



REPORT OF THE  
2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

# MOVING THE NEEDLE ON GENDER EQUITY THROUGH US-JAPAN COLLABORATION



JAPAN CENTER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE  
(JCIE/JAPAN)

JAPAN CENTER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE  
(JCIE/USA)



REPORT OF THE

2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

# MOVING THE NEEDLE ON GENDER EQUITY THROUGH US-JAPAN COLLABORATION

Prepared by

Kim Gould Ashizawa

Copyright © 2022 Japan Center for International Exchange All rights reserved.  
Written by Kimberly Gould Ashizawa.  
Design and typesetting by Patrick Ishiyama.

Japan Center for International Exchange  
Meisan Tameike Bldg. 7F, 1-1-12 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052, Japan  
[www.jcie.or.jp/japan](http://www.jcie.or.jp/japan)

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)  
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 731, New York, New York 10115, USA  
[www.jcie.org](http://www.jcie.org)

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	<b>1</b>
Overview	<b>3</b>
Summary of Findings	<b>5</b>
Recommendations	<b>8</b>
Dialogue Report	<b>10</b>
Survey Reports	<b>26</b>
<i>United States</i>	<b>27</b>
<i>Japan</i>	<b>41</b>
Participants	<b>53</b>



# Acknowledgments

More than 40 women from the United States and Japan, including politicians and government officials, business leaders, journalists, policy experts, academics, and nonprofit leaders, participated in the 3rd US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue. The discussions were held virtually over the course of three sessions in the early months of 2022. These meetings built on two previous dialogues and allowed participants to dive deeper into some of the key policy issues affecting women in our countries and explore real-world solutions. They also gave us the opportunity to continue expanding our network of fascinating and inspiring women leaders. Moreover, the dialogue prompted our efforts to advocate for the inclusion of gender issues on the US-Japan summit agenda, which was achieved during the May 2021 summit between President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida.

The dialogue was first launched by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) in 2017, when a delegation of female Diet members traveled to the United States for talks with a wide range of policymakers, policy specialists, and business leaders in Washington DC and New York. That trip culminated in a weekend retreat at Pocantico with American women leaders from various sectors to explore the challenges facing US-Japan relations and the shared obstacles women have overcome to achieve success.

In 2021, in light of the pandemic, we launched a virtual version of the dialogue with the enthusiastic support of two legislators who are leaders on gender equality issues in their respective governments and who agreed to serve as co-chairs of the dialogue, Hon. Seiko Noda (Liberal Democratic Party) and Hon. Diana DeGette (D-Colorado). Those sessions focused on the impact of the pandemic on women, ways to address the societal inequities that the pandemic had revealed, and the need to amplify the voices of women in policymaking. A report of the 2021 dialogue is available on our website at <https://bit.ly/seekingthenextnormal>.

Our 2022 virtual meetings delved into greater detail on these issues, examining the state of gender policy in each country, initiatives to encourage greater engagement by women in policymaking, and efforts to promote women in STEM fields. We were once again fortunate to have the leadership of our esteemed co-chairs, Representative DeGette and then Minister Noda (the latter served from October 2021 to August 2022 in the Kishida cabinet with a portfolio that included the posts of Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment and Minister of State for Gender Equality). We held three online meetings in January, February, and March 2022, and were able to hold one smaller in-person meeting in May, when Representative DeGette visited Japan. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our chairs for their time and efforts to

ensure that the sessions were a great success. They brought to the table not only their extensive experience and insight, but also their strong commitment to US-Japan relations and to empowering other women leaders.

We would also like to thank all of the women leaders from the United States and Japan who took part. Their willingness to share their unique experiences and rich insights led to incredibly frank and illuminating discussions. We are particularly indebted to our resource speakers who kicked off our sessions with thought-provoking presentations: Jennifer Klein (White House Gender Policy Council), Jean Sinzdak (Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers-New Brunswick), Mari Miura (Sophia University), Takako Hashimoto (Chiba University of Commerce), and Rita Colwell (former Director, US National Science Foundation). Ms. Sinzdak also provided us with a thoughtful and comprehensive survey of US initiatives to promote women's engagement in politics, which is included in this report.

In addition, we must thank Hannah Katz and Kazuko Shoji in our co-chairs' offices for their assistance and patience as we organized the sessions and recruited participants, and our talented simultaneous interpreters, Shiori Okazaki, Sanae Sasajima, and Doreen Jackson, whose skillful translations made these conversations possible. We are also grateful to Kazuyo Kato, executive director of JCIE/USA for her leadership, and our JCIE colleagues, Hifumi Tajima, Kim Gould Ashizawa, and Hayley Hutchison, for their tireless work to ensure the success of the meetings.

Our sincere thanks go to the MRA Foundation, whose continued support has made this dialogue possible, the Toshiba International Foundation for their generous funding for the preparation of this report, and ITOCHU International for their additional support of the dialogue. The views expressed in this report are solely the responsibility of JCIE and are not intended to reflect the stances of our funders.

We hope that the recommendations that emerged from this year's dialogue inform the next phase of efforts to promote gender equity and equality in our countries and will further strengthen US-Japan partnership and bilateral relations moving forward.



Peggy Blumenthal  
Board Chair, JCIE/USA



Hideko Katsumata  
Executive Director  
and COO,  
JCIE/Japan

# REPORT OF THE 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

## Overview

The 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue was held virtually in January–March 2022, bringing together leaders from both countries for meetings to share insights into the challenges and opportunities for women’s leadership in various fields. This program built on two previous US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogues—an in-person meeting in 2017 and an online version in 2021. This year’s series of three sessions was co-chaired once again by Rep. Diana DeGette and Rep. Seiko Noda, and it featured lively discussions on key issues of social and economic equity, how politics impacts women’s lives and careers, existing and needed frameworks to promote women in politics, and ways to encourage gender equity and inclusion in a digital era.

Since the previous dialogue was held in the spring of 2021, the issues covered in our discussions have been front and center in both countries. In late 2021, Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held leadership elections, which also determined the prime minister of Japan. Our co-chair, Rep. Noda, was one of two women who ran for the post, and her platform drew a striking degree of attention to the issues facing working women, families, and women in politics in Japan. Following the election of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Rep. Noda was subsequently named Minister of State for Gender Equality, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, as well as Minister in Charge of Women’s Empowerment, among other responsibilities in the Kishida Cabinet. However, despite that step forward, Japan also took one step backward as the Lower House election held shortly thereafter saw the number of women elected to that body drop from 10.1 to just 9.7 percent. Meanwhile, in the United States, the Democratic Party has been debating how best to invest in the workforce, with a strong emphasis on the need for greater support for childcare and eldercare as a way to get women back into the workforce in the post-pandemic era. While President Biden was able to include \$39 billion in the American Rescue Plan to support access to childcare for essential workers and to help maintain the struggling industry during the pandemic, his subsequent Build Back Better legislation, which included a proposal to make a strong investment in



the care infrastructure, met with resistance even from some within his own party. These trends show that the issues discussed last year are now part of the mainstream discourse, but that there is still much work to be done.

Following up on these developments, the 2022 dialogue focused first on some of the key areas where policymakers and other leaders are working to promote greater gender equity. We then examined best practices in promoting women in politics in both countries, comparing the processes and support systems that currently exist and how they can be strengthened. To inform that discussion, JCIE also prepared surveys on the existing support systems in the US and Japan that are designed to foster women's political participation. And finally, we took a deeper look at the state of women in the STEM fields, which are so critical to the future economic growth of our countries.

Led by our co-chairs, the discussions engaged more than 40 women, including national legislators and leaders from government, business, media, philanthropy, academia, and think tanks. JCIE invited leading experts to kick off each session with presentations designed to offer background information and spark conversation. This was followed by a lively roundtable-style discussion, co-moderated by Hideko Katsumata, executive director and COO of JCIE/Japan, and Peggy Blumenthal, board chair of JCIE/USA. Based on Chatham House rules, the comments made were not for attribution, and thus while the conclusions drawn in this report reflect many of the ideas, themes, and tenor of the discussions, they are solely the responsibility of the author.



# Summary of Findings

## 1. Improve Economic Equity and Security for All Women

### *Treat women's economic security as a critical component of the domestic and global economic recovery*

As our economies build back from the pandemic, we must take the opportunity to rethink fundamental structural inequities that disproportionately impacted women's economic security during this crisis. The overrepresentation of women in non-regular and informal employment is a serious concern that pushes women into vulnerable positions and lessens their lifetime earning potential. Workforce development, training, and reevaluations of supply chains are important tools to address this issue and to provide more equitable access to good-paying, full-time jobs in growth sectors.

### *Maintain and expand access to workstyles that promote flexibility and work-life balance*

Government and corporate leaders should encourage the continued adoption of telework and telehealth, which offer parents more freedom over their schedules and minimizes commuting. This creates a new opportunity for both men and women to rethink their work-life balance and the balance of their contributions to housework and childcare.

### *Provide equitable access to and encourage the use of paid family and medical leave for all workers*

Ensure that workers—both men and women—across all sectors of the economy and in all types of businesses have equitable access to paid family and medical leave, and that they are able to utilize that leave without fear of reprisal or negative impact on their careers.

### *Address the caregiving crises in each country to improve access and affordability*

The caregiving sector is a critical element in closing gender gaps, but it poses a difficult conundrum: users of care services require affordability, but providers of care—who are predominantly women—must be adequately compensated. The United States can learn from the Japanese government's experience in offering free preschool and its success in improving the access to such services in recent years. Both countries must examine how to ensure that caregivers are adequately compensated for their crucial work of caring for those most vulnerable in our society, our children and elders.

*Quantify the unpaid contributions of women to the economy*

Around the world, women spend substantially more time than men on unpaid household chores and care work—cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping, and providing child or elder care. New approaches are needed to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid work. There have been initiatives such as the recent introduction of Medicaid programs in the United States that reimburse a designated family member or friend who serves as a caregiver, and their effectiveness as an example of quantifying and compensating work should be examined.

**2. Create and Strengthen Empowering Frameworks for Women in Politics and Business**

*Engage greater numbers and diversity of women in politics and corporate leadership*

Ensuring the inclusion of a wider range of female voices in terms of age, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, geographic base, etc., is crucial for more informed decision making, whether that entails understanding the real-life impact of policies or identifying new or overlooked business opportunities.

*Start early to change perceptions*

More interventions are needed at younger ages to inform girls and young women, as well as their male counterparts, that politics and business are not just a “man’s world,” but places where all people can and should participate and make their voices heard. This change in perceptions requires that parents send the right messages to both daughters and sons. It also requires efforts by schools, media, and others to ensure that young people see positive representations of women in leadership roles.

*Increase access to political leadership training programs*

There are a wide range of organizations in the United States that promote women’s political participation and train and support potential candidates, but access is still uneven across the country and should be improved. In Japan, however, more organizations and initiatives are still needed. Greater engagement of the academic sector in the development of new and existing political training programs in Japan would be beneficial. Another important means of promoting political participation is civic leadership education, particularly for girls and young women. Civic engagement at the local level also provides important training and pathways to future political careers.

*Don’t assume laws are enough—take concrete actions to promote political engagement*

Simply passing laws or “allowing” women to run is not enough. Active interventions are needed to successfully recruit, train, and fund women candidates, create caucuses, and establish other mechanisms to help one another. This is particularly true given that politicians require what have been called the three “Cs”—confidence, capacity, and connections.

*Create a “reserve army” of women with leadership skills*

Efforts in the private sector to ensure that women can rise to executive positions will also help create a pool of women with the necessary decision-making experience, confidence, and financial resources who can be encouraged to step up and run for office. Similarly, it is important to promote job mobility between politics and other sectors in Japan, and to select women with relevant experience for cabinet positions.

**3. Promote Women in STEM***Improve diversity and inclusion in STEM at the K-12 level*

Both governments should continue and expand their initiatives to encourage girls' participation in STEM at the K-12 level should be continued and expanded. At the same time, it is important to ensure that teachers' and parents' unconscious (or conscious) biases do not get handed down to young children. In addition, girls (and boys) need to see more female role models in STEM and be exposed to more information about the reality and variety of work in STEM fields.

*Improve diversity and inclusion in STEM in universities*

The presence of and mentoring by female professors can play a decisive role in encouraging young women to pursue a career in STEM. Universities need to have a full-scale, data-based articulation of their institutions' vision for recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in STEM. At the classroom level, reframing science and technology as a means to solve problems that young women care about can provide greater motivation for them to enter and continue in STEM fields.

*Promote continuing education and reskilling for women*

To help advance women in STEM, ongoing education and reskilling programs can provide valuable assistance to women who want to reenter the field after pausing their careers to care for children or other family members, as well as to women who may not have started in technology-related areas when they were first recruited but see that as a potential path moving forward.

*Invest in women-led businesses in the tech sector*

Venture capital (VC) is essential for entrepreneurship in STEM-related business, yet the field in both the United States and Japan is dominated by men. A number of public and private initiatives have been launched to assist businesswomen—e.g., the Tokyo municipal government's Acceleration Program in Tokyo (APT) to help women entrepreneurs expand globally, or Women Who Tech's various grant programs for women-led tech startups—and it would be helpful for Japan and the United States to compare notes in greater detail on what has and has not been effective to date in the two countries and consider ways to ensure that more women's voices are represented in the VC sector.



# Recommendations: An Agenda for US-Japan Collaboration on Gender Equity

In their May 2022 Joint Statement, President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida “concur that ensuring that all people, regardless of gender identity, can achieve their full potential is both a moral and strategic imperative, critical to every aspect of society and the economy.” While the two countries have at times cooperated on efforts to address such topics as education for girls or economic advancement for women in developing nations, which are certainly commendable initiatives that should be continued and expanded, they have yet to propose any partnership to improve the less-than-exemplary status of women in their own countries. If we hope to lead by example, then the next step must be to clearly elucidate and integrate gender equity in the bilateral US-Japan collaborative agenda, not only in our development assistance agenda but also in the context of an agenda to empower women in our own countries as well. The following are potential action items for that agenda.

## **Explicitly incorporate gender in existing agreements**

A Fact Sheet on the US-Japan Competitiveness and Resilience (CoRe) Partnership issued during the May 2022 Kishida-Biden Summit stressed, “Our exchange programs will continue to distribute the benefits of the CoRe Partnership inclusively and equitably, to empower women in our societies.” Steps should be taken to clarify and monitor how existing initiatives under the rubric of the CoRe Partnership, as well as the US-Japan Climate Partnership and other bilateral agreements, will work to ensure equity and inclusion.

## **Promote comparative research and dialogues on government and corporate policies to improve the wellbeing of women**

The United States and Japan should provide funding for joint analyses and dialogues that examine policies and practices both in the public and private sector that can improve the status of women. Examples of topics that could be covered by such funding include the following:

- how to reduce the ratio of non-regular employees in the female labor force
- best practices for maintaining and integrating telework and telemedicine in post-pandemic life
- how to ensure equitable access to benefits such as paid family and medical leave
- best practices for training and reskilling women to enhance their careers or reenter the labor market post-childbirth

- the effectiveness of quotas and targets for the promotion of gender equity in boardrooms, management, and politics
- lessons to be learned from America's Title IX policy for improving gender equity
- best practices in the two countries on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of talented women in academia

### **Expand bilateral efforts to promote women in STEM**

The United States and Japan should create a bilateral program that focuses on women in STEM in both the education and business sectors.

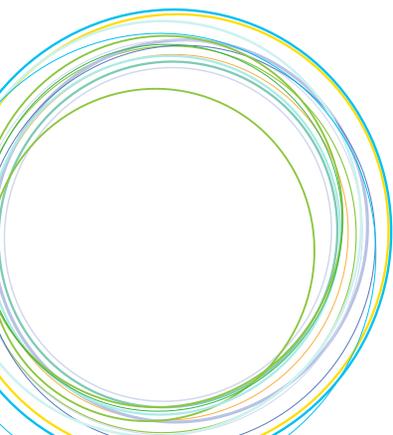
- On the educational front, provide support for joint analyses on how best to encourage girls to study STEM, how to effectively retain and promote women researchers, and how to provide recurrent and reskilling educational opportunities that contribute to a more viable career path for these women in science, technology, and engineering. Bilateral academic exchanges and fellowship opportunities should be offered that target women in STEM.
- On the business front, promote programs that build networks among women leaders in STEM and encourage interaction with younger generations of women to show them what a potential career path in STEM might look like. For example, the US government has been convening a TechWomen program that offers mentoring and exchange to women in developing countries, pairing them with women at science and technology companies in Silicon Valley, but women in the United States and Japan could also benefit from such support and networking opportunities.

### **Encourage investment in Japanese and American women entrepreneurs, particularly in future-oriented fields**

Women entrepreneurs in both countries struggle when raising capital, in no small part due to the fact that VC remains a male-dominated field. Opportunities should be created to increase US-Japan networks of entrepreneurs and of venture capitalists who are interested in supporting women-led companies. The two governments should consider incorporating grants to women-led businesses in critical fields related to shared objectives of the bilateral partnership such as green energy, cybersecurity, supply chain resilience, and femtech.

### **Increase the availability of funding to civil society organizations for people-to-people exchanges**

The sharing of lessons learned, the creation of empowering frameworks and networks, and the simple words of mutual encouragement that are achieved through bilateral exchanges can have a profound impact on participants. In particular, cross-sectoral US-Japan dialogues that draw on the experiences of women in politics, business, academia, policy research, and media have proven to provide unique perspectives and insights. But the availability of funding for such exchanges has been shrinking over the past decade. Both governments should consider ways to expand their support of such programs.



# Dialogue Report

## Session Topics and Speakers

### Session 1: Gender and the Role of Politics (January 12, 2022)

**Hon. Seiko Noda**, *Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment, Minister of State for Gender Equality, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, LDP (Japan Co-chair)*

**Ms. Jennifer Klein**, *Co-chair, White House Gender Policy Council*

### Session 2: Frameworks for Success—Systems to Empower Women in Politics and Beyond (February 15, 2022)

**Ms. Jean Sinzdak**, *Associate Director, Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers-New Brunswick*

**Prof. Mari Miura**, *Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, and Deputy Director, Promotion of Gender Equality Office, Sophia University*

### Session 3: Promoting Women in the Digital Society (March 22, 2021)

**Dr. Takako Hashimoto**, *Vice President, Chiba University of Commerce*

**Dr. Rita Colwell**, *Distinguished University Professor, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health; Distinguished University Professor, University of Maryland, College Park; former Director, US National Science Foundation; Member, Board of Governors, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology*

## Gender and Politics: Improving Equity and Economic Security for Women

### Alleviating the Impact of the Pandemic on Women

In January 2022, around 40 women sat down in front of their Zoom cameras for the opening session of the 3rd US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue. It was evening in the United States and morning in Japan. Many of the participants had joined in the 2021 sessions, and all had hoped that the pandemic would be behind us by the time we met again, but unfortunately, the United States was reaching the peak of a major spike in COVID-19 cases caused by the Omicron

variant while Japan was just entering what would become its worst phase of the pandemic to date. Parents in the two countries were grappling once again with the looming possibility of school closures and the need to take time off from work to tend to sick family members, industries such as tourism and leisure continued to take a hit, and offices pushed back their timelines yet again for a full return to in-person work. In short, the discussions were held against a backdrop of ongoing uncertainty and disruption that continued to take a tremendous toll on women as they carried out their roles in the economy, their communities, and their families.

