

Showa Women's University Senior High School: LABO Research Summary Report

Title: Creating a Society Where Women Are Beacons, and Everyone Shines

Key words: gender, women leaders, diversified society, and minority groups

1. Introduction

There are a number of different Super Global High School programs being conducted at our school. Over last four years, we have created various study project groups where we conduct research projects on various issues relating to gender. There are four groups. The first group is focusing on 'Women in global management and entrepreneurship'. The theme of the second group is 'Achieving gender equality in Japan'. The focus of the third group is 'Japanese women making positive contributions abroad', especially in Cambodia. Finally the fourth group is exploring the theme of 'Promoting the advancement of women in developing countries', particularly in Thailand. Here we will focus on the first three.

2. Methods and Results

(1) The first group: "Women in global management and entrepreneurship"

Mentor: Mr. Takeshi Hibiya, a former advisor of Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd.

Activities: We met with Mr. Hibiya regularly throughout the year, where we conducted seminars, and discussions. We visited several local companies, both large and small. As part of our fieldwork, we went on a study tour to South Carolina, in the USA, where we held a panel discussion on leadership with women working in various professional fields, and visited corporations such as Boeing to interview female executives working there. We learned that the three Ps were the keys to successful leadership. They are partnership, passion and people.

(2) The second group: 'Achieving gender equality in Japan'

Mentor: Dr. Naomi Inoue, a clinical psychologist

Activities: For our fieldwork, we visited a number of government agencies, such as the Bureau for Gender Equality in the Cabinet Office, and Urayasu City Municipality in Chiba to look at their policies. We continued our trips to Finland to further explore their advanced systems and practices to promote gender equality. Our visits included time at the Ombudsman office, a children's nursery, an elementary school and a high school, and also, a progressive furniture company run by a local female entrepreneur. The ration of women legislators in Finland is 42 %, while that in Japan is just 7.3%. Education in Finland also promotes 'gender-free' awareness, which succeeds in forming 'gender-free' consciousness nationwide.

(3) The third group: 'Japanese women making positive contributions abroad, in Cambodia'

Mentor: Professor Yukiko Yonekura of Showa Women's University

Activities: We visited Cambodia to learn from Japanese women entrepreneurs working in Cambodia, after listening to a series of lectures on Cambodia from Professor Yonekura. Entrepreneurs are working to contribute to developing environmental sustainability and social justice. Our school took the initiative in organizing an annual two-day seminar with other SGH high schools who visited Cambodia for similar study trips, which continues to even now.

3. Conclusion

Through our study trips overseas and participating in various events, we've begun to realize the following: promoting women's leadership is a part of a more universal goal, which is to create an equal society where not only women, but 'every person' has the right for an education, to work and be productive and enjoy a healthy social life, where differences and diversities are welcomed and viewed as strengths. To create such a society, we believe that we need to work on improving both legal systems and society's thinking. For the latter, we've been taking a number of initiatives, such as conducting a 'gender-free' workshop, distributing fair-trade products, and creating posters and articles for our school. Each is a small step toward realizing a society where women are beacons, and everyone shines.

*** Executive Summary ***

During our research trip to Finland to further explore the 'gender gap' issue, we recognized that Finland is moving toward the inclusion of 'everyone' in society, rather than finding ways to elevate the status of 'women'. In Japan, we have our approach to 'diversity'. Yet, we have many issues to tackle, including gender prejudice and discrimination, understanding the needs of LGBT, and those with special needs. Our study trips to Finland, the USA and Cambodia and local business organizations helped us explore the challenges when building a more diversified society where everyone shines, including women and minorities.

