Board Chair, Incorporated Non-profit Organization J-Win)

Importance of Diversity

In this age of information and globalization, how to establish a new business model and how to increase the level of customer satisfaction are truly crucial. What are required in this situation are innovative attempts and creative ideas and sense of value.

With this as a background, diversity – the approach of striving to actively use a wide variety of human resources with different values and from different cultural backgrounds – is now regarded as an important business strategy throughout the world.



Ms. Yukako UCHINAGA

Diversity as a Corporate Strategy

In 1993, Louis Gerstner assumed the position of chairperson of IBM, which was suffering from sluggish business results in those days. Emphasizing the promotion of management diversity as one of the important elements for the company's drastic reform, he established a target to be achieved by IBM group companies in the world: making a full use of women's abilities, who form a major "minority" group in the world. At IBM Japan, a group was established to strive for the promotion of the use of women's abilities. As a result of the group's discussion, the following three problems to be solved were revealed:

1) No role model was available in the workplace, which made it difficult for female workers to draw their future pictures.

→Presenting opportunities for exchanging information by holding seminars for all female workers and panel discussions for female managers

2) It was difficult to strike a good balance between careers and household chores/childcare.

→Adopting a working scheme by which workers could select their working places and hours more flexibly, and establishing a corresponding assessment system

3) It was difficult for female workers to join in a so-called "old boys network." (an organizational culture that has been nurtured in a male-dominant society by male workers to do business smoothly.)

→Encouraging workers to understand how organizational cultures differ between men and women, changing the corporate climate, and establishing a women's network

As a result of the above efforts, five years later, the company successfully achieved the target of increasing the percentage of female managers to the same level as male managers. This was made possible by the top management's strong belief in the importance of using women's capabilities as a corporate strategy. The company subsequently realized a V-shaped turnaround.

Messages to Companies and Women

Working women should set up goals regarding their careers. If any opportunity is given, you need to try to make full use of it, regardless of the way in which you do so. This will certainly improve your skills. It is tough for both men and women to pursue their career, but it also brings you joy of self-realization. If you decide to generate certain achievements in your career, you must never give up.

For companies, the use of women's capabilities does not simply entail HR policy; it is confirmed that such use is imperative in making Japanese business society even more competitive. The first step toward promoting diversity management is the use of women's capabilities, although this is not the ultimate goal. It is hoped that many more companies will use women's capabilities in order to make Japan even more competitive.

Panel Discussion

Panelists

Ms. Yukako UCHINAGA

(Board Chair, Incorporated Non-profit Organization J-Win)

Mr. Bjørn MIDTHUN

(Minister-Counselor, Royal Norwegian Embassy)

Ms. Mihee HONG

(Head of Division Policy Research, Incheon Foundation for Women and Family)

Ms. Junko KOMORITA

(Representative Director, Zm'ken Service Co., Ltd.)

Coordinator

Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI (KFAW President)

From Mr. Bjørn MIDTHUN of the Royal Norwegian Embassy

He explained mainly about the current situation of Norway, a country of gender equality, as well as about the country's measures to realize women's participation in society and achieve an appropriate work-life balance.

Currently, in Norway, there are many women active in society. Of particular note is that in politics women account for 40% of the national assembly members and 50% of the cabinet members, and a woman has assumed the position of prime minister. This indicates that the percentage of women in decision-making processes is extremely high.

What has encouraged this trend is the country's quota system and childcare support system to enable mothers to return to their work after childbirth. Particularly, the establishment of many more nursery facilities and the paid childcare leave system, as well as the Papa Quota scheme which encourages more fathers to participate in childcare, enable men and women to cooperate in childcare and women to work without hesitation.

As a result, the women's labor force participation rate of Norway is relatively high among OECD countries, and the country's birthrate is also high.



Mr. Bjørn MIDTHUN

From Ms. Mihee HONG of South Korea

She spoke about women's participation in the politics of South Korea and Incheon Metropolitan City, as well as the background to the election of the country's first female president. In South Korea, a quota system was introduced in the field of politics, which has increased women's participation in politics. She also explained about changes in the percentages of women among national and local assembly members, as well as about the country's election system.