Both governments have responded to the pandemic by implementing a range of policies intended

to alleviate its impact and support women and families. In the United States, the 2020 Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act under President Trump, and the subsequent American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 under President Biden introduced a number of measures. These included providing emergency paid sick leave and family medical leave, extending unemployment benefits, offering direct payments to individuals and payments to employers who retained their workers, expanding the child tax credit and the child and dependent care credit, and funding schools to help make classrooms safe to reopen and to deal with “learning loss” during the pandemic, among many others. Similarly, Japan offered an employment adjustment subsidy to help employers retain employees during the downturn, extended unemployment benefits, and sought ways to reinforce the safety net for non-regular workers.

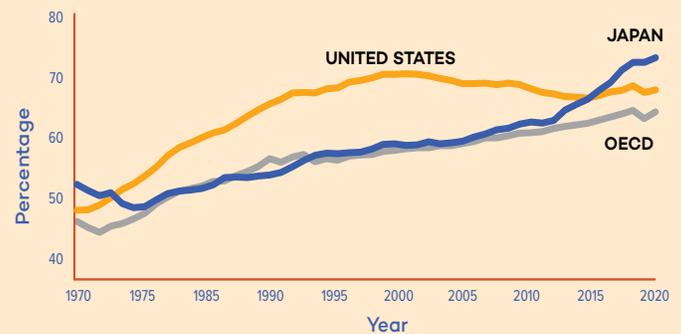
While these efforts helped, women were still hard hit during the pandemic, and as our dialogue convened, workforce participation and income levels were still well below their pre-pandemic levels. As an International Monetary Fund (IMF) working paper described with regard to the situation in Japan, women are “overrepresented in vulnerable industries and occupations that typically offer less stable working conditions and fewer training and growth opportunities. This points to structural inequities and impediments for female, young, and non-regular workers that should be addressed irrespective of the pandemic.”<sup>1</sup> Recognizing that women are facing these same disadvantages in both countries, the women leaders who gathered for our dialogue stressed the importance of advancing women’s economic security as a critical component of the domestic and global economic recovery.

## Systemic Barriers Facing Women in the Economy

### *Regular vs. Non-regular Employment*

The discussions focused on a number of systemic issues that need to be addressed. First and foremost, as noted above, the pre-pandemic model, in which a high proportion of women are employed as informal or “non-regular” workers (part-time employees, freelancers, and contract-based employees), is clearly no longer tenable. This issue is particularly pronounced in Japan, which has a surprisingly high level of labor force participation among women. In fact, 76.3 percent of women in Japan were working in 2016—which was higher than in the United States (see fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> But this achievement is undermined by the fact that a large portion of those workers are engaged in part-time work—a trend that becomes more prevalent once women are about a decade out of college. Indeed, pre-pandemic statistics show that while 61 percent of women aged 25–34 were full-time regular employees, the numbers flipped for older age groups so that 61 percent of women 35–64 were non-regular employees or self-employed.<sup>3</sup> Workforce development, training,

**Figure 1. Labor force participation of women ages 15–64, 1970–2021**



Source: OECD

1. Shinya Kotera and Jochen M. Schmittmann, “The Japanese Labor Market During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” IMF Working Papers WP/22/89 (May 2022).
2. Jay Shambaugh, Ryan Nunn, and Becca Portman, “Lessons from the Rise of Women’s Labor Force Participation in Japan,” The Hamilton Project (November 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/lessons-from-the-rise-of-womens-labor-force-participation-in-japan/>.
3. Statistics Bureau, Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2019 Labour Force Survey, <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/en>.

and supply chain diversification are important tools to reduce the overrepresentation of women in vulnerable sectors of the economy and in jobs with no prospects for career development while promoting equitable access to well-paying, full-time jobs in the growth sectors of the future.

This issue is directly tied to concerns about women’s lifetime earning capacity and economic security. As life expectancy for women in both countries is longer than that of men by five to six years,<sup>4</sup> it is important that women have lifetime earnings that can sustain them into their old age. As of 2021, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that nearly 23 percent of women aged 65 or older are living in poverty in Japan, and nearly 26 percent in the United States—significantly higher than the percentages of their male counterparts.<sup>5</sup> As our populations are greying and the burdens on our social safety nets are growing increasingly heavy, the implications of the old model of women’s employment clearly have an impact on everyone.

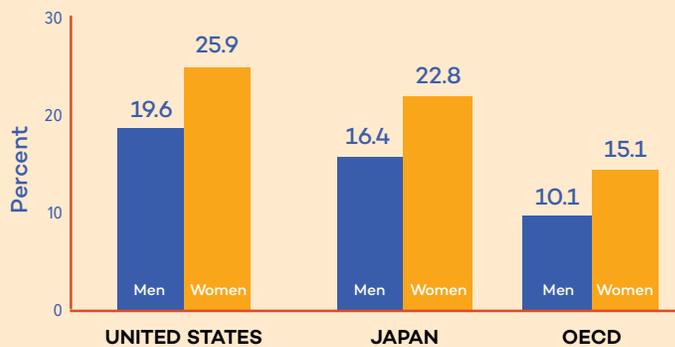
*Why Not Full-Time?*

There are various reasons why women are not regular employees, including sociocultural forces, economic factors, and structural barriers, as well as personal choice. In the case of Japan, one reason women opt for part-time work is that there is a tax disincentive to full-time employment. If a spouse earns less than ¥1.5 million (roughly US\$11,000) annually, they receive a tax deduction of ¥380,000 (currently around US\$2,800). There have been calls to address this issue (and the amount was raised slightly in 2018), but as is true in any country, there is often a steep political price to pay when governments take away a tax break.

Flexibility is another reason that women, particularly mothers, have chosen the non-regular employment route. The sudden diffusion of telework as a result of the pandemic has changed that calculus as it offers many parents more freedom over their schedules and eliminates the time and cost of commuting. It has provided a new opportunity for both women and men to rethink the work-life balance, and—at least in theory—allows men more time to contribute to

housework and childcare. Indeed, in the United States, many companies have encountered reluctance among employees to a full return to the office. A Pew survey in January 2022 found that among employed adults whose workplaces were open, 76 percent were still choosing to work from home all or most of the time simply because they preferred it rather than because of concerns over the pandemic. And 17 percent indicated that they were telecommuting because they had moved (either temporarily or permanently) away from their workplace, indicating that they were unlikely to be returning

**Figure 2. Income poverty rates among people aged 65+**  
 Percentage of those with income lower than 50 percent of median equivalized household disposable income



Source: OECD, “Pensions at a Glance 2021”

4. According to the World Bank, women in Japan have a life expectancy at birth that is six years longer than their male counterparts, while American women have a roughly five-year advantage. In 2020, Japanese men’s life expectancy at birth was 82, compared to their female counterparts who had a life expectancy of 88 years; in the United States, those numbers were 75 and 80 (reflecting a sharp pandemic-related drop). World Bank, “Life Expectancy at Birth,” <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN>.

5. OECD, “Pensions at a Glance 2021: OECD and G20 Indicators—Old-age income poverty,” [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/finance-and-investment/pensions-at-a-glance-2021\\_d76e4fad-en](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/finance-and-investment/pensions-at-a-glance-2021_d76e4fad-en).

to their pre-pandemic style of work.<sup>6</sup> In Japan, a survey by Persol Research and Consulting Co. found that about 28.5 percent of the 20,000 employees it interviewed were working from home in February 2022, and 80 percent wanted to continue to have that option.<sup>7</sup> Participants in our dialogue lauded the adoption of telework and telemedicine during the pandemic, both of which provide critical flexibility for women and vulnerable populations, and they expressed the hope that ongoing access to these options can be integrated into the post-pandemic economy as well. Leadership and support from the governments of the United States and Japan are needed to ensure the promotion of technologies that allow for flexibility in the workplace and for these options to be maintained moving forward.

### *Where You Work Matters*

Of course, not all jobs lend themselves to telework. Women in the healthcare, retail, and hospitality sectors are less likely to be able to take advantage of that option, and part-time workers are less likely than full-time workers. The fact that women are disproportionately engaged in precisely those front-line, in-person sectors is another structural issue that places women at a disadvantage.

The type of company that a woman works for also impacts her access to flexibility, benefits, and advancement opportunities. Participants noted that in Japan in particular, but in the United States as well, there tends to be a different corporate culture between large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While large companies offer greater stability and benefits, their more rigid tenure-based promotion systems can put women at a disadvantage. Conversely, SMEs may offer greater flexibility in terms of career trajectories for women, but they are less

likely to offer the same types of job benefits. This led to more women at SMEs having to quit their jobs during the pandemic. Policy measures are needed to encourage greater flexibility and opportunities for women at large corporations and greater access to safety net such as paid family and medical leave for those at smaller businesses.

Benefits and earning potential are an issue not only in the business sector but also in the nonprofit world—a sector where women represent the majority of the workforce in both countries.<sup>8</sup> This sector plays a critical role in addressing key social issues—supporting the health and welfare of children, the elderly, single mothers, or people with disabilities; providing international humanitarian relief efforts; fighting for the environment; and supporting women’s empowerment; to name a few—and its contribution to GDP in both of our two countries is said to be between 4 and 6 percent.<sup>9</sup> To put that in context, in both Japan and the United States, that is substantially more than the agricultural sector’s contribution to GDP, which is just over 1 percent. But in Japan in particular, many still confuse nonprofit work with volunteer work, meaning that employees are grossly under-compensated for their contributions to society. More robust partnership with and support from government and business is needed to ensure the economic stability of this crucial sector.

### *Unpaid, Underpaid, and Unaffordable Caregiving*

Access to and affordability of caregiving for children and aging parents is another common challenge facing women in both countries. Caregiving as an occupation tends to be a low-paying job, leading to staff turnover and shortages. The pandemic exacerbated that problem in the United States, where childcare centers have had to raise

6. Kim Parker, Juliana Horowitz, and Rachel Minkin, “COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Reshape Work in America,” Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2022/02/16/covid-19-pandemic-continues-to-reshape-work-in-america/>.

7. Takashi Endo, “Companies and Employees Wide Apart on Views on Teleworking,” *Asahi Shimbun*, April 20, 2022, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14602888>.

8. An estimated 73 percent of the US nonprofit workforce is female according to Network for Good (<https://www.networkforgood.com/resource/celebrate-women-in-nonprofit/>).

9. For information on the Japanese nonprofit sector, see Aya Okada, et al., “The State of Nonprofit Sector Research in Japan,” *Voluntaristics* 2.3 (2017): 12, <https://set-hirota.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/32983521ad6634b8d4e0b8bb8e61b2e1.pdf>; for information on the US nonprofit sector, see Independent Sector, “Health of the U.S. Nonprofit Sector Quarterly Review,” September 30, 2022, <https://independentsector.org/resource/health-of-the-u-s-nonprofit-sector/>.

pay in order to attract and retain employees, and they have simultaneously incurred costs related to health safety. These increased expenses have led the price of childcare to rise to more than \$10,000 per child, which is more than 10 percent of the median income for married couples with children and more than 35 percent of the median income for single parents.<sup>10</sup> This cost factors into a woman's decision whether or not to return to full-time employment. The cost of childcare in Japan is much lower, and the government provides free preschool for children aged three and older. In the past, access has been a serious issue, with more than 25,000 children on waiting lists for nursery care in 2017, but a combination of factors—including efforts to increase the number of daycare centers, a rise in employer-created childcare centers, the declining number of births in Japan, and the impact of the pandemic—led that number to drop below 3,000 in 2022.<sup>11</sup> The dialogue participants noted that the caregiving sector is a critical factor in closing gender gaps in the domestic and global economy, but it poses a difficult conundrum: users of care services require affordability, but providers of care must be adequately compensated, which they generally are not.

Compounding this issue is the fact that much of the caregiving in both countries is unpaid work that falls to women. For example, when a child is sick, it is usually the mother that leaves work and picks them up from school. Moreover, the pay gap between men and women means that during the pandemic, when schools shut down, it often made more financial sense for mothers to leave their jobs to stay at home with their children than it did for fathers. Eldercare too falls predominantly to women, and unlike past generations, today's family caregivers are likely to be employed outside the home as well, therefore requiring them to juggle their many responsibilities.

There is a need to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work and to invest in the care workforce, including home health workers, childcare providers, and domestic workers. Indeed, this need is spelled out clearly in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment. Target 5.4 states, “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.” It was noted that one practice in the United States that may be instructional for Japan is a relatively new policy within the Medicaid insurance program that allows family members to be paid to serve as caregivers for their loved ones.<sup>12</sup> This is one example of quantifying the contributions of women to the economy.

## Creating and Strengthening Empowering Frameworks

### The Latest Developments

In the year that passed between our 2021 dialogue and the 2022 dialogue, the Japanese and US administrations have been working to bolster the institutional frameworks supporting women. In February 2022, spearheaded by Minister Seiko Noda, the Japanese government introduced a bill to create a new agency for children and families, which subsequently passed in June and is scheduled to launch in the spring of 2023. The new agency is intended to integrate policies across multiple government ministries and agencies to improve the handling of issues concerning children, such as declining birth rates, child poverty, and sex crimes. Japan also began providing health insurance coverage in April 2022

10. Economic Policy Institute, “Child Care Costs in the United States,” <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/>.

11. Nippon.com, “Japan Sees 90% Drop in Daycare Waiting Lists Over the Last Five Years,” September 14, 2022, <https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-data/ho1428/>.

12. See, for example, Salom Teshale, Wendy Fox-Grage, and Kitty Purington, “Paying Family Caregivers through Medicaid Consumer-Directed Programs: State Opportunities and Innovations,” National Academy for State Health Policy website, April 2021, <https://www.nashp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/paying-family-caregivers-April2021.pdf>.

for 70 percent of the cost of fertility treatments, a move that not only addresses the country’s falling birthrate and shrinking labor force, but also allows women greater control over the timing of starting or expanding their family and over their career trajectory.

In the United States, the Biden administration created the White House Gender Policy Council in 2021 to improve gender equity and equality in America’s foreign and domestic policy. The council’s membership includes all members of the cabinet and many other key officials, from the director of National Intelligence to the director of the National Science Foundation. In October 2021, the council released a national strategy that enumerated strategic priorities including economic security, gender-based violence, health, climate change, science and technology, and democratic participation, among others.<sup>13</sup> The structure of the council helps ensure that a gendered approach is incorporated across the whole of government.

But whether or not the priorities that can make a dent in gender inequality actually get enacted or funded often depends on whether or not women are present in the “room where it happens,” the seats of power where those policies are decided. In the business context, one woman at our dialogue noted that because 70 percent of her company’s board was comprised of women, they were able to quickly adopt pandemic policies in support of employees with children, for example, or to recognize the need for measures to address mental health. In the political arena, a legislator pointed out that conversely, when policies are being discussed in a room full of male politicians (particularly those who are older), gender issues and the potential implications of a policy on women and children are rarely top of mind.

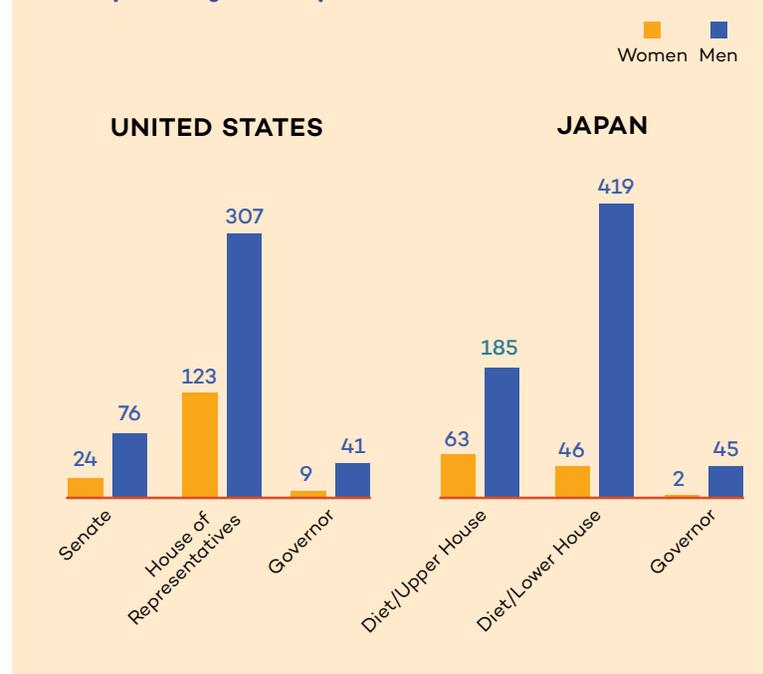
For that reason, our participants stressed that engaging not only more women, but also women with diverse backgrounds and experiences—including age, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic background, geographic

base, etc.—is critical for more informed decision making. For example, American legislators have found that the inclusion of younger women in Congress and women from diverse backgrounds has been important when talking about legislation to address the cost of college, housing costs, and so on.

Sadly, however, the United States and Japan hold the bottom two slots in terms of women’s legislative representation among the G7 nations. Among the 38 OECD countries as well, the United States ranked 26th in 2021, while Japan was dead last at 38th in the number of women parliamentarians at the national level.<sup>14</sup>

This is not to say that there has not been progress. In the United States, the 2016 election jump-started a movement of record numbers of women running for office at all levels of government, eventually leading to the election in 2020 of the first woman (and first woman of color) to the office of vice president. And looking at

Figure 3. Number of elected officials at the state and national levels (as of August 2022)



13. White House, *National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* (2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/National-Strategy-on-Gender-Equity-and-Equality.pdf>.

14. OECD, *Women in Politics* (2021), <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/women-in-politics.htm>. Women in politics is defined here as “the share of women in the national lower or single houses of parliament. Measured as a percentage of total parliamentarians.”

cabinet-level officials, roughly half of the Biden cabinet is female as of this writing.

In Japan, the 2018 passage of the Gender Equality Act did little to move the needle at first, as the 2021 Lower House election actually saw a drop in seats held by women. But in the summer of 2022 (after the conclusion of our dialogue this year), a record number of Japanese women ran in the Upper House elections—one-third of all candidates. The result also set a record, as women claimed 35 out of the 245 seats that were up for grabs. But that baby step of progress still leaves the ratio of women in the Upper House at a woeful 9.9 percent presently, and the number of women in the Kishida cabinet, which stood at three earlier in the year, was reduced to two in a reshuffle that took place not long after the election.

### Moving the Needle on Representation

What, then, is needed to move the needle and get women elected? That was the focus of the second session of our dialogue. The surveys included in this report were prepared in order to offer some background on the frameworks currently in place to help encourage young women to step into leadership positions. They also point to gaps and hurdles facing women in each country, and our discussions built off their findings.