<Information in Japanese>

テーマ: 女性が輝く社会、そして誰もが輝く社会へ

(Creating a Society Where Women Are Beacons, and Everyone Shines)

要約: ジェンダー・ギャップの研究でフィンランドを訪れた。フィンランドでは「女性だけではなく、皆が平等になるために」という課題に社会全体で取り組んでいた。日本は「ダイバーシティ推進」を掲げてはいるが、男女格差や LGBT や障害者差別など問題は多い。そこで私たちは、海外研修や企業訪問等で得た知識を基に、女性やマイノリティ等、誰もが輝ける社会をいかに築いていくのかという問いに、主に女性の視点から考え、提言する。



Creating a Society Where Women Are Beacons, and Everyone Shines

2617: Showa Women's University Senior High School

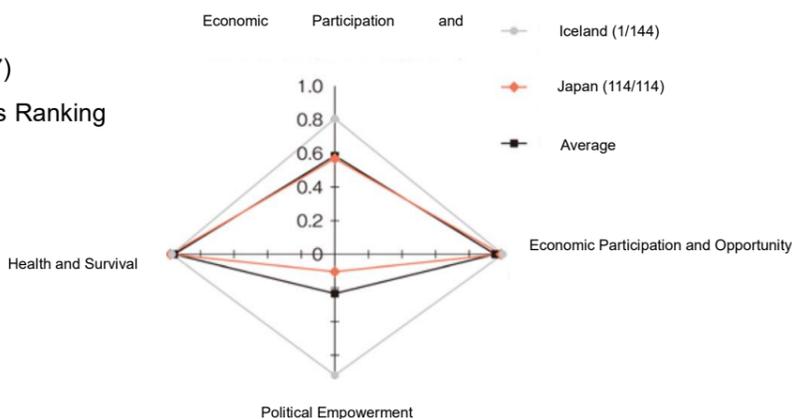
~ Introduction ~

Topic: The Global Gender Issues and Women's Leadership.

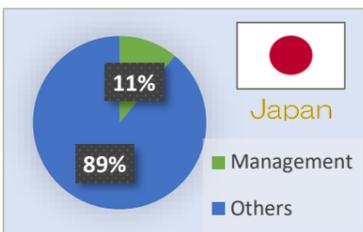
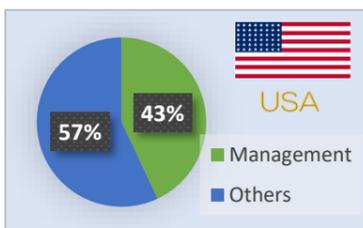
Objective: Finding Out What Will Help Japanese Women to Serve as Leaders, and Acquiring Those Qualities and Skills Ourselves.

Women Leaders in Global Management and Entrepreneurship

Gender Gap Index (2017)
Comparison with Japan's Ranking
in Each Field



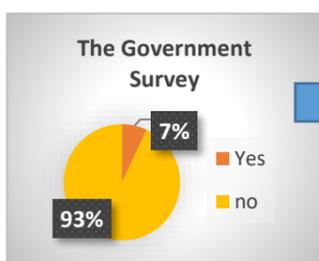
Rate of Women in Management



USA:
Laws to Ban Sex Discrimination
Are in Place

Japanese Women's Awareness

Question: "Do you want to be a manager?"



- Reasons for No
- Priority in family life and personal matters
 - Not wanting to work under pressure
 - No self-confidence / No role models
 - No interest in career advancement



Our Learning from Business Practices in the USA and Japan

- Keys to Successful Leadership: A Woman Executive at Boeing, USA: Three P's: Partnership, Passion and People
- Fuji Xerox: Supporting female employees who work from home, take leave for raising children, offer daycare at work, etc..
- Now Japan has more women managers than ever before, partly due to the government's initiative and efforts by women and employers.

Conclusion:

Japan needs stronger equality laws and equal education opportunities. If every student is given leadership roles, they will lead them to seeking leadership roles in society in the future.

Finland: Gender-Free Education and High Gender Ranking

Finland



• At Nursery School

- Tonttula nursery school has given gender free education since 2010.

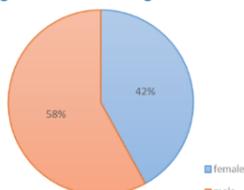


• At Elementary School

One School's Goal: Equality to treat all people equally, not only girls, but also racial minorities, the disabled and so on.

- It doesn't divide students based on sex.

Percentage of Female Legislators in Finland



Japan



• At Nursery School

Teachers seem to be unaware of gender bias stereotypes in their practices. They treat students differently based on sex. E.g.) Different lines for girls and boys.