In South Korea, pro and con discussions are underway regarding the quota system. However, it is true that the system has increased the percentages of female national



Ms. Mihee HONG

and local assembly members. The system is necessary for promoting women's empowerment in South Korea.

From Ms. Junko KOMORITA, the Top Manager of a Construction Company

Ms. Junko KOMORITA has received the Mayor's Prize at the City of Kitakyushu Work Life Balance Awards as an individual and as a company respectively, as well as the Women's Challenge Prize from the Cabinet Office of Japan in 2013. She shared her own experiences about her attempts to use women's abilities.



Her company has adopted designs generated from the perspective of women as ordinary citizens, and employed a work sharing scheme to enable female employees at different life stages to work. In the male-dominated construction industry, she implemented management that could be made possible only by a woman, and promoted nationwide community creation projects by the Female Construction Design Team, which are helping the company generate favorable business results.

Free Discussion

Discussion was held regarding the positive effects that the use of women's capabilities will have on businesses and the entire society, as well as regarding the necessity of a quota system, based on the examples of Norway and South Korea. In addition, it was discussed what should be done to promote the use of women's capabilities in Japan, the progress of which is hard to observe in this country. It is insufficient for the government to launch certain measures and systems. Ms. UCHINAGA indicated the necessity of the commitments of companies' top managers to strategies for utilizing women's capabilities. Ms. KOMORITA said that it was necessary to establish a corporate climate where women could fully demonstrate their abilities.

The discussion concluded with the audience asking questions and voicing comments. A female company manager in the audience said, "A numerical target is set up at my workplace for the promotion of female employees, about which I feel uncomfortable. I often think that I've been promoted only thanks to this target.", Ms. UCHINAGA replied, "Even if you are told that you have been promoted to manager just because you are a woman, you need never care about that. The reality is that the percentage of female managers is still very small. This does not mean that women are inferior to men, but that women have been placed in an environment where they cannot fully demonstrate their abilities for various reasons. Many women are not mentally ready, but that is not a reason to refuse opportunities given. Without fear of making mistakes, you should do your best in cooperation with your subordinates, coworkers, and bosses." Her comment was so encouraging that the audience, most of whom were women, felt greatly emboldened.



Panelists

Cultural Exchange Event between Women's Organizations of the City of Kitakyushu and Incheon Metropolitan City

The interactive relationship between Incheon Metropolitan City and KFAW began in 2007. This year, 11 members of the Incheon Council of Women, including the organization's President LEE, visited KFAW and attended a cultural exchange event with women's organizations in Kitakyushu. President LEE and the organization's Chief Secretary SHIN also visited KFAW in February 2013, in order to help us make this interactive event happen. On the day of the event, Ms. Mihee HONG, the panelist of the previous day's 24th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women, joined in the group; we welcomed a total of 12 members.

< Women's Groups in Kitakyushu Participating in the Event >

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

The event attracted more than 30 persons from women's organizations in Kitakyushu. Associate Professor KIM of the University of Kitakyushu served as an interpreter for this event and a supervisor for the Korean cooking session held as part of the event. In addition, citizen volunteer interpreters and staff dispatched from Incheon Metropolitan City to the City of Kitakyushu joined the interactive event.

The event began with cooking and tasting typical dishes representing each country. While rolled *sushi*, *inari-zushi* (flavored boiled rice wrapped in fried bean curd), and a *nishime* (dish simmered slowly in a soy broth) were cooked as representative of Japanese dishes, *chapchae* and *songpyeon* (types of bean-jam cakes)* were prepared as Korean dishes. The members from the women's organizations in South Korea also tried making rolled *sushi*. The participants from both countries demonstrated their wonderful cooking skills and made delicious dishes.



Cooking dishes

Subsequently, the participants moved to a Japanese tea room, where Japanese participants demonstrated their skills of making the traditional Japanese tea under the guidance of Ms. Masako Date, a tea ceremony master of Urasenke. The South Korean participants also tried making traditional Japanese tea and enjoyed the taste of their tea.