In the US survey report, Jean Sinzdek of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University, one of the country's most respected organizations conducting research and advocacy for women's political leadership, laid out the myriad organizations—some dating back to the 1800s and others created just in recent decades—that are working to promote women's political participation across the United States. She described eight areas in which these groups are active: campaign trainings for women, non-gender-specific campaign trainings, organizations for women's political empowerment, women's political action committees (PACs), organizations of women elected officials, political appointment projects, women's legislative caucuses, and youth civic leadership programs

for young women and girls. Based on CAWP's research and experiences over the years, Sinzdek stressed, "The solutions to barriers to women's political participation as candidates and officeholders are to intervene at younger ages, to routinely and consistently ask more women to run, to train them so they feel qualified to run, and to provide resources and support at various points on the political engagement spectrum."

As participants read and discussed the US and Japan surveys, there were two common themes that stood out in terms of moving that needle. The first was that we will not make real progress until we address the deeply rooted socioeconomic and cultural factors that deter young women from pursuing careers in politics. Despite the fact that women generally lead their male counterparts in terms of civic engagement in areas such as volunteering and membership in community organizations, by the time women reach college, they tend to show less interest in politics and have less confidence that they have the qualities needed to lead. Sinzdek noted that young women need accessible role models in politics and other leadership positions, and she stressed, "Programs that aim to shift the narrative of politics as exclusively a male domain and that help girls build their leadership skills while actively participating in political spaces could have a tremendous impact on the diversity of representation in future generations."

Participants concurred that more interventions are needed at younger ages to ensure girls and young women that the world of politics is not just a "man's world," but a world where all people can and should participate and make their voices heard. In this sense, representation matters, and having women in the public sphere whom young women can look up to is crucial to inspire future generations. It is equally important that young women see current women leaders on the front lines of business, academia, think tanks, and the nonprofit world who are advocating on their behalf.

There was also agreement that women often do not have a clear picture of what it requires or what it is like to be a politician—both the good and

the bad aspects—and there were calls for greater efforts to share information, including through academic research and networking among women studying politics, more opportunities for young people to meet women politicians, and more media coverage of women in politics. For example, one legislator shares her personal stories about her experience via YouTube.

Participants noted that civic leadership education for girls and young women is another critical area, and it is particularly lacking in the United States at the K-12 level. There are, however, a wide range of national, state, and local organizations that provide programs for young women to generate interest in politics and leadership more broadly. By contrast, in Japan, there are still too few programs providing training for young women.

Japanese participants expressed interest in better understanding the impact that Title IX has had in the US context and how it has been implemented. Title IX, legislation that was spearheaded by a Japanese-American Congresswoman, the late Rep. Patsy Mink of Hawaii, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, and is considered a landmark in the movement for gender equity. The law prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance, and it has had a tremendous impact on the US educational opportunities for women as well as on girls' sports, which promote confidence and leadership among women. This was noted as an area where further discussions would be worthwhile, as efforts to change mindsets among Japan's youth are sorely needed.

And educational efforts must be directed toward men as well. It was pointed out that in Japan, the deeply embedded idea that “politics is a man's job” is still accepted by many male legislators and voters. The result is that women candidates and politicians face sexual harassment from their colleagues and their constituents, have a harder time raising funds (although thanks to Japanese regulations on campaign spending, the sums required

are much lower than what American candidates must raise), and often are shut out of the “old boys network” through which information is shared and policy decisions are often made. One example of an educational initiative was the release of a video from Japan's Cabinet Office in May 2022 that shared examples of the types of sexual harassment that are being faced by female candidates.<sup>15</sup>

The second theme that was evident from the surveys and the discussions was that simply passing laws or “allowing” women to run is not enough. Active interventions are needed to make progress, whether that means actively recruiting, training, and funding women or creating caucuses and other mechanisms to let women provide mutual support for one another.

The Japan survey authors, Hideko Katsumata and Hifumi Tajima note that in addition to the need for hard skills (practical knowledge and skills for campaigning and fundraising) and soft skills (leadership preparedness), politicians require what have been called the three “Cs”: confidence, capacity, and connections. The types of training and support that women candidates receive in the United States are sorely lacking still in Japan. While the regional chapters of many political parties in Japan are conducting training programs for potential women candidates, and a few local nonprofit organizations offer programs as well, the activities remain limited in scope and content. US leadership training programs have also had the advantage of drawing on close ties between academia and the political sphere. Japan has begun to develop programs but making stronger connections with the academic sector would likely benefit new and existing political training programs in Japan for an increasing number of interested young socially minded individuals who may one day run for office.

According to the two surveys, women in both countries are less likely than men to be asked to run for office. As one participant noted, sometimes just being asked, “Have you ever thought about running for public office?” can provide the

15. Masatoshi Toda, “Video Shows Harassment Local Politicians Face in Real Life,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 1, 2022, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14601390>.

needed encouragement for women to consider politics as a career. The types of organizations discussed in the surveys that work to identify and recruit women are thus particularly important and should be expanded. Connected to this, however, is the lack of a “revolving door” in Japan between jobs in government and the private sector. For more women to take the leap and enter politics mid-career, greater job mobility is critical.

Moreover, the Japan survey noted that another obstacle to women’s political participation is that they also lack the opportunity to hone their leadership skills in other sectors, including business and civil society. The various impediments to women rising to executive positions in both countries, although in Japan even more so than in the United States, limits the “reserve army” of women with the necessary decision-making experience, confidence, and financial resources who can be encouraged to step up and run for office.

Turning to the business sector, there are examples of quotas being introduced in the United States as a way to promote more women in leadership positions in the sector, such as recent efforts by NASDAQ and the state of California. To date, Japan has taken a different tack. As of April 2022, Japan’s Financial Services Agency has begun requiring firms listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange to disclose their “policy and voluntary measurable targets” to ensure board diversity (including gender and nationality), and they must publish the ratio of women in senior positions in their organizations in their annual securities report. They must also disclose the average pay by gender and the percentage of male employees who take childcare leave. These measures do not specify what the ideal targets should be, however, and rely largely on peer pressure rather than penalties. As a result, while there has been a rise already in companies with at least one female board member, the number of companies with 2 or more is still low, and it remains to be seen whether those numbers will expand without further pressure. As

of July 2022, the average number of women directors on the boards of Nikkei 225 companies was just 1.5 out of an average board size of 10.5 people (14.4 percent).<sup>16</sup> It would therefore be useful to have a US-Japan discussion on best practices in business to consider how to effectively implement such measures and also to ensure that they extend beyond the boardroom to management positions as well.

Quotas are also a potential tool for increasing equity in the political sphere. Various quota systems have been introduced in more than 100 countries worldwide with marked success, and there have been calls in Japan in recent years for quotas to be implemented as a way to increase the number of women legislators. The 2018 Gender Equality Act did require parties in Japan to make an effort to field equal numbers of male and female candidates. But because there were no penalties introduced for a failure to do so, and because there are so many male incumbents from the ruling coalition, the results in the most recent Upper House election in July 2022 fell well short of that at just 33.2 percent. For the ruling LDP, which together with its coalition partner Komeito now hold 146 out of 248 seats (roughly 59 percent), the ratio of female candidates was a lamentable 23.2 percent (Komeito was even lower at 20.8 percent). Calls for gender quotas in the United States have been more sporadic. Richard Reeves of Brookings Institution, for example, writes that while Biden’s appointment of a more gender-balanced cabinet raised the country’s gender equality rankings significantly, it will take quotas to improve the situation in Congress. He believes that the institution of a quota, if applied by law, would be found unconstitutional, so it is up to the political parties to act.<sup>17</sup> Here again, examining best practices for the application of quotas in the corporate and political fields could offer useful lessons.

16. River Davis, “Despite Abe’s Push, Women Still Largely Absent from Japan Boards,” *Bloomberg US Edition*, July 21, 2022.

17. Richard V. Reeves, “Congress Needs Gender Parity Quotas,” Brookings Institution, April 21, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/congress-needs-gender-parity-quotas/>.

## Promoting Women in STEM

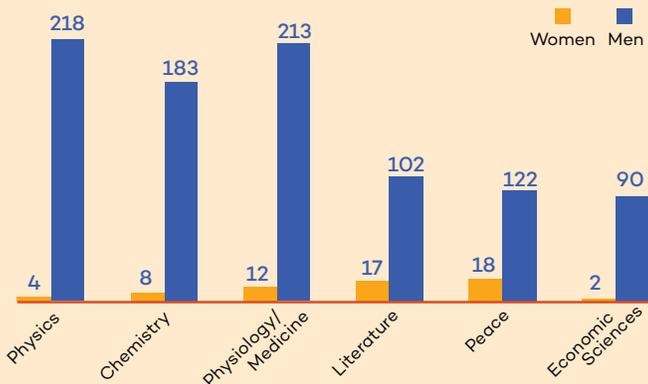
The final session of our dialogue took a deeper dive into an issue that had been raised in the 2021 meetings: the importance of increasing the numbers of women pursuing STEM careers. Throughout history, many women in STEM have made critical scientific contributions that have changed our understanding of the world around us. These women include Marie Curie—the only person in history to have won Nobel Prizes in two scientific fields—and more recent examples like Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna, who were jointly recognized with a Nobel Prize for their groundbreaking work on the gene editing method known as CRISPR, and Kizzmekia Corbett, who played a key role in developing the mRNA technology that led to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, among others. Nonetheless, women remain underrepresented in STEM fields in terms of leadership roles and recognition. In fact, as of 2022, only 24 women had won a Nobel

Prize in the sciences out of 638 awarded, or less than 4 percent (see fig. 4).

In both the United States and Japan, the ratio of female students in undergraduate and graduate science and engineering programs is low, and among them, the ratio of those who continue on to become researchers in these fields is even smaller. In the United States, although women represent the majority of bachelor's degree recipients in health and life sciences, only around one in five undergraduate degree recipients in engineering or computer science are women.<sup>18</sup> These numbers have resulted in a smaller number of women actually working in those fields. Japan has similarly low ratios, with women representing only around 6 percent of engineering researchers, and only 7.5 percent of managers in the information and communications technology (ICT) field.

Even in the health sciences, women in Japan have faced substantial barriers, as highlighted by a 2018 scandal where it was discovered that ten leading medical schools were tampering with the entrance exam scores to reduce the number of female students admitted. Fortunately, the number of women entering medical school has subsequently increased to over 40 percent (that number is now over 50 percent in the United States),<sup>19</sup> and in 2021, the percentage of women who passed the medical school entrance exams surpassed that of men.<sup>20</sup> But once they do get in, they have few female role models or mentors they can look to. Both countries continue to have a poor track record in terms of the number of women in positions of leadership at academic medical institutions. A 2019 report by the Association of American Medical Colleges found that women accounted for just 16 percent of medical school deans, 18 percent of department chairs, and 25 percent of full professors.<sup>21</sup> In Japan, the

Figure 4. Individual recipients of the Nobel Prize by gender, 1901–2022



Source: Nobel Prize website, <https://www.nobelprize.org/>

18. Sapna Cheryan, Allison Master, and Andrew Meltzoff, “There Are Too Few Women in Computer Science and Engineering,” *Scientific American*, July 27, 2022, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/there-are-too-few-women-in-computer-science-and-engineering/>.

19. Sumiyo Akazawa et al., “Women Physicians in Academic Medicine of Japan,” *JMA Journal* 5, no. 3 (July 15, 2022): 289–297, <https://www.jmaj.jp/detail.php?id=10.31662%2Fjmaj.2021-0116#fig2>.

20. Kyodo News, “Women Overtake Men in Exam Pass Rate at Japan’s Medical Schools,” February 16, 2022, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/02/1c41b683f2e3-women-overtake-men-in-exam-pass-rate-at-japans-medical-schools.html>. The rates flipped back in 2022, however, with 13.1% of women and 14.2% of men passing.

21. Amy Paturel, “Where Are All the Women Deans?” AAMC News (June 11, 2019), <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/where-are-all-women-deans>.

percentage of full professorships in the medical field held by female physicians in 2018 was under 10 percent.<sup>22</sup> And these numbers were similar or worse across the science and engineering fields.

This lack of representation signals to female students that academia and academic research posts in STEM fields are not a viable career path for them. And this is a problem not just for women but for society as a whole. The female half of the world's brainpower is being underutilized in the essential areas of science and technology—areas that increasingly affect the way we work and live.

### Why Women in STEM Matters

Jobs in STEM are understood to be critical to the future of the Japanese and American economies. For example, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs in STEM will grow by 10.5 percent from 2020 to 2030, as compared to 7.5 percent for non-STEM jobs.<sup>23</sup> And in addition to high demand, those with degrees in STEM also tend to earn substantially more.<sup>24</sup> For women in particular, there are many benefits of working in the field of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Tech jobs in particular are more likely to offer the potential to work from home and enjoy greater job flexibility. It is also an area where mid-career transitions and re-entry after taking time off for parenting may be more practical than in other fields.

Since technology changes constantly, as long as recurring education and retraining opportunities are available, women can update their skills and reenter the workforce after an extended absence more easily than in other fields. In addition, there are many new companies in the field, which often offer a more flexible and inclusive environment than older, established corporations more set in

their ways. And because science, IT, and engineering require not just technical know-how but also cross-disciplinary skills, a bird's-eye view, management capabilities, and ethics, women can make an impact in the field even if they have initially trained in non-technical fields. It is also an area where workers' individual job performance and results are recognized, allowing women to shine.

In this digital world, technology is impacting everyone, but our discussions found tremendous financial and power inequities between the creators and users of technology, and women can play a role in addressing this issue. For example, the creators of technology that facilitates the online ordering of food or goods have been highly successful, but their systems rely on delivery workers who receive low wages and no social protections. And the use of AI to increase productivity at the expense of labor has been drawing a growing backlash as well. Cambridge University economist Diane Coyle, for example, calls for a rethinking of "progress." She writes, "Whatever we mean by the economy growing, by things getting better, the gains will have to be more evenly shared than in the recent past. An economy of tech millionaires or billionaires and gig workers, with middle-income jobs undercut by automation, will not be politically sustainable."<sup>25</sup> It is essential that women's voices be reflected in that process of rethinking how technology shapes our future digital society.

### How to Improve Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Education

The K-12 level is perhaps the most critical stage in determining whether girls end up pursuing education and careers in STEM fields. It is important to encourage self-confidence among

22. Kaori Kono, Takashi Watari, and Yasuharu Tokuda, "Assessment of Academic Achievement of Female Physicians in Japan," *JAMA Network Open* 3, no. 7 (July 2020), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7348686/>. Indeed, the OECD reported that as of 2020, Japan was last among 32 OECD nations in terms of female staff in tertiary education. See Kyodo News, "Japan Ranked Last in Women Staff in Tertiary Education in 2020: OECD," October 9, 2022, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/10/6c91120eada9-japan-ranked-last-in-women-staff-in-tertiary-education-in-2020-oecd.html>.

23. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment in STEM Occupations," <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/stem-employment.htm>.

24. National Science Board, National Science Foundation, "The STEM Labor Force of Today," August 2021, <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20212/figure/LBR-12>.

25. As quoted in David Rotman, "How to Solve AI's Inequality Problem," *MIT Technology Review*, April 19, 2022, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/04/19/1049378/ai-inequality-problem/>.

girls about their ability to do well in core subjects like mathematics and science. It is also important to ensure that teachers' and parents' unconscious (or conscious) biases do not get handed down to young children.

Part of the solution is to change the way that society views STEM careers. In addition to dispelling the notion that science is a “man’s world” or the fallacy that men are somehow genetically predisposed to be better in math and science, there is also the need to correct the perception of STEM as a siloed field where you work alone in a lab, when in reality it requires collaboration and cross-sectoral input to spur innovation. Girls need to see more role models in STEM and be exposed to more information to have a better sense of the reality and variety of working in STEM fields.

One participant pointed to the example of a US university, Harvey Mudd College, that redesigned its computer science course to focus on problem-solving, examining questions such as how to bring water to remote villages in Africa. This was part of a successful initiative to substantially increase the number of women in their computer science program (by 2016, more than half of computer science majors in the school were women).<sup>26</sup> If you can reframe science and technology as a means to solve problems that young women care about, then it provides greater motivation for them to enter and continue in STEM fields.

There are a number of programs being conducted with public- and private-sector support that provide training to help teachers be more effective advocates for STEM in schools. Intel, for example, is targeting middle school girls to encourage them to become innovators, and a nonprofit in Japan, SKYLabo, introduces Design Thinking to high school girls through workshops that feature STEM professionals from major corporations such as Panasonic and Uniqlo. STEM camps and other initiatives also help make

science and technology more approachable and “demystify” STEM for girls and can encourage girls to advocate for themselves and have a voice of their own.

Finally, the role of universities is also vitally important. The presence of and mentoring by female professors can play a decisive role in encouraging young women to pursue a career in STEM. It was pointed out that statements of intent are not enough; universities need to have a full-scale, data-based articulation of their institutions' vision for recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in STEM. That requires capacity-building within institutions to ensure that the vision is carried out long-term and is based on these institutions' ongoing self-reflection and analysis of what is and is not working.

### Promoting Equity and Inclusion in STEM Fields

In both the United States and Japan, there are a number of government initiatives to promote STEM by and for women at various levels. On the US side, for example, there is a Women in STEM Caucus in Congress, founded by Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (2021 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue participant). And in recent years, the US Congress passed the Building Blocks of STEM Act, which provides National Science Foundation funding for research on how early childhood education can better encourage girls' participation in STEM and for the development of gender-inclusive computer science programs. The Japanese government, meanwhile, has initiatives such as the Japan Science and Technology Agency's Support for Female Students in Choosing Science Courses program that targets junior high and high school girls, creating opportunities for them to meet with woman researchers and engineers. On the business front, former Minister Noda has been promoting femtech and

26. Oliver Staley, “Harvey Mudd College Took on Gender Bias and Now More than Half Its Computer-Science Majors Are Women,” *Quartz*, August 22, 2016, <https://qz.com/730290/harvey-mudd-college-took-on-gender-bias-and-now-more-than-half-its-computer-science-majors-are-women/>. See also Harvey Mudd College, “Harvey Mudd Launches BRAID Initiative to Increase Diversity in Computer Science,” September 24, 2014, <https://www.hmc.edu/about-hmc/2014/09/24/harvey-mudd-launches-initiative-increase-diversity-computer-science/>.

menotech as areas for greater investment and she also chairs the Femtech Parliamentary League. It would be helpful to compare notes in greater detail on what has and has not been effective to date in the two countries.

Continuing education and reskilling are vital for women's advancement in general. This applies to women who want to reenter the field after pausing their careers, and also to women who may not have started in technology-related areas when they were first recruited but see that as a potential path moving forward. Opportunities to network with other women in the field, in similar industries and from other countries, are also important.

