

RECENT NWEC ACTIVITIES

The 2015 NWEC International Symposium : Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment, February 12 (Fri.), 2016



Keynote address
(Ms. Emmeline L. Verzosa)

The 2015 NWEC International Symposium was held at Plaza F in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo on February 12, 2016 on the theme: Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment. Approximately 70 people from Japan and abroad attended this year's symposium and lively discussion ensued.

The keynote address in Part I was presented by Ms. Emmeline L. Verzosa, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Office of the President, who gave a detailed report entitled "Synergizing Gender-responsive Actions for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines.

The report, which described concrete examples of how the Philippine Commission on Women, with the support of the government of Canada, implemented the GREAT Women Project throughout the Philippines, offered a good opportunity for everyone to think about how Japan, where women's participation in economic fields remains inadequate, should approach this issue.

GREAT stands for Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women, and the project sought to synergize the activities of economic, government and

private organizations. It is notable for its role in creating gender-responsive work and employment environments conducive to women's economic empowerment through improved access to technical and business training, innovation in technology, resources, facilities, packaging, and markets.

To sustain and expand the gains of this project, Ms. Verzosa offered the following suggestions: 1) Provide capacity building and technical assistance on Gender and Development, and Women's Economic Empowerment to various agencies at all levels; 2) Establish associations or cooperatives for women micro-entrepreneurs; 3) Strengthen partnerships with the private sector to improve product quality and expand marketing channels; 4) Encourage government, non-government and other organizations to offer programs and support services for women migrant workers, and respond to their needs; 5) Establish and improve monitoring mechanisms to check whether women aspiring toward economic empowerment have assured access to capital and finance, markets, capacity building and state-of-the-art technology.

Ms. Verzosa closed her strong message to the audience by concluding that the key to realizing women's economic empowerment lay in synergized efforts among relevant organizations, and establishing good gender-sensitive governance.



Panel discussion

The panel discussion on women's entrepreneurship held in Part II comprised animated reports and discussion. In a report entitled: Developing Women's Capacity for Growth and Change, Fumiyo Harada, a financial specialist active in Asia, described initiatives being taken by the Development Bank of Japan to support development of women entrepreneurs. Megumi Hagiuda, a young entrepreneur, then discussed the challenges being made by her shop "Afrika Rose" in a report entitled: Create Jobs by Kenyan Roses.

Both reports offered straightforward yet detailed accounts of the development of women's ventures - how they were supported and managed, the services and products involved, and the challenges they encountered - and clearly conveyed the difficulties and joys of entrepreneurship.

Explaining that the Development Bank of Japan was started as a national bank in 1951 to promote industrial recovery after World War II, Ms. Harada elaborated on both why the bank had begun supporting women entrepreneurs, and the selection process and criteria used to screen applications for venture support projects. She also offered convincing explanations for the problems with many venture applications, saying some applications were difficult to adopt because either production wasn't feasible despite having an interesting concept or the applicant was too emotionally involved.

Ms. Hagiuda explained that rather than simply providing “support” for a developing country, the import and sale of Kenyan roses had resulted a win-win relationship for both Kenya and Japanese consumers, and impressed the audience with her vivid account of what this venture had involved, including both the mishaps and the surprises. The symposium venue was decorated with exquisite roses sent directly from Kenya.

Facilitating the discussion, Yoko Yajima, an expert in diversity management and a principal consultant at Mitsubishi UFJ Research & Consulting, did an excellent job of moderating between the support provider and recipient sides, and deepening discussion into what is needed to promote women’s empowerment. The keynote speaker, Ms. Verzosa, also participated in the discussion and heated debate on matters concerning women’s economic empowerment ensued.

These lectures and discussion ensured the symposium offered a meaningful forum for clarifying what is needed to further advance women’s empowerment in both the Philippines and Japan, and the way forward in Japan, where the Law to Promote the Role of Women in the Workplace and the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality have been adopted.

In the question and answer session, questions about issues such as when women in the Philippines had begun to enter the workforce and how the government was responding to women migrant workers received a thorough explanation of historic circumstances surrounding women’s advancement from the beginning of the 20th century.

In Part II, in addition to numerous questions about rose cultivation in Africa fielded by the audience, a lively discussion developed around the forward looking outlook that although it had been difficult for Japanese women to start new businesses in the past, they had begun to accumulate knowhow and an environment conducive to starting and sustaining new businesses was becoming established.

2015 Issue-specific Training "Seminar on Promotion of Networking among Asian Countries on Anti-Trafficking in Persons " October 19 (Mon.) ~ 30 (Fri.), 2015

The National Women's Education Center of Japan held the above titled seminar from October 19 to 30, 2015, as a project commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The seminar was attended by 14 people involved in initiatives to combat trafficking in persons (TIPs) from 7 countries in the ASEAN region – from Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam, where JICA projects are ongoing – as well as from the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia and Laos.