Making tea

Next, they tried on the national costumes of each country. The South Korean participants put on Japanese *kimono*, while Japanese participants put on *chima chogori*, the Korean national costume. The South Korean members selected *kimono* with their favorite patterns and the Japanese members helped dress them in the *kimono*. The scene of all 12 members wearing *kimono* was very impressive, making the atmosphere at the venue even more exciting.



Commemorative photo of members in kimono

The event concluded with interaction among all the participants at the Exchange Plaza on the first floor of the MOVE. Sharing tables together, the Japanese and South Korean participants formed closer relationships with each other through interpreters. On behalf of women in Kitakyushu, Ms. Katae Terasaka delivered her greetings and gave a singing performance, before the event reached a successful conclusion.

(On the front cover of the magazine is a commemorative photograph taken at this event.)



* Songpyeon

This is traditionally eaten on the day of *Chuseok*, a major harvest festival in the country held on August 15 according to the lunar calendar. To cook this food, first pour hot water into glutinous rice powder and stir it. With this dough, wrap the mixture of adzuki beans, chestnuts, ground sesame seeds, and sugar, and then steam it in a steamer lined with pine needles. In Korea, it is said that single women who can make beautifully shaped *songpyeon* will find excellent marriage partners, while pregnant women who can do so will have cute babies.

Career Hunting: The Generation/ Gender Gap

Ms. Kay E. MAKISHI (U.S.A.)

Profile

I am a second-generation Japanese immigrant who grew up in the United States. I studied Japanese and anthropology through study abroad at Sophia University while I was in Pennsylvania University. Currently, I am working as a coordinator for international relations in Okagaki, Japan. From 2012, I started to research on relationship between Japan and the United States as a fellow of the Sasagawa Peace Foundation. I was elected for the president of national AJET committee for 2013-14.

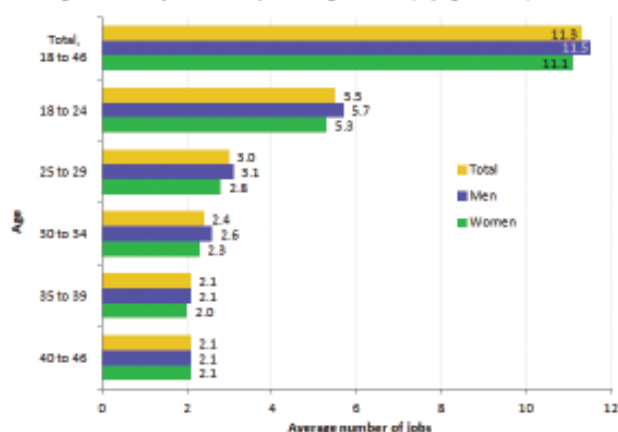


The Generation Gap

Flexibility, upward mobility, and work-life balance are some key aspects the current American generation seeks for in a career. Popular industries include technology, business, and health services. Particularly in the technology and business industries, globalization is kindling more overseas ties which affect how work relationships are being conducted in the US due to differences in location and time zones. For example, emailing and teleconferencing are vital to operations in many industries. All these factors that coincide with the change in the current generation's work landscape demand and allow for flexibility from both employees and managers. It also greatly affects the pursuit of gender equality.

In addition, job hopping has become the norm in the US. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people in their early 50's held an average of 11 jobs from ages 18 to 46. Networking is the buzz word and the constant evolution of technology allows this to be done easier now than in the past. For example, social media platforms such as LinkedIn, are specifically created to help build one's professional network. A common phrase heard in college these days regarding advice to students looking for jobs is, "it's all about who you know".

Average number of jobs held for persons ages 18 to 46, by age and sex, 1978-2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

NOTE: Jobs that were held in more than one of the age categories were counted in each appropriate category, but only once in the total.

The Breadwinner and Homemaker

In past generations, males tended to be viewed as 'breadwinners', meaning a main income earner of a family while females often fulfilled a domestic role as homemakers and were solely responsible for childrearing. This gender stereotype is gradually dissipating as more women feel and become empowered.