On the business front, women entrepreneurs need greater encouragement and investment in their work. Although the number of women breaking into VC in both countries is on the rise, VC remains heavily dominated by men. The importance of diversity needs to be stressed both to those providing funds and to the start-ups themselves: Diversity = Profitability. Many studies have shown that companies with greater diversity on their boards and in management are more profitable, so there is a financial incentive to promote inclusion.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the recent business focus on ESG (equity, sustainability, and governance) and the SDGs (particularly in Japan) has opened up new opportunities to empower women and to invest in women as human capital.

As in all of our sessions during the 2022 dialogue, the topic of work-life balance was raised again as being critical not only in creating inclusive environments at work that allow women to advance and/or return to the workplace, but also in terms of ensuring that a career in STEM is attractive to young women. The need for parents to teach sons how to contribute around the home in childcare, cooking, cleaning, etc., was mentioned as an important way to change the norms around the division of unpaid labor in the home.

And finally, it was noted that women need to identify the barriers to their advancement and seek solutions themselves. This can include organizing campaigns to ensure women are nominated and selected for leadership roles in professional associations, for example, or looking for and correcting hidden biases in the language of recruitment materials.

### US-Japan Collaboration for Women's Empowerment

As outlined above, the situation facing women in the United States and Japan is marked by more convergence than divergence, as we face common challenges and share many similar objectives. The participants in our dialogue identified many areas where further US-Japan exchanges and collaborations could help improve the status of gender equity and equality in our two countries and beyond.

First and foremost, they strongly recommended that collaboration on gender equity be placed squarely on the bilateral US-Japan collaborative agenda. At past summit meetings, the topic of women's empowerment has been raised, but primarily in the context of supporting education for girls or maternal health in developing countries and there was no mention of how our countries could work together to improve equality and equity at home. The US-Japan CoRe Partnership announced in 2021, for example, addressed cooperation on a wide range of issues, from the digital economy to global health and climate change. But it lacked an indication of how these fields can be pursued in a way that promotes a more equitable distribution of the benefits of that partnership. It is important that a gendered perspective on the CoRe Partnership be developed and introduced to ensure that it reflects the interests and insights of all members of society. JCIE took the first steps toward this goal following the dialogue as we worked with

27. See, for example, Paul Gompers and Silpa Kovvali, "The Other Diversity Dividend," *Harvard Business Review* (July–August 2018), <https://hbr.org/2018/07/the-other-diversity-dividend/>.

the US State Department to insert language on US-Japan cooperation and exchanges on gender equality into the documents for the May 2022 summit between Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden (see Epilogue).

What forms could expanded US-Japan partnership and collaboration on women's empowerment take? Our discussions have identified a number of areas where further research and dialogue would be useful to better understand the impact of government and corporate policies to improve the wellbeing of women and families in both countries. Topics include such areas as how telework and telemedicine can be effectively maintained and integrated into post-pandemic life; how disparities in corporate benefits such as paid family and medical leave can be alleviated; how the ratio of non-regular employees in the female labor force can be reduced; how training and reskilling can be targeted to help women enter better-paying jobs or create on-ramps for women who have been out of the labor market due to family caregiving obligations; and how government policy or peer pressure from companies' partners and affiliates might be applied to improve women's career advancement and economic security. On the educational front, exploring how Title IX has been implemented and the impact it has had in the United States could be useful for Japanese policymakers. Sharing best practices on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of talented women in universities could be another useful exchange.

As noted above, the recent business focus on ESG and the SDGs provides incentives for a greater focus on women's empowerment. There are opportunities to foster more bilateral studies and discussions on the use of quotas and targets regarding diversity on boards and in top management in both countries. Another important area for bilateral cooperation could be the promotion of networking among Japanese and American women entrepreneurs

and VC investors who focus on supporting women entrepreneurs.

US-Japan dialogue and exchange among women in STEM-related businesses could provide useful opportunities for these women to expand their networks and explore mutually beneficial opportunities. For example, the two countries could provide opportunities for women leaders in the STEM fields to interact with younger generations of women to show them what a potential career path in STEM might look like. And both countries should be encouraged to invest more in women-led businesses, including in the femtech field.

Looking beyond the business sector, the two countries should continue to pursue greater US-Japan dialogue and research on promoting women in STEM. The two countries have much to learn from one another on how best to encourage girls to study STEM, how to effectively retain and promote women researchers, and how to provide recurrent and reskilling educational opportunities that contribute to a more viable career path for these women in science, technology, and engineering. Bilateral academic exchanges and fellowship opportunities should be offered that target women in STEM.

Finally, it is critical that both Japan and the United States continue to help one another work toward becoming more representative democracies that include women's voices at all levels of government. The sharing of lessons learned, empowering frameworks, and simple words of mutual encouragement through our dialogue has already made an impact on the participants, and we hope to continue and expand this important network. In particular, the cross-sectoral US-Japan dialogues that draw on the experiences of women in politics, business, academia, policy research, and media have proven to provide unique perspectives and insights, offering solutions and innovations that can be shared across various fields, and should be continued.



# EPILOGUE

Following the conclusion of the 2022 Dialogue, several developments took place that are directly relevant to our discussions.

## Women on the Agenda

JCIE/USA followed up on the group's recommendation and worked with the Japan Desk at the State Department to get gender equity issues onto the agenda at the May summit meeting between Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden. As a result, the issue was mentioned in the Joint Statement and in the Fact Sheet on the CoRe partnership as follows:

### Joint Statement:

*“Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden, recognizing that the pandemic has made promoting gender equity more important than ever, concurred that ensuring that all people, regardless of gender identity, can achieve their full potential is both a moral and strategic imperative, critical to every aspect of society and the economy. The two leaders also emphasized the importance of preventing and addressing gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.”*

### Fact Sheet on the U.S.-Japan Competitiveness and Resilience (CoRe) Partnership:

*“Expanding and Renewing our Partnership: The United States and Japan committed to strengthen further our vibrant people-to-people ties by expanding collaboration and participation in research projects and international exchange programs. Our exchange programs will continue to distribute the benefits of the CoRe Partnership inclusively and equitably, to empower women in our societies. Exchange programs have engaged civil society, and the public and private sectors to encourage women's role in the business sector, government, and STEM fields.”*

JCIE will continue to work to push our governments to flesh these ideas out more fully and to put concrete plans and funding toward these goals.



## In-Person Dialogue in Tokyo

Co-chair Diana DeGette travelled to Japan at the end of May with the Congressional Study Group, and before those events started, she spent a day with JCIE. Participants from the Dialogue gathered for a roundtable discussion and then a lunch meeting was held for Rep. DeGette and Minister Seiko Noda, along with a handful of other participants. The discussions focused on recent developments and the upcoming elections in both countries, as well as next steps for promoting US-Japan cooperation on gender equity.



## Japan's Upper House Election and Cabinet Reshuffle

Japan went to the polls in July 2022 in the wake of the tragic and shocking killing of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was a staunch supporter of US-Japan relations and a strong advocate of women's empowerment. A record number of women candidates were running for the Upper House this year—181 in all, which was 33.2 percent of all candidates. Of those, 35 were victorious, bringing the total number of female members to 63, or 25.4 percent of members (up from 22.8 percent). The previous number was 56, so that represents a gain of 7 seats. However, shortly after the election, Prime Minister Kishida reshuffled his cabinet, in large part as a result of disclosures regarding ties between the Unification Church and Japanese politicians. Unfortunately, the result was a drop in the number of female cabinet members from an already low three down to two. Minister Seiko Noda was among those who lost her post, and Kishida's appointment of a male Diet member to take her place as Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment and of Policies Related to Declining Birthrate as well as Minister of State for Gender Equality did not go unnoticed by the domestic and international press.



## Survey Reports

In preparation for the second session of the 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, surveys were conducted in the United States and Japan of programs and organizations that exist in each country to encourage women's political engagement and leadership. These surveys were intended as a way to share best practices and also as a way to identify gaps. For the US report, we asked Jean Sinzdak, Associate Director of the Center for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, to provide her insights into the state of the field. On the Japan side, a survey was prepared by JCIE/Japan staff, with assistance from the ICHIKAWA Fusae Center for Women and Governance. Both surveys are included here, and Part II of the Japan survey, which lists relevant organizations, can be accessed online on the JCIE website.

# Training Women for Political Leadership: An Overview of Programs and Organizations in the United States

Jean Sinzdak

Center for American Women and Politics  
Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

February 2022

## Current Status of Women's Political Representation in the United States

Women in the United States have made significant progress towards political equality. Notably, in 2020 the country elected the first woman and woman of color as vice president, Kamala Harris, and the past two election cycles have seen record numbers of women running for state legislative, statewide executive, and Congressional seats; the numbers of women now serving in those offices are also at record highs.

Despite this progress, there is substantial work to be done to achieve gender equity in political representation. Men continue hold approximately 7 in 10 elected offices at every level of government around the country. The highest percentage of women serving in public office is at the state legislative level, where women hold 31.3 percent of the seats nationwide. At the federal level, 27.1 percent of Congressional seats

are held by women; 24 women serve in the US Senate (24 percent) and 121 women serve in the House (27.8 percent). Women hold 31 percent of statewide offices, including the 9 women who serve as state governors (which matches the previous record of women holding governorships at any one time). At the local level (in cities with populations over 10,000), women hold 30.5 percent of elected seats.<sup>1</sup>

The record-breaking election cycles of the past two years were jumpstarted by the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. It is worth noting that the story of women's successes in the past two election cycles differed along party lines. Democratic women were largely responsible for the increases in women candidates and officeholders in the 2018 election, but Republican women rebounded from 2018 losses to account for the majority of increases in women's candidacies and officeholding in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

1. Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). 2022. "Current Numbers." New Brunswick, NJ: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University-New Brunswick. <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/current-numbers> (Accessed January 19, 2022).
2. Dittmar, Kelly. 2021. *Measuring Success: Women in 2020 Legislative Elections*. Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

## The Need for Intervention

While women have been running in record numbers, they still remain significantly underrepresented in the overall pool of candidates: women were less than 36 percent of all nominees for congressional and state legislative offices in 2020.<sup>3</sup> To increase the numbers and diversity of women running for office, efforts must be intentional.

Getting more women to run for public office presents particular challenges. Political science research shows that women need an extra push to consider themselves ready to run for office. In a study comparing women's and men's pathways to the state legislatures, the [Center for American Women and Politics \(CAWP\)](#) found that women need more support and encouragement to run for office than men. Twenty-nine percent of women legislators reported that “an organization played a particularly important role in getting them to run for their current office,” compared with 19 percent of male legislators. Nearly half of male legislators are “self-starters” who report that seeking office was entirely their idea, compared to only about one-quarter of women. In contrast, most women (51 percent) were recruited, compared to only 28 percent of men. In addition, women are more likely than their male colleagues to have attended a campaign training or workshop, suggesting that training support may be critical to increasing the number of women in office.<sup>4</sup>

Women are also less likely to be asked to run for office. A study by Professor Richard Fox of Loyola Marymount University showed that women were less likely than their male counterparts to have received a suggestion to run for office, particularly from formal political actors such as elected or party officials. Fox's research shows that among similarly situated professionals in fields (such as law or business) that have produced elected

officials frequently in the past, 36 percent of women, compared with 57 percent of men, see themselves as qualified or very qualified to run for office.<sup>5</sup>

A recent study on children and political ambition illustrated that girls are socialized to have limited political ambition. A team of researchers analyzed data on 1,600 children around the country and found “that children not only perceive politics to be a male-dominated space, but with age, girls increasingly see political leadership as a ‘man's world,’” and noted that the differences started at younger ages and grew more acute as boys' and girls' political knowledge and understanding grew. Schools, the media, families, and peers were among the forces reinforcing these perceptions as they helped socialize the concepts of the male-dominated world of politics. Ultimately, the study found girls are less likely to see traditional politics as a place for them to lead.<sup>6</sup> As the authors note, this research suggests that efforts to shift the culture and change perceptions of who can serve as public leaders must start at the earliest ages. Programs that aim to shift the narrative of politics as exclusively a male domain and that help girls build their leadership skills and actively participate in political spaces could have a tremendous impact on the diversity of representation in future generations.

The solutions to barriers to women's political participation as candidates and officeholders are to intervene at younger ages, to routinely and consistently ask more women to run, to train them so they feel qualified to run, and to provide resources and support at various points on the political engagement spectrum. On the positive side, early indications from recent elections show that women were less likely to “wait their turn” to run for office. Many of those who ran and lost in 2018 went on to run again in 2020, another trend

3. Dittmar, Kelly. 2021. *Measuring Success: Women in 2020 Legislative Elections*. Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

4. Carroll, Susan J., and Kira Sanbonmatsu. 2013. *More Women Can Run: Gender and Pathways to the State Legislatures*. New York: Oxford University Press.

5. Fox, Richard L. 2003. *Gender, Political Ambition, and the Initial Decision to Run for Office*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for American Women and Politics, 2003.

6. Bos, A., Greenlee, J., Holman, M., Oxley, Z., & Lay, J. 2021. “This One's for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls' Political Ambition and Interest.” *American Political Science Review*, 1-18.

that indicates that women may be more successful in coming years in overcoming some of the key barriers to running for office.<sup>7</sup> A combination of active interventions along with cultural shifts and structural changes may herald an even greater increase in women's participation in politics as candidates and officeholders in years to come.

### Overview of Organizations and Programs Aimed at Increasing Political Engagement of Women and Girls in the United States

The modern women's political movement has gone through important growth over the past several years. Some women's organizations, including the Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women, have operated for decades, but in recent years, numerous organizations with a focus on advancing women's political representation have been founded. Significantly, many organizations are focused on diversifying the cadre of women engaged in political leadership, including racial and ethnic diversity.

The increase in women's political engagement over the past five years has helped expand the number of programs and organizations dedicated to women's political advancement. Democratic and progressive women who were particularly motivated during the 2018 election cycle formed many new, largely grassroots groups focused on Democratic and progressive women's political empowerment. Republican women countered that effort during the 2020 election cycle with some new organizations and candidate recruitment efforts specifically aimed at reversing the backslide in the numbers of Republican women elected officials.

The types of organizations focused on political participation of women in this country can be broadly categorized as follows:

1. Campaign trainings for women, including partisan programs (both within the formal political party structure or adjacent to it), ideologically based programs (for example, progressive, conservative, or focused on one issue area or set of issue areas) or targeted constituency programs, and nonpartisan programs
2. Non-gender-specific campaign trainings
3. Organizations for women's political empowerment
4. Women's political action committees (PACs)
5. Organizations of women elected officials
6. Political appointments projects
7. Women's legislative caucuses
8. Youth civic leadership programs specifically for girls and young women

While many organizations have multiple missions or offer programming across these categories, the categories offer a framework for better understanding the landscape of programming and resources available to women seeking to get more politically engaged in the United States. Additionally, most of the programming and other efforts to engage more women in politics and government operate outside any formal political apparatus or party structure, managed by non-profit or volunteer grassroots organizations.

### Campaign Trainings for Women

Currently, over 120 organizations on national, state and local levels provide campaign trainings targeted directly at women candidates. Most campaign trainings cover the key topics that help women become successful candidates for office in the United States, including developing a campaign plan and assembling a campaign team, fundraising, communications and message development, digital campaign strategies (including social media), working with the political parties, and mobilizing voters. Some offer specific programs based on their constituency, such as running in an urban versus a rural area or running

7. Dittmar, Kelly. 2019. *Unfinished Business: Women Running in 2018 and Beyond*. Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

for a judicial seat (judges are only elected in some states, not all, and those races typically have distinct campaigning rules to avoid ethical conflicts of interest).

In terms of audience, the trainings can be divided into three general categories:

1. Partisan programs (both within the formal political party structure or adjacent to it)
2. Ideological (progressive, conservative, focused on one issue area) or targeted constituency programs
3. Nonpartisan programs

### Partisan Campaign Training Programs

The political parties in the United States offer campaign trainings for their candidates. For example, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Association of State Democratic Committees (ASDC) run a [Best Practices Institute](#) that provides trainings to activists and volunteers, party leaders and staff, students and youth organizers, candidates and campaign staff. The Republican National Committee offers [political education programs](#) that provide candidates, campaign managers, and staff with the tools and information needed to organize and run campaigns. Usually these are not gender-specific but open to any candidates who affiliate with the party. At various times, political parties have recognized the need to acknowledge gender diversity, so there have been efforts to recruit and train women within formal party structures, but by and large, the political parties focus on recruiting any viable candidates. Party-adjacent organizations such as the [National Federation of Republican Women](#) and the [National Federation of Democratic Women](#) both offer education and training programs for women within their parties.

Outside of formal party structures, a number of independent but partisan nonprofit organizations recruit and train women to run for office. One of the largest on the Democratic side, [Emerge America](#), recruits and trains Democratic women to run for office, focusing on providing both national and state-based training as well as

building a national network of program alumnae, staff, boards, and volunteers who can help support women through their candidacies at every level and once they are elected. Founded in 2002 in California, there are currently Emerge chapters in 27 states around the country. The Republican counterpart (and predecessor to Emerge America) is the Excellence in Public Service Series. Founded in 1989 as the [Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series](#) in Indiana, this network of state-based programs encourages, mentors, and prepares selected Republican women leaders to seek new levels of involvement in government and politics. Other Excellence in Public Service Series programs include the [Anne Anstine Series](#) in Pennsylvania, the [Lincoln Series](#) in Illinois, and the [Dodie Londen Series](#) in Arizona.

Both Emerge America and the Excellence in Public Service Series focus on state-level networks and trainings to better prepare women to run within the context of their own states or regions. Also central to the programming model for both is that their programs are typically 6–10 months long with cohorts of 25–35 people, allowing them to offer more in-depth, personalized training and to provide more opportunity for networking among cohort members.

### Ideological or Special Interest Group Programs

Many organizations focused on campaign training follow ideological guideposts, only training or supporting women candidates with a particular policy position or set of positions. The [National Women's Political Caucus](#), for example, recruits, trains and supports pro-choice women candidates for elected and appointed offices at all levels of government regardless of party affiliation. Chapters around the country offer trainings.

The [Women's Public Leadership Network \(WPLN\)](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating, organizing, and inspiring women to seek public office. While nonpartisan, WPLN aims to remove barriers and provide support

specifically for center- and right-leaning women seeking elected office and appointments.

[Run For Something](#) works exclusively with progressive millennials ages 35 or younger who are first- or second-time candidates running for local offices (such as school board, city council, county commissioner). While not specifically for women, Run For Something offers a model for creating strategies aimed at addressing a specific segment of the population. As the organization notes: “Run for Something will help recruit and support young diverse progressives to run for down-ballot races in order to build a bench for the future—the folks we support now could be possible members of the House, Senate, and maybe even President one day.”<sup>8</sup>

### Nonpartisan Campaign Trainings for Women

Some campaign trainings are strictly nonpartisan and are open to any and all women interested in running for office. The approach for these programs generally follows a “wide net” model, aiming to promote democratic inclusion and the greatest possible diversity among public leaders, as opposed to those programs that recruit from a specific subset of the population, either by partisan background, ideological beliefs, or geographic location, or some other set of criteria.