Based on NWECC's research and studies on trafficking in persons, this seminar has been held in Japan since 2009 in cooperation with JICA as an international seminar concerning trafficking in persons. This year the first of the new 3-year Plan covering the ASEAN region.

The seminar focused on initiatives to combat trafficking in persons and initiatives to prevent violence against women in Japan and in the participants' countries. The participants studied the differences and issues of initiatives in each country, as well as best practices, through lectures by government agencies, visits to public establishments and non-governmental organizations as well as role play and workshops. The 10-day seminar helped understanding of the eradication of trafficking in persons from the perspective of people involved and the protection of victims, and promoted cooperation within the ASEAN region

On the final presentation day, achievements from the seminar and initiatives in each country were shared with the invited guests from the relevant ministries and agencies, the International Organization for Migration, embassies in Japan, non-governmental organizations and learned individuals.

Participants gained a better understanding of trafficking in persons in Japan and participating countries through the seminar.

Comments shared by participants

“The seminar was highly beneficial. I would like the understanding and knowledge gained in the seminar, be made available to be shared between stakeholders in each country.” “This theme is extremely effective and important to our work.” “The theme chosen in the seminar is directly useful in everyday situations.” “The content was useful in solving the labor issues between the receiving and sending countries.”



President Utsumi
Welcomes the participants



Visit to social welfare corporation
Ichiryukai in Chiba prefecture

Seminar on Career Building for Female University Students, February 20 (Sat.) ~ 21 (Sun.), 2016

Twenty-one students attended this year's seminar themed "Thinking about your career is tantamount to thinking about your life," which was co-sponsored by Leadership 111.

The seminar aspires to foster women leaders and promote gender equality by providing female university and college students with an opportunity to consider three perspectives: 1) autonomy and independence, 2) life planning, and 3) the will to change and support society.

Participants from the first two seminars were invited to join the planning committee and help with the preparation and management of this year's seminar, the third of its kind. The importance placed on "the cycle of learning and networking" is one of the distinguishing features of this seminar.

In a lecture entitled "An oral survey of the environment surrounding women and paths followed by female university graduates" participants learned about women's position in society today. This was followed by a panel discussion among Ms. Kozue Hirano (SSHE Advisor, EMG Marketing Godo Kaisha); Ms. Takako Hagiwara, (Executive Officer, Green House Co., Inc.) and Ms. Rie Nakamitsu (Specialist, Program Division, NWEC) that was coordinated by Ms. Yumiko Inomata (Representative of Empowerment Management Research Institute). Describing how they had overcome various life events and how they viewed their jobs in society, each of the women conveyed a clear message: Working is a pleasure that women should not hesitate to pursue." Students asked a multitude of questions, and intense small-group discussions ensued at the evening social event with panelists and planning committee members.

During the group work session held on the second day after a tour of the exhibition room of the Women's Archives Center and the Information Center for Women's Education, students reflected on and shared things they had noticed up until the previous day, and discussed how they would each engage with society. They then completed worksheets to clarify their own thoughts and ideas in anticipation of their future careers, and presented action plans they could implement from the following day.

The seminar provided an opportunity for students to find their orientation and think about how they would like to interact with other people and society, all of which was empowering for them. Their feedback included comments such as: "We could hear from working women in great detail, and it was the first time for me to talk so deeply about the future with people my own age," "The seminar gave me the opportunity to reflect on myself again," "I'm so glad I participated. The seminar gave me hope for a bright future," and "I will treasure the bonds I've made here."



Seeking additional input from panelists in the panel discussion



Group work

Training Course for Women's Information Archivists (Basic Course) + (Practical Course), December 9 (Wed.) ~ 11 (Fri.), 2015

Twenty-five individuals from throughout Japan attended the Basic Course held on December 9 & 10, and nineteen attended the Practical Course on December 10 & 11.

Given that this course aims to impart basic knowledge pertinent to appropriate preservation, storage and use of source materials related to women (women's archives), NWEAC invited external specialists in archive administration to provide lectures to individuals engaged in such duties. Originally launched as the "Introductory Training Course for Women's Information Archivists" in fiscal 2009, the "Practical Course" was added in fiscal 2012, and the "Introductory Course" was renamed the "Basic Course" in fiscal 2014.

The Basic Course comprised lectures outlining women's archives and copyright theory and providing information on the storage and use of paper materials and films; and reports on a number of archives being made publicly accessible by archive facilities. Participants were also invited to join an optional tour of NWEAC's Women's Archives Center and a social event to promote networking among the lecturers and participants.

The first day of the Practical Course involved practical workshops in which examples were used to explain basic theories on creating exhibition spaces in archive facilities, and exhibits in the Women's Archives Center's exhibition room were appraised and discussed. The second day involved lectures on preservation and restoration techniques for paper materials and hands-on practice in various restoration techniques, including dry cleaning and rebinding of paper materials. Feedback from participants included comments such as "Both the people and the content chosen for this course were outstanding" and "Use of concrete examples made explanations of current and future issues and necessary perspectives easy to grasp."