There is a saying, "you can't have your cake and eat it, too." Meaning, you can't do both things; you must choose one

or the other. In the case of females, this metaphor often referred to those two things as having a career and raising children. Today, the more common saying you hear is, "you can have your cake and eat it, too." According to Forbes, the number of women in law school has gone from 4% in 1963 to 44% in 2012, and the number in medical school increased from 6% to 49%. Though there is momentum through this critical mass, there is still a lot more work needed to achieve gender equality in the US.

The Gender Difference

The fact that more women are joining the workforce and achieving managerial and executive positions is encouraging women with careers to be the new standard. C-level female executives such as Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook who graduated from Harvard Business School and also wrote the book *Lean In*, serve as role models for more women to take control of their careers.

In the US, work-life balance is the key and both women and men seek it in their careers. However, women tend to seek more flexibility than men since the majority of responsibilities for childcare are still often laid upon women. In my case, being in my mid-20's and looking forward to advancing my career in addition to one day raising a family, telecommuting in terms of flexibility is an important aspect I look for in a job.

The highest paying jobs for women are in health care, business and computer science, according to Forbes. Women in these fields can earn and are earning over \$100,000 a year. However, women are still recorded to earn just 82% of their male counterparts. Jobs in engineering and hard sciences are still dominated by males, while the majority of nursing and caretaker positions are held by females.

Regardless of all these existing inequalities, society is on the right track with more and more women feeling empowered to pursue both a career and raising a family in addition to a shift in consciousness at the workplace. Moreover, women empowerment is not just about women. It is about men, too. Because without men sharing responsibilities regarding house chores and child rearing, women cannot have the freedom or time to be able to become successful inside and outside the home. It takes both genders to be aware of each other's goals. Only through respect, compromise as well as increased understanding from employers and a change in the work environment, true gender equality can be achieved.

Becoming Solar Lamp Entrepreneurs: Adult Education among Rural Women in Indonesia

Ms. Gloria ARLINI (Indonesia)

Children come to mind whenever we talk about education. Educational initiatives such as Teach For America and its equivalent in Indonesia, Indonesia Mengajar, for example, groom bright talented recent college graduates to serve for one to two years as primary school teachers at their countries' underprivileged schools. Barring some criticisms, such initiatives are largely welcomed as a great leap forward in moulding the minds of the young, our future generations.

But the onus to shape children's personalities does not lie solely upon schools. Informal education starts at home, which means that parents—especially mothers—play an even more significant part in educating their children. Having a positive role model they can look up to at home is the key to nurturing the healthy psychological and moral development of young children.

For these reasons, adult education is no less important than child education. Unfortunately, the former is typically neglected.



NDI Fellows

Adults are assumed to have already passed their learning age and saddled with responsibilities such as making ends meet and childcare, no longer have time nor interest to learn. Adult women are doubly marginalized, especially in the context of patriarchal societies in Asia and Africa, where women are given a role of homemakers and caregivers—neither of which requires much 'education'. Besides, in remote villages where resources are scarce and patriarchal values are not yet diluted by modern and Western ideas of gender equality, and the concept of lifelong learning for rural adult women are practically non-existent.

But how hungry they are for knowledge!

In the past three years, Nusantara Development Initiatives: NDI (www.ndi.sg), the social enterprise I co-founded, has been working in remote rural areas in Indonesia with no access to electricity. We aim to end energy poverty by training rural women to become solar lamp entrepreneurs. We encourage these women to start a small business selling good quality environmentally-friendly solar lamps to their communities.

These women are housewives aged between 30 and 60 years old with little education. Some are elderly women who do not know how to write and read very well, others are divorcees who have to be the sole breadwinner for their families, yet others are enterprising young women who want to try their hands at business. But one thing remains the same: these women have strong desire to learn and broaden their horizons, especially when we bring new knowledge

Profile

Having been a KFAW Foreign Correspondent in 2005-2009, I am excited to return again this year. I graduated from National University of Singapore with the Masters in Social Sciences degree. In 2010, I co-founded Nusantara Development Initiatives, a non-profit social enterprise which aims to train Indonesian rural women to become entrepreneurs. I hope to continue sharing my perspectives on Indonesian women through KFAW.



right to their doorsteps.