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University created [Ready to Run](#)<sup>®</sup> in 1998 to address the underrepresentation of women in New Jersey politics for two reasons. At the time, New Jersey was consistently near the bottom of all states for women’s representation in state legislatures. In addition, research demonstrated that practical intervention was important for helping more women feel inspired to launch campaigns. The New Jersey program now serves as a flagship model for other states, and the Ready to Run<sup>®</sup> National Network has partners in 20 other states and the territory of Puerto Rico. The program aims to provide a comprehensive

curriculum that incorporates the political culture and climate of the locale and uses state and local campaign experts to highlight the specifics of running in a particular state or region, and it is open to women regardless of political party affiliation or position on policy issues. One lesson that has been clear: active intervention is crucial to changing the political climate of a state. When Ready to Run<sup>®</sup> was first launched in New Jersey, the state ranked 39th in the nation for women serving in its legislature. As of January 2022, the Garden State is ranked 26th, after having been ranked as high as 10th in 2012 (the numbers for women’s representation have not declined for New Jersey; other states have increased their numbers to surpass the state). CAWP also developed a special Diversity Initiative to complement Ready to Run<sup>®</sup>. The Center was proactive in raising funds and organizing advisory committees of women leaders in underrepresented minority communities to develop pre-conference programs to address the special challenges faced by women of color, including overcoming cultural barriers, finding mentors and role models, and representing a diverse electorate. The New Jersey-based Diversity Initiative comprises three separate programs: Run Sister Run: Women of the African Diaspora Changing the Political Landscape; Rising Stars: Educating Asian American Women for Politics; and ELLA Wins (Elections & Leadership Latina Academy). Since the inception of the Diversity Initiative, fully half of all participants in the New Jersey Ready to Run<sup>®</sup> program have been women of color. The Diversity Initiative model has been useful for replication in states with diverse populations.

Other nonpartisan training organizations include [Vote Run Lead](#), which recently launched a campaign to get more women to run for state legislatures in every state and offers campaign trainings in several states, and [She Should Run](#), which offers online training and professional development for women who are considering running for office. The [Campaign School at Yale](#)

8. Run For Something. “Our 2019-2020 Strategic Plan.” <https://runforsomething.medium.com/run-for-somethings-2019-2020-strategic-plan-a272e5633849> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

[University](#) is a nonpartisan, issue-neutral leadership program whose mission is to increase the number and influence of women in elected and appointed office in the United States and around the globe.

In addition to the national organizations mentioned above, state and local organizations work to educate and train women to run in their communities. Examples include [Eleanor's Legacy](#), which recruits, trains, and supports pro-choice Democratic women to run for state and local office throughout New York. [Colorado 50/50](#), which was founded in the spring of 2017, is dedicated to achieving gender parity at all levels of office in the state. The Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus offers an annual [Leap into Leadership](#) training for women in the state. [More examples can be found here.](#)

Crucially, the number of available programs varies widely by state, so access to training is uneven. National organizations like those listed above are filling some of these gaps, but ideally access to campaign training would be greater across the board.

### Campaign Trainings (non-gender-specific)

Within the campaign training landscape, there are a number of non-gender-specific campaign trainings, mostly run by nonprofit organizations. Some are ideological or party-based, but others are strictly nonpartisan, such as the [Campaign Management Institute](#) run by the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University.

Some organizations focus on elevating their target constituencies in public leadership. The Veterans Campaign, for example, offers a nonpartisan [candidate training](#) to inspire and train more former members of the military to run for office around the country. The founder, Seth Lynn, is a former service member who had begun a post-military career in public policy and was disappointed by how few current elected officials

had served in the military. Recognizing the need to reach this population, he founded Veterans Campaign with that mission. The Veterans Campaign offers training on how to get involved in civic leadership, laying the groundwork for a campaign or advocacy initiative, message development and communications, fundraising, grassroots operations, digital media, and specific challenges, opportunities, and techniques for veterans & military affiliates. Importantly, participants have the opportunity to hear firsthand accounts of distinguished veterans who have made the transition to civic and political leadership, a crucial piece in helping convince this population to consider careers in "second service." Their candidate training program is non-gender-specific, but they do offer [Women's Programs](#) aimed at women military veterans and military spouses and have partnered with the Center for American Women and Politics on this program in the past.

Other national organizations with a target constituency include [New American Leaders](#), which provides campaign trainings to prepare first- and second-generation Americans to use their power and potential in elected office. LGBTQ Victory Institute offers [candidate and campaign trainings](#) with comprehensive, nonpartisan best practices to present and future LGBTQ candidates, campaign staff, and community leaders.

At the state level, there are also numerous examples of organizations that offer training for their constituents with the goal of advancing those who will be supportive of their policy positions and issues. For example, the New Jersey chapter of the AFL-CIO, one of the largest labor union organizations in the country, offers [candidate training](#) for union members in the state. The Arkansas Farm Bureau, together with the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce, offers [campaign training](#) to help those in the business and farming communities to run for office.

[More examples can be found here.](#)

## Women's PACs

Political action committees (PACs) are organizations formed for the express purpose of raising money to support or defeat candidates for public office. Most PACs represent business, labor or ideological interests.<sup>9</sup> While the number fluctuates from year to year, as of January 2022 there are approximately 100 national and state-based PACs dedicated to supporting women candidates specifically. Most are either party-based, primarily supporting women from Democratic or Republican parties, or ideologically based, supporting women who either support a particular cause or lean one way or the other on the political spectrum. The number of PACs supporting Republican women has grown in the past few years, but Democratic or progressive-leaning PACs still far outnumber them.

The organization widely considered to be the standard-bearer for political action committees supporting women's representation is [EMILY's List](#). EMILY stands for Early Money is Like Yeast (It Makes the Dough Rise). The saying is a reference to a convention of political fundraising that receiving major donations early in a race is helpful in attracting other, later donors. Founded in 1985 by activist Ellen Malcolm, it is solely for pro-choice Democratic women running for office at the federal, state, and local levels. It remains the largest women's PAC in the country, to date raising \$700 million for women candidates.<sup>10</sup> As part of its overall strategy, EMILY's List also works on candidate recruitment and voter outreach efforts in addition to fundraising. While not the first PAC founded to support women candidates, because of its size and reach, EMILY's List serves as a model for a number of smaller state and local PACs around the country.

[Value In Electing Women Political Action Committee \(VIEWPAC\)](#) was founded in 1997 by women Republican members of US Congress and professional women to help elect qualified, viable Republican women to Congress. VIEWPAC is exclusively dedicated to protecting and increasing the number of Republican women in the US House and US Senate. VIEWPAC's goal is to strategically provide financial support where and when it is needed most; whether it be for a vulnerable incumbent or a competitive candidate. Since VIEWPAC began, it has directly contributed and helped to raise over \$20 million for Republican women running for Congress.<sup>11</sup> Another relatively new Republican PAC is Elevate PAC (E-PAC). The 2018 election cycle saw a decline in the number of Republican women serving in US Congress. When closer analysis indicated that Republican women were struggling to win primary elections, Congresswoman Elise Stefanik launched E-PAC to support top Republican female candidates in primaries across the country.<sup>12</sup> This is another example of where early support and active intervention may make a crucial difference in outcomes. Notably, Republican women had a successful 2020 election year, increasing their numbers in Congress and state legislatures. While there are several factors at play, the support and attention from prominent Republican women and organizations was certainly a factor in their success.

In recent years, there has also been an increase in PACs aimed at recruiting more diverse pools of women to run for office. [Higher Heights for America PAC](#) is the only political action committee exclusively dedicated to electing more progressive Black women at the federal and statewide levels and as mayors in the 100 most populated US cities. According to their website, Higher Heights PAC has helped secure the largest

9. OpenSecrets. 2022. "What is a PAC?" Washington, DC: OpenSecrets. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/what-is-a-pac> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

10. EMILY's List. "About Us." Washington, DC: EMILY's List. <https://store.emilyslist.org/pages/about-us> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

11. Value in Electing Women PAC (VIEWPAC). "Some Victories." Alexandria, VA: Value in Electing Women PAC. <https://viewpac.org/> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

12. Elevate PAC. (E-PAC) "About E-PAC." Glen Falls, NY: Elevate PAC. <https://elevate-pac.com/about/> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

number of Black women to ever simultaneously serve in Congress; send the first Black woman to the US Senate in 20 years; elect more Black women to serve as mayors for the country's 100 most populated cities; and select the first Black woman to win a major party nomination for a governor's office.<sup>13</sup> Another example is [PODER PAC](#), a political action committee working to increase the number of Democratic, pro-choice Latinas serving in Congress. Founded in 2008, PODER PAC's strategy is to highlight Democratic Latina federal candidates, connect candidates with a national network of Latinas leaders, and raise early money so that Latina candidates become viable contenders.<sup>14</sup>

Recognizing the need to recruit younger women for political office, [Women Under Forty PAC \(WUF PAC\)](#) supports the efforts of women under forty from all political parties who are running for Congress and the state legislatures. [Vote Mama PAC](#), founded in 2019, is the first PAC in the country dedicated to increasing the political power of Democratic mothers through direct financial support, mentorship, and endorsements.

[More examples of women's PACs can be found here.](#)

## Organizations of Women Elected Officials

As their numbers have grown over the years, so have organizations of women elected officials. These organizations play a variety of roles; some serve as networking hubs, while others offer leadership skill-building and mentorship opportunities. Yet others work together on specific policy initiatives and legislative priorities. The two main types of organizations are women's legislative

caucuses and membership organizations for women elected officials.

## Women's Legislative Caucuses

Within legislatures, caucuses are informal, voluntary organizations of members that exist to discuss ideas and possibly to pursue policy development, research, or education. Legislative caucuses are exclusive to members of that legislature. Scholar Anna Mahoney notes: "Women's caucuses inside institutions that are traditionally dominated by men provide a safe space for marginalized legislators to support each other and develop initiatives apart from those determined by committees and parties. By participating in bipartisan caucuses, members develop relationships and skills that assist them in accomplishing all their legislative goals. Caucuses allow legislators to express shared identities, develop expertise, and become better advocates for key constituencies. Finally, caucuses provide leadership opportunities and are correlated with an increase in women's advancement to formal leadership positions."<sup>15</sup>

At the federal level, the [Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues](#) is a bipartisan membership organization within the House of Representatives committed to advancing women's interests in Congress. Founded in 1977, the Caucus has worked on legislation that impacts the lives of women and children, including the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Violence Against Women Act.<sup>16</sup>

There are currently about 20 women's caucuses in state legislatures around the country. The mission, formal structure, and levels of activity vary widely from state to state. Some caucuses primarily pursue specific legislation that will be supportive of

13. Higher Heights for America PAC. "About Us." New York, NY: Higher Heights for America PAC. <https://www.higherheightsforamericapac.org/about-us/> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

14. PODER PAC. "Our Strategy." Bethesda, MD: PODER PAC. <http://www.poderpac.com/our-strategy.html> (Accessed January 15, 2022).

15. Mahoney, Anna. 2017. "Creating Women's Caucuses in State Legislatures." Cambridge, MA: Scholars Strategy Network. <https://scholars.org/contribution/creating-womens-caucuses-state-legislatures> (Accessed January 10, 2022).

16. Women's Congressional Policy Institute. 2019. "Caucus History & Accomplishments." Washington, DC: Women's Congressional Policy Institute. <https://www.wcpinst.org/our-work/the-womens-caucus/caucus-history-and-accomplishments/> (Accessed January 20, 2022).

women, while others focus on archival preservation and leadership development or networking.<sup>17</sup> The Hawaii Women’s Legislative Caucus sponsors a package of bills during each legislative session; in 2021 the package included bills relating to women’s health, preventing violence against women, and supporting women in the workplace.<sup>18</sup> The [Conference of Women Legislators of the Illinois General Assembly](#) works on empowering all women in the state through a series of initiatives, including educational scholarships for women in Illinois, a civic leadership program for college women, and a partnership with the Girl Scouts to teach its members about public service. The [Wyoming Women’s Legislative Caucus](#) offers regular gatherings, a speakers bureau, candidate development, and an intern/aide program to encourage more Wyoming women to run for office.

[A list of women’s legislative caucuses can be found here.](#)

### Membership Organizations for Women Elected Officials

Organizations of women elected officials largely provide professional development and networking opportunities and promote the leadership and advancement of their members. The [Women’s Legislative Network of the National Conference for State Legislatures](#) is a professional development organization that includes every female state legislator in the 50 states, United States territories, and the District of Columbia, and defines its mission as “promot[ing] the participation, empowerment, and leadership of women legislators.” The [National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women \(NOBEL Women\)](#) is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization primarily composed of current and former black women state legislators as well as many appointed officials. NOBEL Women notes that it was “[o]riginally established in 1985 as a national organization to increase and promote the presence of black

women in government... [and] in recent years has expanded its vision to serve as a global voice to address a myriad of issues affecting the lives of all women.” The [Women Mayors Leadership Alliance of the US Conference of Mayors](#) encourages and develops involvement and leadership potential for women mayors within the Conference of Mayors, as well as offering networking opportunities for women mayors. Other organizations include: the [National Foundation for Women Legislators](#), [Women in Government](#), and [Women of NACo Leadership Network \(National Association of Counties\)](#).

[Additional examples can be found here.](#)

### Organizations for Women’s Political Empowerment

In addition to campaign training and fundraising for candidates, numerous organizations at the national, state, and local levels work to promote women’s political empowerment and engagement in various ways. Strategies deployed by these organizations include research and public education, civic engagement, voter outreach, and recruitment.

### Research and Public Education

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University is the oldest and most definitive source of data and research on women’s political status in the United States. Nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about women’s political participation in the United States, CAWP’s mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about the role of women in American politics, enhance women’s influence in public life, and expand the diversity of women in politics and government.

Since its founding in 1971, CAWP has collected and made publicly available the data on women

17. Mahoney, Anna. 2017. “Creating Women’s Caucuses in State Legislatures.” Cambridge, MA: Scholars Strategy Network. <https://scholars.org/contribution/creating-womens-caucuses-state-legislatures> (Accessed January 10, 2022).

18. Hawaii State Legislature. 2021. “Package Report: Women’s Legislative Caucus.” Honolulu, HI: Hawaii State Legislature.

serving in elected office at the state legislative levels and above, and in 2020, added a new dataset, women in municipal office in cities of 10,000 and above. CAWP's scholars have conducted research on a number of topics related to women's political engagement, including women candidates and campaigns, the impact of women in office, women of color in office, women voters, and women and the political parties. CAWP's education and outreach programs translate research findings into action, addressing women's underrepresentation in political leadership with effective, intersectional, and imaginative programs serving a variety of audiences. Programming includes the annual Ready to Run® Campaign Training for Women, the NEW Leadership® program for college women, and Teach a Girl to Lead®, which aims to teach girls and boys about women's public leadership.

There are several other state-based research institutions that conduct research and provide data on women's representation in their states or regions, some of which are modeled after CAWP. Examples include the [Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University](#), the [Carrie Chapman Catt Center at Iowa State University](#), and the [Center for Women's Leadership at Portland State University](#).

### Leadership Development and Advocacy

Aside from research-based organizations, there are organizations working towards women's empowerment primarily through leadership development and advocacy. Two of the largest feminist organizations in the United States, the [National Organization for Women](#) and the [American Association for University Women](#), have state chapters throughout the country. Both organizations work towards equity for women through advocacy, education, and research, focusing on educational, political, and economic equity as well as racial and social justice initiatives.

Some organizations work to increase the diversity of women serving in office. For

example, the [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies \(APAICS\)](#) is dedicated to ensuring the participation and success of Asian Pacific Americans in government at the national, state, and local levels. Founded in 1994, APAICS promotes, supports, and conducts non-partisan education and informational activities, research, and programs designed to effectively enhance and increase the participation of the Asian Pacific Islander American community in the democratic process. APAICS runs a Women's Collective, which highlights AAPI women currently serving, provides research and data on AAPI women in office, and offers programming to increase their numbers.

The mission of the [National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.](#) is to advocate on behalf of Black women and girls and to promote leadership development and gender equity in the areas of health, education, and economic empowerment. Their civic engagement initiatives include voter education, registration, and rights, and increasing the numbers of Black women candidates running for political office.

[Hispanas Organized for Political Equality® \(HOPE\)](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas in California through leadership, advocacy, and education to the benefit of all communities and the status of women. HOPE's strategies include a Binational Public Service Fellowship, an executive leadership program for Latina professionals who, "through increased competence in national and global economic and security issues, are in a position to make urgent and long-lasting improvements in the lives of Latinas in the United States and all communities." They also offer leadership development programs for college and high school Latinas, as well as public policy conferences such as Latina Action Day, which brings together corporate and community Latina leaders and elected officials on public policy affecting Latinas in California.

## Recruitment-Focused Organizations

As noted, research shows that women are less likely to get recruited to run for office. Many women's PACs and political leadership organizations use recruiting as one of their tools, but [Close the Gap California \(CTGCA\)](#) uses recruitment as its main organizing principle. Founded as a statewide campaign to achieve gender balance in the California legislature by recruiting progressive women to run, CTGCA recruits women in targeted districts and prepares those women to launch competitive campaigns. California is a term-limited state, which means that organizers know which seats in the legislature will be open in which years. Although not all states have term limits, CTGCA provides a model for using direct, targeted recruitment as the primary strategy for advancing women's political representation. It is also worth noting that targeted recruitment is a tool that the political parties already use as part of their efforts, with varying degrees of prioritization and success. Close the Gap California showcases a way for outside organizations to impact the process in addition to or in lieu of any formal party efforts. According to CTGCA, their strategy has four steps:

1. Strategic targeting of legislative districts, including a detailed analysis of legislative districts to determine open or winnable seats
2. Prospect identification: Using allies and networks, CTGCA builds a list of viable candidates with progressive values, and vet the names with local leaders
3. The "ask": CTGCA then reaches out to prospective candidates and asks them to consider running
4. Candidacy exploration and decision: CTGCA works with the prospective candidates through the decision-making process, including a structured exploration of the district, the requirements of a successful campaign and the legislative job itself

## Voter Education and Outreach

Several organizations work towards engaging women as voters, civic educators, and advocates for democracy. The most recognized of these organizations is the [League of Women Voters of the United States \(LWV\)](#). LWV encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. One of its primary activities is work to register voters, provide voters with election information through voter guides, and host candidate forums and debates. LWV currently has more than [700 chapters](#) around the country.

[Black Girls Vote](#) is a nonpartisan organization designed to represent the concerns and interests of Black women. Its activities include voter education, poll worker training, and a collegiate ambassador program providing peer-to-peer education on the electoral process.

[Additional examples of women's political empowerment organizations can be found here.](#)

## Appointments Projects

Some organizations offer programs that encourage women to seek positions on government boards and commissions. The North Carolina Institute for Political Leadership, for example, offers a one-day workshop, [Women on Board](#), that helps demystify the process of getting appointed to and serving on local, county, and state public boards and energizes women to seek appointed positions in their communities, in addition to improving their confidence and networking skills.