Participants on the Basic Course



Participants on the Practical Course

TOPICS

Delegation from the Women and Development Center, of the Vietnam Women's Union, Visited NVEC

On November 17, delegation from the Women and Development Center, of the Vietnam Women's Union, visited the National Women's Education Center. Delegation came to Japan to learn about Japanese efforts to prevent violence against women and supporting survivors of domestic violence. Staff of the Office of Research and International Affairs delivered a short lecture about, the current situation and issues related to violence against women in Japan, and the training program which the National Women's Education Center is conducting for members of the nationwide Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers.

The leader of the delegation Ms. Huan Thi Ai Nguyen, First Vice President of the Vietnam Women's Union, commented that in Vietnam, too, violence against women was recognized as a major social problem, and the group expected to learn much from the efforts being made in Japan.



Ms. Huan Thi Ai Nguyen, First Vice President of the Vietnam Women's Union



Commemorative Photo with the delegation of Women and Development Center of the Vietnam Women's Union

The “7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Development and Gender” was held in Seoul, South Korea

On December 14, the “7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Development and Gender” was held in Seoul, South Korea, sponsored by the Korean Women’s Development Institute (KWDI), and carried out in cooperation with the National Women’s Education Center. Its theme was Gender in International Development Agenda: with Special Focus on Beijing +20 and the SDGs in China, Japan and Korea.

At the beginning of the forum, the congratulatory remarks of President Utsumi were ready by a member of NWEK who thus spoke about the investigative research and joint research projects conducted heretofore based on an agreement between the center and KWDI, and confirmed that in the future, too, NWEK would cooperate in efforts to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) sensitive to gender.

Following keynote speeches by experts from UN Women and the Asian Development Bank, there was a panel discussion in which a member of the Office of Research and International Affairs delivered a report, from the Beijing Platform for Action to the Sustainable Development Goals Japan’ Efforts to Realize Gender Equality, and in which representatives of South Korea’s Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) participated as panelists. In the general discussions, subjects related to achieving SDGs – such as setting more effective numerical goals, and gender issues after a natural disaster occurs – were addressed.



NWEK Staff delivered a report



Commemorative Photo

INFORMATION FROM NWEC

FY2016 Programs by NWEC (International Programs)

Program	Targets & Numbers	Date	Content
(1) Seminar for Gender Equality Officers and Leaders in the Asia	Administrative officers and NPO leaders Approx. 12 people	October 3 (Mon.) ~ 7 (Fri.), 2016	Conduct a practical participatory seminar on pressing issues pertaining to women's capacity building for NGO leaders and administrative officers responsible for women's policy and education, and in a position to propose and formulate policies related to gender equality in Asia.
(2) NWEC International Symposium	Individuals with an interest in gender equality Approx. 50 people	Around December, 2016 (Planned)	Host the NWEC International Symposium and invite overseas specialists to address a global issue pertaining to women's human rights and empowerment. Introduce and discuss international trends and progressive initiatives that have contributed to promoting gender equality.
(3) Issue -specific Training "Seminar to Promote Cooperation on Initiatives to Combat Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN Countries" (To be entrusted by JICA)	Individuals involved in the prevention and protection aspects of measures to combat trafficking in persons in Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia and the Philippines (Including those from central and regional government agencies and NGOs) Approx. 14 people	October 24 (Mon.) ~ November 11 (Fri.), 2016 (Planned)	Organized in conjunction with a JICA project to combat TIP in ASEAN Countries, this seminar comprises workshops for individuals involved in this issue in the region. This is the second year of a three-year plan.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The National Women's Education Center (NVEC) -the Independent Administrative Institution strives towards the formation of a gender-equal society. Cooperating with organizations and institutions involved in women's education in Japan and other countries, NVEC functions as a national center for women's education to promote training opportunities for leaders in women's education and others in the field; opportunities for exchange between groups, both women's groups and family education support groups; specialized research into women's education and family education; and the collection, compilation and dissemination of information on women and the family. The NVEC Newsletter is published twice a year to introduce our activities.

NVEC Newsletter has been published since 1984. It includes information on various activities undertaken by the National Women's Education Center as well as women in Japan. The paper-based newsletter was renewed as a digital-based news source to facilitate more efficient and timely dissemination of the information.

We invite you, hereafter, to access information real time from the Center's Home Page as well as read our latest newsletter from the following pages.

- NVEC Home Page(English) <http://www.nwec.jp/en/>
- NVEC Newsletter Top Page <http://www.nwec.jp/en/publish/#head1>
- NVEC facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NWECJapan>

★ Thank you for reading NVEC Newsletter.

National Women's Education Center (NVEC) of Japan

Address: 728 Sugaya, Ranzan-machi, Hiki-gun, Saitama-ken 355-0292, Japan

Tel: +81-493-62-6714 Fax: +81-493-62-9034 E-mail: webmaster@nwec.jp

Published in Japan ISSN 1882-0697