"I want to learn," one fifty-year-old woman said shyly, "when else will I get such an opportunity, since I am already so old?"

Of course teaching older women demands different pedagogical strategies as compared to teaching children. To train these women, NDI has developed our own entrepreneurship module which encompasses product knowledge, communication skills, marketing skills, sales techniques and book-keeping. As literacy level is relatively basic in these villages, we have to devise creative ways to prepare these materials to engage the women, such as having less words and more attractive visuals, doing interactive hands-on activities and playing games, doing sing-along sessions and drama skits.

We also have an out-of-class practical session, where we bring these women out to another village to practice directly what they have learnt in the classroom. We encourage them to apply their newly-acquired communication, marketing and sales skills to sell the solar lamps to 'familiar strangers'.



Solar Lamp

You know what joy is when you see their expressions shown after having successfully made their very first sale.

The apex of the training program is the graduation. This is a momentous occasion for the women entrepreneurs, who have never been to a graduation ceremony before—let alone starring in one. Each woman is given a graduation certificate and a Business-in-a-Bag kit, comprising five lamps as a starter kit. They can then proudly embark on their journeys as solar lamp entrepreneurs.

Many of us take education for granted, because it is so commonplace where we come from. But to these rural middle-aged women, learning means having someone who spends time to guide them, root for them, and believe in them—for the first time in their lives. And sometimes, that is all they need.

An elderly woman proudly displayed her certificate of graduation and our class photo in her humble 2mx2m living room. Her youngest son smiled proudly at his mother, a woman who only studied up to Primary 4, as we congratulated her for being our best-performing entrepreneur.

"I am happy that you came to our village," she said, "Teach me more, I want to learn more."

She was 68 years old.

Child Education

Mr. Saboor Ahmed (Pakistan)

Education is very essential for the progress of any country and the success of a nation stands on quality education. Pakistan is a country where the educational condition is not satisfactory, and this is the reason that Pakistan ranks second in terms of the number of out-of-school children in the world, only after Nigeria.

The status of government schools is not good, because Pakistan is spending only 2.6 to 2.3 percent of its GNP (gross national product) on them. Other reasons for the failure in the educational system include lack of interest in education in rural areas because of poverty and low awareness. Pakistani society has a mix of different cultures, and some cultures neglect education, especially for girls.

The picture of illiteracy in Pakistan is grim. Although successive governments have announced various programs to promote literacy, especially among women, they have been unable to translate their words into action because of various political, social and cultural obstacles.

Official statistics released by the Federal Education Ministry of Pakistan give a desperate picture of education for all, especially girls. The overall literacy rate is 60 percent, while only 46 percent of female are literate. The situation is especially alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles. One of the most deplorable aspects is that in some places, particularly northern tribal areas, the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. This is a gross misinterpretation of Islam, the dominant religion in Pakistan (96 percent of the population), which, like all religions, urges men and women to acquire education.

As we have seen, the literacy rate of women is only 46 percent in Pakistan. The Article 25-A of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan ensures free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5 to 16 years, and provinces are making some progress towards its implementation. Because of the high population growth rate and low expenditure on education, the shift in the average level of adult literacy has been slow, from 26 percent in 1981



20 million children are not enrolled in school in Pakistan.



Lack of equipment and basic needs in schools

Profile

I am from the most deprived province in Pakistan and the background of my family is a tribal family. I have experience of working in three provinces of Pakistan in the fields of disaster management and gender-based violence. Now I have a community-based organization which focuses on human rights, women's education, etc. I am a student in the gender studies department of Qaid e Azam University in Islamabad. I wish to empower women in Pakistan, give equal opportunities to them, and promote gender mainstreaming.



to an estimated 57.7 percent in 2010. This figure is the average between urban and rural areas, male and female, and different provinces. The rate of literacy for rural females in 2010 was only 22.5% in Baluchistan, 20.3% in Sindh, 29% in Khaiber Pakhtunkhwa, and 40% in Punjab.