The [Center for American Women and Politics hosts the New Jersey Bipartisan Coalition for Women's Appointments \(BCWA\)](#), a statewide, bipartisan group of prominent women and organizations convened in years when there is an open seat for governor. The purpose of BCWA is to ensure the placement of women in key positions throughout state government. BCWA's goals

are to create the expectation within both major parties that women will play significant roles in government, both in the cabinet and on boards and commissions; help the next governor identify a strong and diverse pool of women candidates for positions within the new administration; educate New Jersey women about the thousands of state, county and municipal appointed positions available; and encourage New Jersey women to submit their résumés for gubernatorial appointments and provide them the tools and information they need to seek appointments.

United We, a nonprofit organization in Missouri, offers [The Appointments Project](#)<sup>®</sup>, which works to empower women and strengthen communities in that state by increasing the gender diversity of civic boards and commissions.

### Civic Leadership Programs for Girls and Young Women

According to research by CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) and others, girls and young women are committed civic actors, leading their male counterparts on many indicators of civic engagement including volunteering, membership in community organizations, and voting. Yet women continue to lag in elected officeholding, and CIRCLE identified five relevant “gaps” that may contribute to this gender leadership gap:

- an interest gap, with young women much less interested in political engagement than their male counterparts;
- a confidence gap, with women far less likely to claim some of the personal qualities that society values in leaders;
- an expectations gap, because young women are less likely than their male peers to have been encouraged to pursue public leadership,

despite the fact that women are as likely as men to be encouraged to run for student government positions;

- race and class gaps, since women of color and economically disadvantaged women are left far behind their counterparts in most indications of civic participation; and
- an assessment gap, where standardized tests that ignore civic motivation or leadership and collaboration skills make it difficult to understand why there is a gender leadership gap or measure progress toward closing it.<sup>19</sup>

Among the challenges of addressing this issue are the lack of visible and accessible role models, lack of equitable access to leadership programs (especially for marginalized populations), the absence of attention to civic education broadly and to women’s political leadership specifically within the k-12 education system, and the need for widespread programs dedicated to civic education and to gender and civic leadership. Fortunately, there are a handful of organizations that provide programming related to civic education and leadership specifically for girls.

The American Legion Auxiliary, an organization of US military veterans’ spouses and family members, offer [Girls State](#) and Boys State in all 50 states in the country. Female high school students who have completed their junior year are competitively selected and sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units for Girls State, where they learn about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government.

[Girl Scouts of America](#), which was founded 120 years ago, has long emphasized civic leadership as part of its programming, and noted in 2017 that its alumnae made up the majority of women in leadership positions in the US government at the time, including 76 percent of women senators, 54 percent of women representatives, and

19. Kawashima-Ginsberg, Kei and Nancy Thomas. 2013. “Fact Sheet: Civic Engagement and Political Leadership among Women – a Call for Solutions.” Medford, MA: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE.) [https://circle.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/2019-12/civic\\_engagement\\_political\\_leadership\\_women\\_2013.pdf](https://circle.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/2019-12/civic_engagement_political_leadership_women_2013.pdf) (Accessed January 19, 2022).

four of the five women governors.<sup>20</sup> Girl Scouts can earn Citizen badges when they engage in civic action, including Public Policy, Behind the Ballot, and Inside Government badges. The badges foster civic skills for girls ages 7–18, such as how to take part in a civil debate, make group decisions, and get involved in government.<sup>21</sup> The [Girl Scout Gold Award](#) represents the highest achievement in Girl Scouting and also a potentially valuable entrée into public leadership. Girls work on a two-year, seven-step process to solve a community problem—not only in the short term, but also for the future. An experiential program like the Girls Scouts’ Gold Award teaches young people the power of policy and government and how to advocate for change, not just in games or simulations but in the real world as well. For example, one Girl Scout undertook a project related to truck safety on a local highway; her research and advocacy—and a fatal truck accident—ultimately led the state to ban big rigs from the highway in question.<sup>22</sup>

The Girl Scout Council of the Nation’s Capitol offers a [DC Congressional Aide program](#) in which Girl Scouts are placed for one week in congressional offices, including those of Senators and Representatives, during the summer in a 40-hour internship. They learn first-hand about the nation’s political process and help members of Congress and their staff with daily assignments behind the scenes.

Another long-standing girls’ leadership organization, Girls, Inc., which was founded in 1864, launched [She Votes 2020](#) in conjunction with the anniversary of women’s suffrage in the United States. She Votes 2020 is an educational, nonpartisan initiative to support girls of all ages to gain the skills and confidence to be future voters, candidates, and political leaders. She Votes covered a variety of topics, including a main focus on the importance of women in politics. Girls explored

representative democracy, the representation by women and people of color in government, and various leadership qualities and female leaders. Girls also explored suffrage and who qualifies to vote now, how to become a voter, and evaluating candidates and confronting gender stereotypes. Girls also participated in activities that allowed them to put themselves in the position of a candidate, including creating a candidate speech, analyzing and creating campaign ads, and learning to gain financial and other support through networking.

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University offers [NEW Leadership](#)<sup>®</sup>, a national nonpartisan program to educate college women about politics and leadership and encourage them to become effective leaders in the political arena. The six-day residential program educates college women about the important role that politics plays in their lives, introduces them to successful women leaders, and encourages them to become more involved in the political process. The NEW Leadership<sup>®</sup> National Network is a partnership of colleges and universities across the country dedicated to developing more women leaders. Network partners have established NEW Leadership<sup>®</sup> programs for college women in their state or region. There are currently 21 NEW Leadership<sup>®</sup> partner programs around the country.

Newer organizations have focused on girls and public leadership more specifically. Running Start is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that trains young women to run for public office. [Running Start’s](#) high school program provides students the opportunity to participate in a campaign simulation, learn from high-level mentors, and meet with members of Congress. Running Start also offers two college programs: Elect Her, a daylong training for college women on how to run for student government on their campus, and

20. Girl Scouts of the USA. 2017. “Girl Scouts of the USA Celebrates Girls’ Legacy of Civic Engagement at 2017 Macy’s Flower Show.” New York, NY: Girl Scouts of the USA. <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/press-room/2017/girl-scouts-celebrate-legacy-of-civic-engagement-macys-flower-show.html> (Accessed January 20, 2022).

21. Girl Scouts of the USA. 2020. “The Citizen Badges Every Girl Scout Should Earn.” New York, NY: Girl Scouts of the USA. <https://blog.girlscouts.org/2020/06/Citizen-Badges.html> (Accessed January 20, 2022).

22. O’Neil, Megan. (2009, December 24). Girl scout wins national recognition. *The LA Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/socal/la-canada-valley-sun/news/tn-vsl-xpm-2009-12-24-lnws-malia1224-story.html> (Accessed January 20, 2022).

a Congressional Fellowship, in which students spend a semester interning for a woman member of Congress along with weekly trainings on how to run for office.

[IGNITE](#) launched in 2010 to address the lack of women in elected office by building a pipeline of next generation of women political leaders. IGNITE's programming includes college chapters that organize activities like voter registration drives, policy workshops, and meetings with elected women and candidates. IGNITE provides regular virtual and in-person training to support individual college chapters. IGNITE's high school programs provide age-appropriate curricula to train girls and young women to understand how government works, why it matters, and how to analyze the policy issues that impact their lives. Girls meet with elected women and candidates from their communities who serve as role models.

## Conclusion

The landscape for women's political empowerment programs has grown in recent years, with numerous organizations and programs dedicated to training women to run for office. As noted earlier, though, access can vary widely depending on geographic location, partisan approach, ideological backgrounds, and constituencies. Ideally, programs would be more readily available to a wider swath of the population. In addition, much more could be done to teach young people about politics and government at earlier ages. Finally, political party organizations, with the most direct access to candidates and potential candidates, could invest significantly more time in cultivating more diverse pools of their candidates, including by gender.

*For further information on organizations belonging to each category of the survey, visit the CAWP "Women's Political Power Map" at <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/programs/womens-political-power-map>.*

# A Survey of Efforts to Support Women's Political Participation and Advancement in Japan

Hideko Katsumata and Hifumi Tajima

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/JAPAN)

February 2022

This survey was compiled to facilitate discussions at the 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue by examining existing initiatives to increase female politicians in Japan and exploring what efforts are needed in the future. The original report comprised an overview report and a second section that introduced a list of various organizations and activities in the private sector that support women's political participation and advancement. The second section is available online at <https://www.jcie.org/2022-survey-womens-political-participation-japan>.

While many groups are working to address issues faced by women, this report focuses on those whose activities include training and educating female politicians, or that are pursuing policy issues to promote female political participation. It should be noted that this is intended to be a survey rather than original research, and we have drawn many suggestions from Women's Political Leadership-US Study Tour Report (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, March 2018) by Professor Mari Miura of Sophia University and Professor Ki-Young Shin of Ochanomizu University. In addition, some of the listings of organizations and activities have been reprinted from the 2020 Directory of Women's Organizations, with the permission of the [ICHIKAWA Fusae Center for Women and Governance](#).

## 1. The Current Situation in Japan

In March 2021, the World Economic Forum released its World Gender Gap Index for Japan. Based on its scores in four categories—economy, politics, education, and health—Japan was ranked 120th out of 156 countries (with an overall score of 0.656 on a scale of 0 to 1), and it scored particularly low in the political and economic sectors (147th and 117th, respectively). Although Japan's score has actually been increasing, its ranking has been decreasing. This illustrates that Japan is lagging while other countries are accelerating their efforts toward gender equality. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union survey on the proportion of female members of parliament worldwide, as of October 2021, Japan had the lowest percentage of female members of a Lower House in the G7 at 9.9 percent, ranking 165th, while the average for all 190 countries in the world was 25.5 percent.

In Japan's 2021 Lower House election, only 186 out of 1,051 candidates (17.7 percent) were women, which is almost the same as the election four years prior. Of the 465 Representatives elected, 45 were women (a decrease of two), including 10 newcomers, and their percentage dropped to 9.7 percent. The May 2018 Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field stipulates that the

number of male and female candidates should be as equal as possible, and there is a growing quota movement that encourages equal numbers of men and women on various fronts. In addition, the Cabinet Office has called for more than 35 percent of candidates to be women by 2025. However, given the recent trends in elections, it will likely be difficult to achieve those targets.

On November 10, 2021, NHK's Politics Magazine summarized the House of Representatives election as one in which "the number of female Diet members is not increasing," and conducted a poll on the proportion of female Diet members. A total of 42 percent of men and women surveyed found the ratio to be "too low," while 46 percent answered that "the ratio is not a problem." Looking at the breakdown by age group, 45–56 percent of respondents in their 50s and above answered that the ratio was "too low," while 38–56 percent said "the ratio is not a problem." In contrast, 32–33 percent of respondents aged 18 to 40 answered "too low" while 61–63 percent answered that "the ratio is not a problem." The gender of respondents did not seem to factor into responses.

The above results can be taken to imply that the younger generation does not necessarily think that the number of female Diet members should be increased just for the sake of changing the ratio, but rather that there is a need for both men and women to have a greater awareness of political participation and diversity. However, the harsh reality is that fewer than 10 percent of elected representatives are women. And given that just 4.2 percent of senior management positions among national government officials are filled by women, and that women comprise only 6.2 percent of executive positions at listed companies in Japan, clearly the low participation and status of women is not limited to the political field. There is no doubt that increasing the number of female Diet and local assembly members, and enhancing women's political participation, will continue to be an important issue.

## 2. Previous Study Examining US Models to Inform Japan's Women's Political Empowerment Efforts—Miura and Shin's US Study Trip Report

In the United States, the 2020 elections for both the House of Representatives and Senate resulted in a record high of 144 women members, up 35 percent from two years prior. The ratio of women to the 535 total members of both houses of Congress increased to 27 percent, placing it 72nd in the world. However, the United States still ranks 6th among the G7.

Mari Miura, professor at Sophia University, and Ki-Young Shin, professor at Ochanomizu University, conducted research on various activities that support women's political participation in the United States, and reported their findings in *Women's Political Leadership—US Study Trip Report* (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, March 2018). In the report, Miura and Shin discussed women's political leadership in the United States and efforts to address related issues, analyzing the factors that have prevented the ratio of congresswomen from increasing and various potential approaches to overcoming the situation, as described in the paragraphs that follow below. Their analysis provides insight into what lessons, if any, Japan might be able to learn.

In considering this issue, it is necessary to look at both supply and demand—how serious the political parties are about increasing the number of female legislators, and how many women want to become legislators—but efforts to encourage women to run for office are particularly advanced in the United States (see the companion piece to this report, prepared by Prof. Jean Sinzdak). Miura and Shin pointed to several factors in the United States that are directly applicable to Japan as well, including (1) a single-seat constituency system that makes it difficult for women to run for office, (2) an election system that is not easily changed, and (3) weak support for a quota system.

One noted difference is that in the United States, party leaders do not usually make official endorsement decisions as they do in Japan; rather,

those who win the primary election receive an official endorsement. Anyone can run in the primary, but the first hurdle is to have women who are willing to run, have the financial resources, and can put together a campaign team. Various training activities focused on women legislators have therefore been developed to find and train women who meet these conditions. In contrast, it is very rare in Japan that a new candidate receives such training before the campaign.

Generally speaking, there are two skills required to run and win an election: (1) hard skills, including practical knowledge and skills related to campaigning and fundraising, and (2) soft skills, such as leadership preparedness. There are also three “Cs” that are also important as necessary leadership qualities: confidence, capacity, and connections. Various initiatives have been undertaken to help women develop these skills and qualities in the United States. Of particular note is the role of American universities, which have developed systematic curricula and are providing practical candidate training programs.

Women are often placed in environments that make it difficult for them to gain confidence. Education from an early age is necessary for women to take on leadership roles in politics and beyond, and many US organizations have developed programs that aim to empower women and girls of all ages through education and training.

In the United States, the bipartisan Women’s Caucus was created in the 1950s, and it was in 1985 that EMILY’s List was established with the clear objective of sending Democratic women to Congress. Since then, organizations to promote and support women in politics have emerged one after another. These organizations have clarified what is needed to increase women’s participation in politics and are developing the necessary programs to meet their respective objectives. As mentioned above, universities have made great progress in developing curricula and leading training and outreach programs beyond the ivory tower. It is important even in academic analysis to change the mindset and self-confidence of

women themselves, and these programs include such support.

Many organizations in Japan working on women’s issues have a strong element of being volunteer groups rather than being professional organizations, making it difficult to develop programs to meet diverse needs and to carry out ongoing, strategic initiatives. It is critical that Japanese society recognize the importance of promoting such efforts and that it support the sector in terms of human resource development and financial resources. In this respect, there is much to be learned from the US experience in addressing this challenge.

### 3. The Challenges to Political Participation as Experienced by Female Diet Members

In 2017, JCIE brought a delegation of women’s Diet members to the United States, where they visited Congress and exchanged views with several Congresswomen, including Democratic Congresswoman Diana DeGette, on issues facing female legislators. Some of the key challenges they discussed are outlined here.

1. Compared to male legislators, who have the advantage of having an “old boy network,” it is more difficult for women in the United States to raise funds. The Japanese female Diet members agreed that fundraising is a big challenge, particularly for women in the opposition party. They mentioned that, compared to their American counterparts, who must raise a significant amount of campaign funding to cover such expenses as advertising through TV and other media, posters and campaign goods, and paying temporary campaign staff, all of which is strictly limited in Japan. The Japanese Diet members may have a bit easier time managing the funding challenge because of this difference in campaign rules.
2. The difficulties of election campaigning were also pointed out. In both countries, incumbents have an advantage, and it is challenging—especially for

- young female candidates—to oust incumbent male legislators who are more experienced in terms of campaign structure, staffing, and media relations.
3. The impact on family was also a topic of discussion. The reality is that it is difficult to balance one's political career and family life, sometimes forcing women to sacrifice their family life. In Japan, where there is a common belief that women should protect their families, women with families are hesitant to continue pursuing their political careers. On this point, US Congresswomen encouraged the Japanese female Diet members, saying, "There's no need to feel guilty," and adding, "It's important to have a support network in your political career, and especially to have a supportive husband."
  4. The delegation learned about such US organizations and initiatives as EMILY's List, Emerge, and Running Start, which support women's participation and training in politics. It was pointed out that such support is of vital importance. The Japanese female Diet members shared that, unfortunately, Japan still does not have a strong foundation or underlying support frameworks for women's political participation.
  5. In Japan, there is a movement to introduce a quota system, and while female Diet members and private sector groups are actively engaged in efforts to achieve that goal, no such legislation has been enacted yet. The US side believes that it is unlikely that the system will be introduced in America, as people may think that women were elected because of the system rather than because of their own merits or because of a change in consciousness or social structure.
  6. The US Congresswomen shared that the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (Women's Caucus) was organized more than 40 years ago, and despite differences between Democratic and Republican party policies, members cooperate on daily congressional activities and women's issues. In Japan, caucuses related to women's issues are a recent phenomenon, having been established only in the past decade.
  7. One thing that the Japanese Diet members noted that they hoped to learn about from the US side

is the role of universities and research centers on women's issues, which break down stereotypes by gathering objective data on women's roles in politics, economics, and society. They also provide training for female politicians based on such research.

In June 2019, JCIE's Diet Women's Study Group discussed leadership challenges facing female legislators in the international community with Silvana Koch-Mehrin, a former German politician and president of Women Political Leaders, a network of female politicians worldwide. In Europe, more female politicians hold top leadership positions at the national and international levels than in other regions, and they are aiming to increase the number of female politicians at all levels and to focus on achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not just SDG-5 on gender equality.

Ms. Koch-Mehrin introduced a number of research findings on non-legislative barriers, and pointed out that in order to eliminate stereotypes, it is important for men to consider these issues as well, and to build support systems through cross-partisan and cross-national networks. The findings included the following:

1. In terms of social structure, there is a perception that women are not leaders.
2. Family approval comes first for women.
3. It is more difficult for female politicians to raise campaign funding than for men.
4. Media attitudes about appearance have a major impact on women.
5. The short history of women's political participation makes it difficult for them to have informal networks.

During that meeting, the Japanese female Diet members expressed their sense that politicians grounded in stereotypes make up the overwhelming majority, and that Japanese politics have denied the voice of the minority. Politics is seen to be a man's job in Japan. Politicians tend to emphasize male logic and reflect the production side of the economy, making it difficult for women's

opinions on the consumer side to get through. A second point they raised was that pregnancy and childbirth among Diet members are considered taboo and a hindrance to political activities. In addition, in conjunction with election system problems, the Diet women raised such practical issues as the predominance of sexual harassment by senior politicians and constituents.

These leaders were committed to the idea that it is up to them to generate change, and it is their mission to address women's issues. Participants also expressed their view that, an environment and social conventions where women's abilities are viewed negatively undermines Japan's national interests, and that for Japan to live and prosper will require a paradigm shift from the current male-oriented culture to multicultural coexistence.