Different addresses: Girls: XX chan, Boys: XX kun

Boys → More mischievous and less responsible

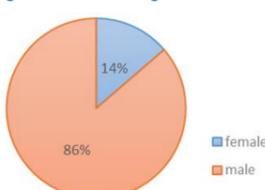
Girls → More polite and reliable

↑ This robs girls of a chance to be more bold.

It is a loss for society when gender stereotypes limit girls to be themselves.

→ The whole society seems to be based on gender stereotypes, and a still deeply rooted male-dominated value system seems to be operating.

Percentage of Female Legislators in Japan



Japanese Women Leaders Making a Difference in Developing Countries

Ms. Sachiko Kojima

Social Entrepreneur: Angkor Cookies

- Making a work place any person can work with no special skills
- Making souvenirs with Cambodian ingredients, by Cambodian people



Ms. Sachiko Kojima

Started an Organic Farm

- She left her first business, Angkor Cookies
- She wants to improve the low productivity of Cambodian farmers

Two Important Qualities of a Leader

- ★ Try to be flexible and adaptable wherever
- ★ Take action even if it is minor



~ Conclusion ~

Our Vision Expanded: From Gender Equality to a Diversity-based Society

Actions We Took: Providing a gender-free workshop for children, creating "Gender Karuta", conducting surveys with questionnaires on leadership expectations, distributing Fair-Trade products, putting up newsletters, joining workshops, and sharing our learning with peers through presentations

Script for the Poster Session : SGH National Forum, December 2018

Introduction:

Our SGH research project has examined the issue of gender and women's leadership globally. We wanted to find out what will help Japanese women to be leaders in society.

Body:

LABO 1: Our theme is 'women leaders in global management and entrepreneurship'. We visited several local companies in Japan. As part of our fieldwork, we went on a study tour to South Carolina, in the USA, where we met local professionals.

In the USA, the rate of women in management is 43%. In Japan it's 11%. In the USA, there are laws to ban discrimination based on sex. In Japan, we do not have such laws. We have the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, but this does not have any penalties against employers.

Now, do women in Japan want to take up management roles? According to a government survey, only 7% of women do. In contrast, at our school, 33% of students with leadership experience do want to make use of the experience. The rate goes down to 15% among those without leadership experience.

Thus, our conclusion is that we need both equality laws and equal education where female students are given many opportunities, free from gender bias.

LABO 2: For education, my group compared Japanese education with that of Finland. We visited nursery schools in Japan and Finland to see what they do for gender equality.

A nursery school we went to in Finland has had gender-free education since 2010. For example, teachers read princess stories, then lead a discussion with children to dispel children's stereotypes of men and women. An elementary school we visited has 'equality' as their school goal, to include all types of minorities equally. They have a unisex toilet. They share responsibilities among all students, including mentally challenged students.

However, in Japan the teachers of the nursery school we visited seem to be unaware of stereotypes. We allow boys to be more active and less responsible, while girls are expected to be polite and reliable, which robs girls of a chance to be bold. This is a loss for society when gender stereotypes limit the growth of each individual.

LABO 3: Our group focuses on Japanese women making a difference in developing countries. We went to Cambodia and met great Japanese women.

Ms. Sachiko Kojima started her business "Angkor Cookies" with two other staff. Now it has become one of the most famous souvenirs in Cambodia. After her success, she changed her focus to create an organic farm in the countryside. Her vision is to bring sustainable work to local communities. I learned from her that it is important to take actions with small steady steps. Also, it is vital to be flexible and adaptable, especially in a different culture.

How could Japan have more leaders like her?

I suggest that one way is for schools to give students more chances to try new things, fail, and try again. This would encourage students to be themselves and grow with their unique qualities.

Conclusion:

Through our project, we came to realize that it is a society where everyone is respected for her or his uniquenesses that we should strive for. Not only women, but also the handicapped, racial and religious minorities, and many more. Therefore, we took action such as providing a gender-free workshop, conducting surveys with questionnaires, distributing fair-trade products, and making up newsletters. Each is a small, but important step toward realizing a society where women are beacons, and everyone shines. (The End)