The parents in rural areas are mostly interested in sending boys to any technical workshops for earning, while girls are made to stay home for domestic work. The reason for not sending girls to school is that they are forced into child marriages, and into domestic work. In terms of the concept of public and private, girls are regarded as domestic workers and boys as breadwinners. The patriarchal structures do not allow girls to go to school, college or university, because they have strong command over girls' basic rights. The cases of violence are happening a lot, because women are less strong than men.

The new Pakistani government, media, civil society and the youth are very interested in improving the overall status of child education in the country, and different political parties are making proposals for increasing budgets for education from 2% to 7%. Now the entire Pakistani society is showing interest in education, and parents are beginning to send their children to school even in rural areas. After a lot of work on the ground by the government, civil society, and humanitarian organizations, girls are also starting to receive technical and academic education across the country. Alif Ailaan, a civil campaign, was launched in the whole country for the promotion of education, especially the implementation of the Article 25-A (free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5 to 16 years).

The foremost benchmark must be the provision of the constitution which ensures that every child in our country is entitled to a good education. Determined efforts are needed to overcome the following barriers to the goal; lack of awareness, lack of resources, the government's ineptitude, corruption, political interference, patronage towards insufficient and unqualified teachers who neglect to work, poor-quality facilities and teachers, inequality in education (i.e. between urban and rural areas, between males and females, and among different provinces), the low income level of lower-middle-class families that makes it harder for their children to receive good education, low awareness of the people in general as well as the parents in particular to education. Therefore, it is necessary for all the children to get good education without any gender-based discrimination so that they can play their parts for the development and prosperity of the country.



Children at an open-air class

KFAW Consulate Series Special Version

What is the Apex Leadership for Women – Striving to Demonstrate Further Performance

1. Date: October 24, 2013, 18:30 - 20:30
2. Lecturer: Ms. Yvonne R. DAVIS, President and CEO, Davis Communications

KFAW Consulate Series Special Version was co-hosted with Consulate of the United States, Fukuoka. We invited Ms. Yvonne R. DAVIS, President and CEO of Davis Communications to deliver a lecture titled “What is the Apex Leadership for Women – Striving to Demonstrate Further Performance.” Unlike an ordinary lecture, this lecture was active and provided interaction with participants.

To become a leader, you need to know about yourself. To know about yourself means not only understanding your weak and strong points. To know about yourself, it is important to pay attention to yourself, rather than rely on estimates by others, and to take an objective look at your ideas. It is necessary to see yourself objectively, as if seeing the entire picture from a balcony. Sharing her past experience with diets, Ms. Davis indicated that balance was very important to anything. (To lose weight, she was once so focused on exercise that her physical health suffered.)

Subsequently, she explained the following points necessary to secure the best communication: 1) speaking clearly so that the listeners will understand; 2) considering

how to communicate with others; 3) securing consistency in your approach; 4) making appropriate follow-ups until the very end and responding promptly; 5) always respecting others; and 6) being sincere and honest.

She went on to speak about gender differences in communication and strategy to demonstrate maximum leadership at work or in an organization. Drawing many opinions from participants, this was a very significant and interactive seminar.



Ms. Yvonne R. DAVIS

Career Development Program for University Students

Last fiscal year, KFAW formulated a career development program for university students in Kitakyushu City. This fiscal year, as a model implementation, we held seminars using the programs at Kyushu Women's University on September 23; at the Community Outreach Center of Kyushu International University on October 25; and at Nishinippon Institute of Technology on October 31.

The photograph here depicts a seminar at the Community Outreach Center of Kyushu International University. The seminar consisted of a lecture using PowerPoint for approximately 20 students, a group discussion regarding men's and women's ways of working, and a Q&A session between the audience and workers with different working styles.

The comments from the students were similar to the following:

- The seminar made me think about how to balance childcare and career.
- I want to make good use of this seminar when hunting

for a job.

- I've learned that there are various future options for working.
- The seminar was good; the atmosphere was not too formal but friendly.

Next fiscal year, we would like to hold such seminars at many more universities.