The dialogues with US Congresswomen and with a European female political leader confirmed that many of the challenges women face in political participation and leadership are shared across national borders, and that female politicians must therefore work to bring about social change through international networks. Ms. Koch-Mehrin concluded by sharing the words of former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet: "When one woman comes into politics, she changes, but when many women come into politics, politics changes."

#### 4. Factors Hindering Women's Political Participation in Japan: Sociocultural, Socioeconomic, and Political Barriers

In order to consider what can be done to improve women's political participation, it is useful to first organize the key factors impeding their progress into three categories: sociocultural barriers, socioeconomic barriers, and political barriers.

##### 1) Sociocultural Barriers

A survey by Japan's Gender Equality Bureau revealed the following results:

- The largest percentage of men and women respondents (66 percent) cited deeply rooted social norms, customs, and traditions regarding the division of roles between men and women as the cause of male preferential treatment in society, as well as the delay in women's political participation and advancement. The percentage was especially high among those in their 30s to 50s, at more than 70 percent. Additional causes given were: Japan's work-first and company-centered mindset, the lack of opportunities for women to demonstrate their abilities, and the lack of childcare and nursing care systems. Similar surveys in other countries also found that social conventions were the first reason given, but in the United States and Europe, the lack of childcare and nursing systems came in second.
- In addition to the above, other findings included (a) there is no system to properly evaluate women who are demonstrating their abilities, (b) there is little awareness of gender discrimination as a human rights issue, and (c) taxation and social security systems that favor full-time housewives encourage the division of roles between men and women.

In April 2021, the nonprofit organization Plan International released a report entitled, *Women's Leadership in Japan 2021*. One survey question asked, "Would you want to take on a role as a future leader?" in response to which 18 percent of men and 9.4 percent of women answered with a clear: "I would like to." Those in the middle made up 58.1 percent, and of those who responded, "I would not like to," 18.2 percent were men and 21.8 percent were women. Some see this as a lack of self-confidence among women concerning their ability to lead, and others think that women do not want to stick their necks out, but it is necessary to find out what makes women hesitate. The report emphasizes the importance of early leadership and gender education.

Another organization, the Z-Sedai Kaigi (Generation Z Council), surveyed 2,800 people between the ages of 16 and 35, which includes those who are considered to be members of Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2015) and Millennials

(born between 1980 and 1995). According to the survey, Generation Z has a greater sense of gender equality, but at the same time also has a greater proportion of those with a traditional work ethos, such as wanting to work for the same company for a long time. Rather than being ideological, Generation Z's sense of gender equality is a more innate sense that there is no need to distinguish between men and women in daily life. Millennials are "wait-and-see followers" in terms of values and lifestyle. It remains to be seen what values a generation who grew up in a completely different social environment will use to move society when it is their generation's turn to take the lead.

No matter how the world is transformed, one would hope that out of respect for human values, we will see reforms to Japan's work-life balance, gender role divisions, the current employment system based on the premise of male breadwinners, and the social security system, and will change the common conventions of a biased society.

## 2) Socioeconomic Barriers

It is said that Japanese women spend more than four times as much time as men doing unpaid domestic work, making it more difficult for them to engage in paid work or to increase their working hours, and costing them opportunities for career development. Women account for only 15 percent of the total executives and managers in the workforce, and women's income is, on average, about half that of men.

It is said that women's political participation is an important factor in eliminating the gender gap. An increase in the number of female Diet members would likely result in an increase in spending on welfare-related policies, the environment, and education. In addition, women in politics work more strongly than men to overcome the negative aspects of society, including the gender gap. At the same time, they tend to push for reductions in defense spending and agricultural and corporate subsidies, so as a result, there are two sides to this issue.

In an article titled, "Women's Advancement and Political Participation in Global Society," in *Global Business Journal* (2016), Waseda University Professor Mieko Nakabayashi stated, "Social systems and policies will have a great impact on women's participation. Even if we advocate for an increase in the number of women in leadership positions, unless we develop a solid foundation of female workers, then we cannot develop a reserve pool of leaders to draw on." She pointed out an underlying contradiction, however. "If the gender gap can be narrowed and more women participate in the labor market, economic growth can be expected to follow. However, many women will not be able to play an active role unless a balance is ensured in terms of unpaid domestic and community labor, such as child-rearing and long-term care, which have traditionally been the responsibility of women. At the same time, while women's political participation may create an environment where women are more likely to participate, if it worsens the budget deficit then it may have a negative impact on international competitiveness."

Even if there are such concerns, it is important to acknowledge that corporations and civil society need to create a social climate that fosters female leaders, and that a reserve army of potential female Diet candidates will emerge from this.

## 3) Political Barriers

In addition to the numerous sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that hinder the development of female politicians described above, it has also been pointed out that there are further barriers to women's political participation in the political world itself.

It has been said that the first issue of the Japanese election system that needs to be examined is the Public Offices Election Act and the single-seat constituency system. When it comes to the question of increasing female legislators, the real issue is more one of conventional customs, such that

politics are largely conducted based on male-centric norms and values. The idea that “politics is a man’s job” is an idea that is still accepted by many male legislators and in society as a whole, and as a result, the most fundamental challenge is to dispel this idea.

In the United States, the first step in running for office is to win the preliminary election, but in Japan, the first step is to obtain the party’s official endorsement. The reality is that it is difficult for newcomers to run for office because each political party is forced to give priority to incumbents when fielding candidates. This is especially true structurally when a party seeks to maintain long-term control of the government.

There has been a great deal of criticism recently of excessive money in politics, and the need for increased transparency in spending and decreased money for campaigns has become a focus of people’s attention. Candidates are required to raise about \$200,000–\$300,000 at a minimum to cover the various direct expenses that will be incurred during a 12-day campaign period. Incumbents have their supporters clubs and a legal organization that can receive political contributions, but for newcomers—especially, young women—who do not have such resources, funding, and support for election campaigns are scarce, particularly for opposition parties. A female candidate was reportedly told, “I will endorse you, but you have to do everything on your own.” It is also reported that female candidates are held to more stringent standards when seeking endorsements.

Advocates of gender equality have requested that each party set a target for the ratio of female legislators and introduce a quota system. But it is difficult to break through without the support of persuasive top male leaders. A new wave with new ideas and action can be the driving force behind the changing of conservative politics, and such a new wave often comes from civil society activities to support more women entering politics. It also requires a culture in which citizens are more interested in politics.

It has been pointed out that even after being elected, while legislators are able to exercise

their power in the political world, they have limited opportunities to cultivate a deeper policy understanding. Female legislators have difficulty accessing information and networks due to the lack of transparency of what is termed the “old boy network,” through which policy decisions are often made outside of the official channels of committees and conferences. Some women politicians also note that the way the legislative schedule is organized is not very friendly to female legislators, and that they must engage in political activities in a more masculine way than even male legislators in order to be recognized, which sometimes results in sacrifices in their home life.

## 5. Activities of Japanese Organizations Supporting Women’s Political Participation and Advancement

Part II of this survey, which is available on the JCIE website, introduces the activities of various organizations in Japan that support women’s political participation and advancement. In this section, we will examine the significance of the activities as they have developed over time.

The ICHIKAWA Fusae Center for Women and Governance and the [I-Josei Kaigi \(Women’s Council I\)](#), established in the 1960s, were postwar pioneers in promoting women’s political participation, and with Fusae Ichikawa, a member of the House of Councillors, leading the way, they worked to achieve women’s rights, including political participation, and to improve the status of women.

The French sociologist Alain Touraine differentiated between “feminism” and the “women’s movement,” noting that the former was seeking everyday rights for women’s freedom and equality, while the latter was a cultural movement aimed at changing values by having women rise up in protest against a system that perceives and controls them as subordinates. In the 1970s, the wave of the US women’s liberation movement, which gained momentum along with the global

trend, reached Japan as well, bringing new developments in the field.

In Japan, two movements emerged during this period: the “feminist movement,” which sought to expand women’s rights within the existing system, and the “Japanese liberation movement” known as “women’s lib.” Japan’s women’s lib movement gained momentum with its campaign to stop an amendment to the Eugenic Protection Law that would have tightened restrictions on abortion, but the proposed amendment was withdrawn in 1974 after it failed to pass, and the women’s lib movement came to an end.

The women’s movement in Japan was given a new direction when the United Nations announced the start of the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985) at the 1st UN World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975. In the same year, the Liaison Group for Realizing the Resolution of the Japan Conference of the International Women’s Year (later called the International Women’s Year Liaison Group) was formed with Fusae Ichikawa as its chair.

Around that time, a new trend emerged with activities that were different in nature than those of the existing women’s movements. In 1977, the [Japan People’s Political Network](#) was organized, which was noteworthy for its concrete activities aimed at sending women to local assemblies. Also known as the “proxy movement,” this was a social movement started by the Seikatsu Club Consumers Cooperative. The club was involved in two types of activities: workers’ collectives to promote women’s entrepreneurship, and ecological activities to “provide safe organic vegetables for families and children.” The club was able to garner 220,000 signatures on a petition requesting that a local assembly enact an ordinance to ban environmentally dangerous synthetic detergents, but when the ordinance failed to pass, they felt the need to participate in political decisions themselves and started a regional network movement. They decided to send their own representative to the assembly in order to reflect their own life and region and to build the type of community they desired, and to achieve “homemade policies”

by ordinary housewives. They formed a network as consumers, taxpayers, and everyday people to send representatives to the local assemblies to participate in policymaking. To make this happen, fellow housewives helped the representative candidates concentrate on campaigning by taking on such tasks as taking the candidate’s children to and from kindergarten during the election campaign. The aim is to expand citizen politics and change politics and society by having ordinary citizens run for parliament one after another and set the rule to replace each other with the next person after two or three terms. At present, there are 10 networks across the country, and 370 people are serving as local assembly members. Although it was a ground-breaking citizens’ movement, one of the activists said that it faces a contradiction in that they cannot use their influence as veterans in the parliament due to the rule that they must be replaced after two or three terms.

Around the same time, in 1979, the [Matsushita Institute of Government and Management](#) was established by Panasonic founder Konosuke Matsushita. Based on the idea that “we must cultivate true leaders to guide Japan and the world to prosperity,” the school aims to help students create their own vision of an ideal society and devote themselves to making that vision a reality. It is a political prep school in a sense, with more than 40 years of history and a well-developed curriculum. As of January 2022, the school has produced 70 members of national and local assemblies, prefectural governors, and even prime ministers and party leaders. It is not an organization that targets women, and there are only 3 women among those 70 politicians, but there is much to be learned from the institute’s activities and management in terms of the institutionalized training of future politicians.

In the summer of 1997, six women leaders from Japan visited EMILY’s List in Washington DC. Impressed by the organization’s activities, they returned to Japan and launched [Win Win \(Women in New World, International Network\)](#) in 1999 with the hope of raising seed money to send as many women as possible into politics

and become a driving force for social change. EMILY's List—EMILY stands for “Early Money Is Like Yeast,” which means that early financial support works like yeast to make bread rise—is the largest Democratic campaign support group in the United States that identifies women running for office and provides a variety of support, including financial assistance. Win Win, by contrast, has adopted a system to financially support candidates who are enthusiastic about women's rights and improving women's status and who place importance on self-determination, regardless of party affiliation, age, occupation, etc. In Japan's Lower House election in 2017, Win Win recommended 23 candidates, 13 of whom won. In addition to its activities to send legislators to parliament, the organization is holding study sessions and awareness-raising activities to promote the introduction of a quota system for the Diet.

In 2010, the Japanese government's Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality endorsed the goal of increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions in all fields to at least 30 percent by 2020 (a goal that had been decided by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2003), and many women's groups have been actively working to achieve this goal. One of them was the Association to Promote Gender Quotas, or Q no Kai, which was organized mainly by Win Win members in 2012. As of 2012, Japan's ranking in terms of women's political participation was a very low 110th out of 135 countries. It was therefore with a sense of urgency that the [Association to Promote Gender Quotas](#) and other women's groups began to lobby the Diet, which led to the formation in 2015 of a bipartisan parliamentarians' association for the promotion of women's political participation and advancement. The association is chaired by a male member of the House of Representatives, Masaharu Nakagawa, and is a joint effort by men and women in the Diet. When the Act on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field (Equal Opportunity Law for Candidates) was enacted in 2018, there were cheers from those who had been promoting the quota system and observing the deliberations.

While the law includes no provisions for penalties for failing to meet the targets, it was definitely a step forward. In the 2021 House of Representatives election, however, the first election since the enactment of the law, the number of female members decreased by two seats. In response, the Association to Promote Gender Quotas presented policy recommendations to all political parties to demand seven items, including “clearly stating gender equality as the party's policy” and “introducing a quota system to increase the number of female members of the Diet.”

One of the leaders of these activities was Ryoko Akamatsu, former education minister and a representative of Win Win. She started the Akamatsu Seikei Juku (Akamatsu School of Politics and Economics) as a part of Win Win's activities because she keenly realized the need to train women to become politicians in earnest. At the same time, the [Academy for Gender Parity](#) was established in 2018 by Professor Mari Miura of Sophia University and Professor Kiyon Shin of Ochanomizu University with the aim of realizing gender parity in politics by cultivating the leadership of young women based on academic knowledge and by training women and minorities to participate in politics on an equal footing. As mentioned above, both professors have conducted research and surveys, referring to various activities in the United States, and have built a bridge between academia and practice with a clear concept and philosophy, providing training courses, training camps, use of social networking sites, and training of trainers.

The women's bureaus of each political party have also been carrying out activities since 2015, conducting seminars and courses to train female legislators. Not only the central party headquarters but also each local party branch is conducting activities to promote women's political participation. In this context, the regional political party Tomin First no Kai opened the First Seikei Juku (First School of Politics and Economics) in January 2022, with Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, who serves as the party's special advisor, serving as the inaugural lecturer. In 2016,

Governor Koike launched a political school, Kibou-no-Juku (School of Hope), which closed in 2017 after six lectures. As a member of the House of Representatives, Seiko Noda also launched the Gifu Women's Political School in 2018, and the Tokyo Women's School from April to June 2019. It is difficult for legislators themselves to lead political schools on a regular basis, so they only conduct them on an interim basis. In 1993, Yoriko Madoka, a former member of the House of Councillors, opened the [Women's Political School](#), which is now in its 26th year and is still in operation. The political school most systematically implemented by a member of the Diet is that of Ichiro Ozawa, a member of the House of Representatives (former leader of the Liberal Party), who in 2001 created the [Ichiro Ozawa Political School](#) as a private school to “discover and train highly motivated young people who can envision the ideal form of the 21st century and the path it should take, and who can be responsible for its realization.” The school features a two-year curriculum, and they are currently taking applications for the 2022 class.

In recent years, there has been a new movement centered on students and young people in their 20s and 30s who want to have various social issues better reflected in policymaking. In August 2021, SHIBUYA109lab conducted a survey on Generation Z's awareness of politics. It was a web survey of 200 men and 200 women, and although the sample size was small for a qualitative survey, the survey is ongoing, so trends among Generation Z can be gleaned from the survey to some extent. According to the survey, 50.3 percent of respondents said that Generation Z's interest in politics increased due to the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the next most important concern being “consumption tax and other tax policies which will affect daily life.” Women expressed more interest in LGBTQ issues, child-rearing support, and women's social participation. When asked if they would vote, 45.8 percent said they would definitely vote, while 32 percent said they would like to vote but were not sure yet. When asked

what is wrong with politics, they offered such responses as “the voter turnout among young people is too low,” “politicians don't have a good image,” “I don't feel that my vote makes a difference in politics,” “I don't support any politician or political party,” and “there are no policies aimed at young people.” Although the overall voter turnout according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) survey was low, the voter turnout among 18- and 19-year-olds was 43 percent, which was higher than the previous survey in 2017. It is critical that Japan's politics does not disappoint the young people, on whose shoulders rest the future of Japan.

On the other hand, it is still fresh in our memories that tens of thousands of people, mostly young people, demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's Office to protest the Cabinet decision on July 1, 2014, that would allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense. In Part II, this paper introduces a group of young people who have begun to take an interest in politics for various reasons, without necessarily aiming at women's participation in politics, and we look forward to seeing how their actions will develop in the future. The BBC reported at the time, “Japanese youth are criticized for being indifferent to politics and lethargic, but they seem to have woken up and will not stay silent.”

## 6. Future Prospects

Above, we have discussed the impediments to women's political participation and advancement. It has been pointed out that while the demand for female candidates is there, the supply is inadequate. In addition to the wide-ranging obstacles discussed above, there are still deficiencies when it comes to the roles of business and civil society as places where women can demonstrate new leadership, and in terms of the educational institutions, NPOs, and other institutions as places that train women leaders. As a result, Japan is lacking a reserve army of potential female candidates who can run for the Diet. It is said that

women aim to become politicians—despite few incentives to do so—because of a strong sense of mission to correct and improve the social issues they see around them. Of course, men also have a sense of mission, but surveys have found that this tendency is more pronounced among women.

It has been 37 years since the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was passed in 1985, and 22 years since the enactment of the Basic Act for a Gender Equal Society in 1999. Efforts have been made, such as the Parité movement and the introduction of quotas, and the Japanese government ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Thanks to these initiatives, the environment supporting women's participation in Japanese society, while still inadequate, has greatly improved. But the fact that Japan's gender gap and various gender-related indices are the worst among the G7 countries indicates that not only the government, businesses and academia must also make greater efforts to correct this situation.

We know from experience that simply passing a law does not mean that the world will suddenly change. Enacting laws to improve the problem is the first step, but we also must change the way in which society operates. The Cabinet Office's "Survey on Changes in Life Awareness and Behavior as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic" found that the working styles and family styles of men and women are changing.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread, Japan began to adopt telework, and by June 2020, a Cabinet survey found that 34.5 percent of workers surveyed nationwide had been teleworking to some degree. Subsequently, that percentage has been decreasing, but given that the pandemic has not stopped spreading, there is still a significant amount of teleworking going on, aside from essential workers.

Currently, there are 12.4 million dual-earner households and 5.71 million households where there is a full-time homemaker, and when parents with children under the age of 18 were asked how much they felt that their housework and childcare had increased since the start of the pandemic,

43.9 percent of women and 38 percent of men answered that it had increased. Although this reflects the respondent's "feeling" and not their actual working time, it appears to indicate that men, who are said to do less one fourth the housework that women do, have also started to share the burden a bit more. This is in part due to the fact that more than 50 percent of Japanese women are "irregular" or part-time workers, and they are more likely than men to be working outside the home in frontline or essential positions that do not lend themselves to telework, thus leaving their teleworking male partners at home. In addition, more than 91 percent of survey respondents said that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in them spending more time with their families, and that they want to keep it that way. The reality is that these lifestyle changes are leading to men playing a greater role in housework and childcare. If the sharing of housework and childcare continues to improve, it will be easier for women to participate in the workforce. They are also expected to build a new lifestyle together with men.