In the 2013 global gender gap index (GGGI), the Philippines ranked 5th out of the 136 countries surveyed (Japan ranked 105th). Although this indicates that the Philippines is an advanced country in terms of gender issues, the country is confronting the serious social issue of poverty; approximately 30% of the country's population lives on two dollars or less a day. We visited the Philippines (Olongapo, Metropolitan Manila) from August 28 to September 8, 2013 in order to pick up information that we can apply to the future operation of our organization.

PREDa Foundation, one of the organizations that we visited in the Philippines, was established in 1974 by the Irish priest Shay CULLEN in order to protect children suffering abuse, cramped in jails without an appropriate reason, and exploited commercially and sexually. Providing legal support, counseling, therapy, and skill training, this organization helps such victims live in an

environment appropriate for children. On the second day of our stay, the organization held a welcome party for us, which provided a good opportunity to interact with some of the girls living at PREDa. We were impressed with their cheerful smiles.

We also visited Miriam College, which features one of Asia's most advanced gender research centers. At the college we attended a briefing and interacted with students.

We also stayed in a slum and a village of indigenous people, and visited an organization supporting poor people and a fair trade producers' group, which helped us research the reality of the Philippines.



PREDa Foundation (Olongapo City)

FY 2013 KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminars

Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) holds KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminars in order to share the results of their research works and practices in Kitakyushu City.

▶ FY2013 the 1st seminar "Bangladesh's Strategy for Regional Development - Grameen Bank's Social Business and Women's Empowerment"

Date and time August 27, 2013, 18:30 - 20:00

Lecturer CHOWDHURY Mahbubul Alam, Professor, Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies

Grameen Bank is renowned for its micro credit scheme that encourages women's economic independence by making small unsecured loans, especially to women in poverty. In the seminar it was explained that the key to the success of this business model lay in ensuring that five borrowers (members) formed one group to support each other, and helping the borrowers fully understand the philosophy of the mechanism by providing a training program before lending the money, and having such groups establish a center where they could identify the situations of the other members and participate in the operation of Grameen Bank. In short, the key to success resides in the mechanism by which members themselves participate in the bank's operations, and by which the earnings of the bank are ultimately returned to the members.

In Bangladesh, the mechanism of Grameen Bank has enabled women in poverty to borrow money in their own names and take action on their own. The seminar concluded with the lecturer indicating that this had raised the women's status and right to speak up at home, leading to an increased number of women becoming independent socially and economically.



▶ FY2013 the 2nd seminar "Efforts, Results, and Challenges Concerning the U.S. Support for Sexual Violence Victims"

Date and time October 15, 2013, 18:30 - 20:00

Lecturer Yumi RIKITAKE, Associate Professor, the Japanese Red Cross Kyushu International College of Nursing; Coordinator, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

Ms. RIKITAKE reported on the results and future challenges revealed through visit research at support organizations for sexual crime victims in Pennsylvania and four other states in the U.S.

In the U.S., the 2005 revision of the Violence against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act mandates public organizations to collect forensic medical evidence for sexual crime victims. As a result, forensic nurses have begun to play a major role assisting sexual crime victims. Forensic nurses specialize in providing nursing care for sexual crime victims and other individuals who are confronted with legal issues involving crimes and accidents. To prepare for identifying the abusers and giving testimony in court, such nurses are empowered to collect and preserve evidence obtained through providing care to victims.

Forensic nursing science, which originated in the U.S. in the 1980s and was widely recognized as a separate nursing field in the 1990s, has not been introduced in Japan yet; the current Japanese legal system restricts nurses' medical practice. In the U.S., forensic nurses have gained strong respect and trust not only from victims but also from the police for providing appropriate care and collecting reliable evidence based on their medical expertise and skills, with consideration for human rights.

However, in the U.S., which is strongly pushing forward with deregulation of employment, there is fierce competition in the medical industry, which actually makes medical institutions somewhat hesitant to employ forensic nurses as special staff. From these examples in the U.S., Ms. RIKITAKE concluded the lecture that in order to improve the Japanese support system for sexual violence victims, it was necessary to introduce forensic nursing science to Japan and establish a mechanism that will ensure the effective functioning of the specialty.



For more details, please visit our website <http://www.kfaw.or.jp/report/cat85-1/>

Location of Kitakyushu



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.