As we search for a new lifestyle after the pandemic, the development of female leaders within the business world, academia, and civil society can lead to their participation in politics, bringing their respective experiences to bear and serving as a reserve corps of future potential politicians. By doing so, it can bring about a change in Japanese society. In the business world, corporate commitments to the SDGs have created a space for female leaders to play an active role, but civil society organizations have not grown sufficiently. As mentioned above, civil society organizations can play a major role in promoting women's political participation. But unfortunately, due to delays in various social systems and lack of social awareness, many of these organizations do not have a sufficient foundation on which to build consistent, ongoing activities. It may seem to be a roundabout way, but Japan needs to create a mechanism to recognize the importance of these organizations and provide financial support.

Politics that reflect the voices of all people, regardless of gender or generation, will be a

major force for social reform. To this end, it is hoped that we will see the further development of professional and ongoing initiatives that accurately grasp the current situation in Japan and

build systematic frameworks to resolve the challenges and respond to the various needs facing Japanese society.

*For more information on specific organizations working on women's political empowerment in Japan, visit our website at <https://www.jcie.org/2022-survey-womens-political-participation-japan>.*

# Participants

## CO-CHAIRS



**Diana DEGETTE**

*Member, House of Representatives (D-CO)*

Rep. Diana DeGette is now serving her 13th term representing Colorado's 1st Congressional District. She is recognized as a leading voice in the United States' ongoing healthcare debate and as the chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, which is responsible for overseeing some of the most important federal agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration. In addition to chairing the Energy and Commerce Oversight panel, DeGette also serves as a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, where she's working to enact policies that will further protect Colorado's public lands and combat climate change.



**Seiko NODA**

*Minister of State for Gender Equality; Former Minister in charge of Women's Empowerment; Member, House of Representatives of Japan (LDP)*

Seiko Noda was appointed by Prime Minister Kishida to be the Minister of State for Gender Equality in November 2021. She simultaneously was named to the posts of Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment, Minister for Declining Birthrate, Minister in Charge of Policies Related to Children, Minister of State for Regional Revitalization and Minister in Charge of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation. She started her political career by winning a seat in the Gifu Prefectural Assembly and, in 1993, she was elected to the House of Representatives. She served in several posts in the Koizumi Cabinet, most notably as Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, and, in 2012, she became the second woman ever named to chair the LDP's General Council, one of the ruling party's three most influential posts. Her areas of interest include the declining birth rate in Japan, measures for persons with disabilities, and consumer issues.

## PRESENTERS



**Jen KLEIN**

*Co-Chair of the White House Gender Policy Council, The White House*

Jennifer Klein is a Co-Chair and the Executive Director of the White House Gender Policy Council. She was previously the Chief Strategy and Policy Officer at TIME'S UP. She has written and taught extensively about domestic and global gender policy, including as an Adjunct Professor at the Georgetown University Law Center. She worked with former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to develop No Ceilings, an initiative to evaluate progress for women and girls since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women and to advance gender equality around the world. From 2009 to 2012, Ms. Klein was a Deputy and Senior Advisor in the Office of Global Women's Issues within the Office of the Secretary at the US Department of State. From February 1993 through January 1999, she worked at the White House in a dual appointment as First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's senior domestic policy advisor and a Special Assistant to the President on the Domestic Policy Council. She holds a BA from Brown University and a JD from Columbia University School of Law.



**Mari MIURA**

**Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Sophia University**

Mari Miura is Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Sophia University. She holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Author of *Welfare Through Work: Conservative Ideas, Partisan Dynamics, and Social Protection in Japan* (Cornell University Press, 2012), *Making Our Voices Heard—Revival of Representative Democracy* (in Japanese, Iwanami Shoten, 2015), editor of *Japan’s Women Representatives* (in Japanese, Asahi Shimbun Shuppansha, 2016), co-editor of *Gender Quotas in Comparative Perspectives: Understanding the Increase in Women Representatives* (in Japanese, Akashi Shoten, 2014). Co-founder of the “Academy for Gender Parity,” which provides training programs for young women to run for office. She received the Wilma Rule Award (IPSA Award for the Best Research on Gender and Politics) in 2018 and was decorated the Knight of the Order of Merit from the French government in 2021.



**Jean SINZDAK**

**Associate Director at Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), Rutgers University**

As associate director of the CAWP, Dr. Sinzduk is responsible for developing strategic initiatives and projects, as well as general administrative oversight. An experienced program director with a strong background in women’s leadership development and civic engagement initiatives, she directs CAWP’s Program for Women Public Officials, which aims to increase the impact of women in politics and make political women’s leadership more effective through national, regional, and local events and programs for women officeholders, candidates, and campaign operatives. She is currently expanding the national network of Ready to Run®, a bipartisan effort to recruit and train women to run for all levels of office. Sinzduk also oversees CAWP’s New Jersey initiatives, including Ready to Run® New Jersey and is the project director of Teach a Girl to Lead®, a national education and awareness campaign. Prior to joining CAWP, she served as director of outreach and communications at the Institute for Women’s Policy Research in Washington DC. Sinzduk received a Master of Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA in English from the University of Scranton.



**Rita COLWELL**

**Distinguished University Professor, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health; Distinguished University Professor, University of Maryland, College Park; former Director, US National Science Foundation; Member, Board of Governors, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology**

Dr. Rita Colwell is Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and President of CosmosID, Inc. Her interests are focused on global infectious diseases, water, and health. She has authored or co-authored 20 books and more than 800 scientific publications. Dr. Colwell served as 11th Director of the National Science Foundation and Co-chair of the Committee on Science, National Science and Technology Council. She served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the American Academy of Microbiology, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington Academy of Sciences, and American Society for Microbiology. Dr. Colwell is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, among many others. Dr. Colwell has been awarded 63 honorary degrees from institutions of higher education and is the recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, bestowed by the Emperor of Japan, the 2006 National Medal of Science, awarded by the President of the United States, and the 2018 Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize of Singapore.



### **Takako HASHIMOTO**

*Vice President, Chiba University of Commerce; Associate Member, Science Council of Japan; former Chair of IEEE Women in Engineering*

Takako Hashimoto graduated from the Ochanomizu University in Japan, and received a PhD in computer science, specializing in multimedia information processing, from the Graduate School of Systems and Information Engineering of University of Tsukuba in 2005. She worked at the software R&D center of Ricoh Co. Ltd., in Japan. From 2009, she was involved with the Chiba University of Commerce. In 2015, she was a visiting researcher at University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently the Vice President and Professor of the faculty of Commerce and Economics at Chiba University of Commerce. She has focused on data mining research and social media analysis, especially topic extraction from millions of tweets related to disasters and topical problems like COVID-19. She serves as Chair of the IEEE Japan Council (2021-22) and on the Board of Governors of IEEE Computer Society (2021-23), and was the Past Chair of IEEE Women in Engineering (2015-16). In 2019, she received the IEEE 2019 MGA Larry K. Wilson Transnational Award, and Fellow of the Information Processing Society of Japan.

## **CO-HOSTS**



### **Peggy BLUMENTHAL**

*Chair, JCIE/USA; Senior Counselor to the President, IIE*

Peggy Blumenthal has been with the Institute of International Education (IIE) for over 35 years, serving as IIE's Chief Operating Officer from 2005 and transitioning to the role of Senior Counselor to IIE President in 2011. Her responsibilities at IIE have included supervision of its international offices, research, and educational services. Before joining IIE, Ms. Blumenthal served as Assistant Director of Stanford University's Overseas Studies and as Coordinator of Graduate Services/Fellowships for the University of Hawaii's Center for Asian and Pacific Studies. Her earlier work focused on the development of US-China exchanges as a staff member of the National Committee on US-China Relations and the Asia Society's China Council. She has written extensively on international education and academic mobility. Ms. Blumenthal holds a BA from Harvard University in Modern Chinese History and an MA in American Studies from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is Chair of the Board of JCIE/USA.



### **Hideko KATSUMATA**

*Executive Director and COO, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/ Japan)*

Hideko Katsumata joined JCIE in 1969. She currently manages the organization's overall operations and is heavily involved in numerous programmatic areas. Ms. Katsumata has been involved in citizen movements to strengthen the nonprofit sector in Japan and served as a member of the Council for the Reform of the Public Interest Corporations that was created to advise the Prime Minister's Office. She has served on the boards of the Chubu Electric Power Company, the Japan Broadcast Corporation (NHK), NHK Advisory Council on International Broadcasting, and the Japan NPO Center and of the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium. She currently serves on the board of the Sacred Heart School Corporation and the board of counselors of the Public Resource Foundation. She is a Screening Committee member of the ORACLE Volunteer Activities Fund. She has authored numerous articles on civil society, including "Japanese Philanthropy: Its Origins and Impact on US-Japan Relations" in *Philanthropy & Reconciliation: Rebuilding Postwar US-Japan Relations*.



## US PARTICIPANTS

- Manira Alva**, Vice President, Issue Advocacy Vital Voices Global Partnership
- Suzanne Basalla**, President and CEO, US-Japan Council
- Susan Berresford**, Former President, Ford Foundation
- Suzanne Bonamici**, Member, House of Representatives (D-OR)
- Anne Bonaparte**, President, Three Degrees
- Claire Chino**, President & CEO, ITOCHU International
- Paige Cottingham-Streater**, Executive Director, Japan-US Friendship Commission; Secretary-General, US CULCON
- Wendy Cutler**, Vice President, Asia Society Policy Institute
- Shannon Dorsey**, Culture and Sports Attaché, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Tokyo
- Barbara Dyer**, Senior Lecturer, MIT Sloan School of Management
- Atsuko Fish**, Founder, Japan Women's Leadership Initiative
- Melissa Horwitz**, Deputy Director, Japan Desk, US State Department
- Isabelle Johnson**, CEO, SK Impact Fund (former Chief of Staff of Sachiko Kuno)
- Kazuyo Kato**, Executive Director, JCIE/USA
- Sarah Kemp**, Global Women's Health and ESG Policy Lead, Organon (currently, Vice President, Intel)
- Rie Kijima**, Inaugural Director of the Initiative for Education Policy and Innovation at the Centre for the Study of Global Japan, University of Toronto; Co-Founder of STEAM labo (SKY Labo)
- Marie Kissel**, Senior Advisor for Government Affairs, Abbott
- Catherine Kobayashi**, NHK World News Anchor & Reporter
- Helena Kolenda**, Program Director for Asia, Henry Luce Foundation
- Julie Makinen**, Executive Editor, The Desert Sun; 2016 JCIE US-Japan Journalism Fellow
- Yukiko Morishita**, General Manager, Washington Office, Chubu Electric Power Co., Inc.
- Elizabeth "Libbie" Prescott**, Director, Fellowships Office, Policy and Global Affairs Division, National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM)
- Susan Roos**, Chief Administrative Officer, Geodesic Capital
- Mariko Silver**, President, Henry Luce Foundation
- Sheila Smith**, Senior Fellow for Japan Studies, Council on Foreign Relations
- Hiroko Tada**, Senior Vice President & General Manager, ITOCHU International
- Kathy Takayama**, Senior Consultant for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (Acting Executive Director), Center for Professional Development & Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub), Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST)
- Rachel Vogelstein**, Senior Advisor, White House Gender Policy Council
- Teresa Younger**, President and CEO, Ms. Foundation for Women

## JAPAN PARTICIPANTS

- Noriko Akiyama**, Senior Political Writer, Asahi Shimbun
- Rie Asayama**, Vice President, SMBC Operation Service Co., Ltd.; J-Win Executive Network Member
- Tae Aso**, Partner, KPMG Consulting Co., Ltd.; J-Win Executive Network
- Mariko Eguchi**, Vice President, Head of Corporate Communications and CSR Activities Office, Aflac Life Insurance Japan Ltd.; J-Win Executive Network Member
- Sachiko Habu**, Editor-in-Chief, Nikkei xwoman
- Takako Hashimoto**, Vice President, Professor, Chiba University of Commerce; Associate Member, Science Council of Japan; former Chair of IEEE Women in Engineering
- Tomoko Hayashi**, Director-General of Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office



**Maiko Ichihara**, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Law and the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University

**Naoko Ishida**, Managing Officer & General Manager, Accounting Department, Prince Hotels, Inc.

**Takae Ito**, Member, House of Councillors (Komeito)

**Takae Ito**, Member, House of Councillors (DPFP)

**Yuko Kakazu**, Astronomer and Sr. Specialist, Subaru Telescope, Education Ambassador, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST)

**Masako Kanaya**, Partner, Ernst & Young Tax Co.; J-Win Executive Network Member

**Izumi Kobayashi**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mizuho Financial Group Inc.; Member of the Board of Directors, ANA Holdings, Inc., Mitsui & Co., Ltd., and OMRON Corporation

**Mari Kogiso**, CEO, SDG Impact Japan

**Masako Kanno**, Partner, KPMG AZSA LLC; J-Win Executive Network Member

**Yukako Maekawa**, Senior Vice President, General Manager, Marketing Department of Management Service Division, NTT Learning Systems; J-Win Executive Network Member

**Kana Morimura**, Partner, Sharman & Sterling LLP

**Rei Murakami**, President, The Murakami Foundation

**Yumiko Murakami**, General Manager, MPower Partners

**Akiko Okamoto**, Member of the House of Representatives (CDP)

**Tazuko Shibusawa**, Member, Executive Board, Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation & MRA Foundation

**Hiroko Shinjo**, Executive Director, Talent Development Department, Talent Innovation HQs, Eisai Co., Ltd.

**Yuko Shoriki**, Senior Vice President, NEC Platforms, Ltd.

**Maiko Tajima**, Member, House of Councillors (Constitutional Democratic Party, CDP)

**Yoko Takeda**, Research Fellow, Chief Economist/ Deputy General Manager, Think Tank Unit & General Manager, Center for Policy and the Economy, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.

**Keiko Tashiro**, Vice President, Daiwa Securities Group Inc.

**Yukako Uchinaga**, Board Chair, J-Win (Japan Women's Innovative Network)

**Miwa Yamaguchi**, Executive Officer, e-Procurement Solutions Unit, Askul Corp; J-Win Executive Network Member

**Keiko Yokoyama**, President, NTT Media Supply Co., Ltd.; J-Win Executive Network Member

**Saori Yoshikawa**, Member of the House of Councillors (CDP)

## Observers

**Jack Arriaga**, Senior Legislative Assistant to Rep. Suzanne Bonamici

**Yoichi Mineo**, Senior Vice President & General Manager, Marubeni America Corp.

**Yoshie Ogawa**, Advisor, Japan International Transport and Tourism Institute, USA

**Arden Parker**, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Diana DeGette

**Daisuke Sakuraba**, Consul, Consulate General of Japan in New York

**Risa Shibuya**, Consul, Consulate General of Japan in New York

**Lisa Wong**, Associate Program Officer, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, New York

**Yusuke Yashita**, Policy Secretary to Hon. Maiko Tajima, Member of the House of Councillors (CDP)

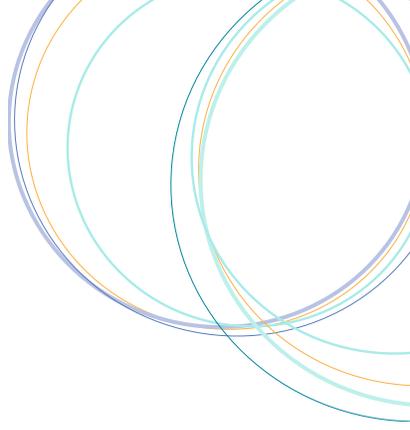
## Secretariat

**Kim Gould Ashizawa**, Senior Advisor, JCIE/USA

**Hayley Hutchison**, Program Officer, JCIE/USA

**Stephen McHugh**, Assistant Program Officer, JCIE/USA

**Hifumi Tajima**, Chief Program Officer, JCIE/Japan



# About JCIE

Founded in 1970, the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) is an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan organization that works to strengthen US-Japan relations and build international cooperation. Operating with partner organizations in Tokyo and New York (JCIE/USA), JCIE sponsors a wide range of projects in collaboration with institutions around the world. These include policy research and dialogue on cutting-edge issues in international relations, leadership exchanges, and efforts to strengthen the contributions of civil society to domestic and international governance. Through these initiatives, JCIE aims to create opportunities for informed policy discussions that can contribute to a more peaceful and stable world.

In 2016, JCIE launched the Empowering Women Leaders program to provide opportunities for women leaders to participate in international dialogues, to build networks among women leaders, and to share lessons learned on ways to encourage fuller participation by women in the political, economic, and social policymaking processes. Over the course of its five-decade history, JCIE has addressed women's leadership in a number of studies and dialogues, and JCIE publications that touch on this topic include the following:

*Seeking the “Next Normal”—Creating a Post-Pandemic World Where Women (and Men) Can Thrive* (2021)

*Common Ground and Common Obstacles: US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue* (2017)

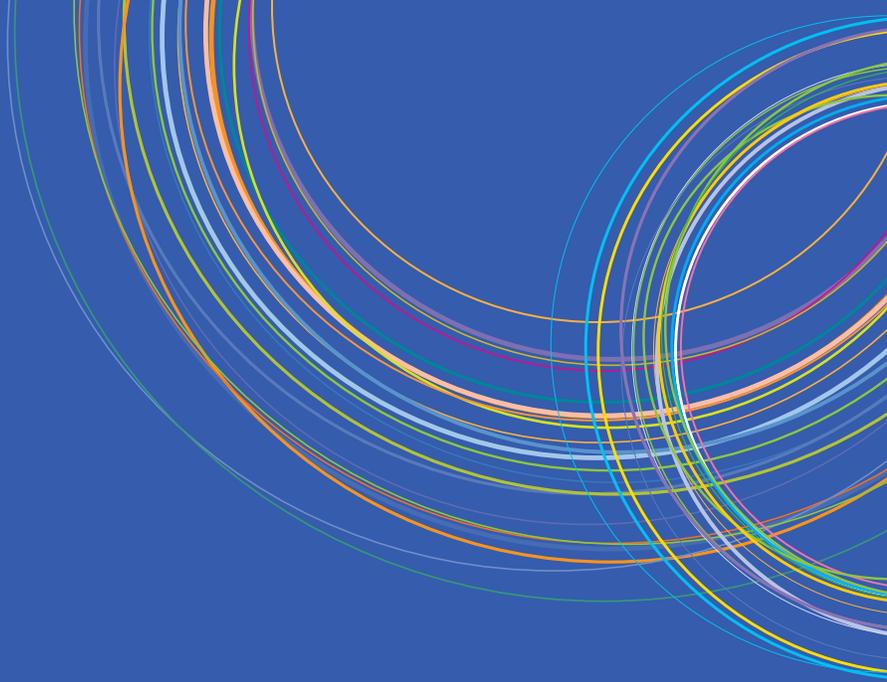
*Looking for Leadership: The Dilemma of Political Leadership in Japan* (2015)

*A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue 3—Economic Empowerment for Gender Equality* (2006)

*A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue 2—Transformational Approaches to the Roles of Women and Men in Economic Life and Political Decision-Making* (2003)

*A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue—New Visions and Perspectives for Women and Men* (2001)

*Japan-US Women Leaders Dialogue: Community Development and the Role of Women* (Co-published with the Institute of International Education, 1994)



JGIB