




REPORT OF THE
2023 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE: A PATH TOWARD WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS, STEM, AND BEYOND



JAPAN CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
(JCIE/JAPAN)

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Acknowledgments

In early September 2023, the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) brought a delegation of four female Diet members and two corporate leaders from Japan to Washington DC as part of the US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue. These leaders, led by the Dialogue's Japan co-chair, Hon. Seiko Noda (Liberal Democratic Party), engaged in a weeklong series of meetings and discussions with a wide range of actors, including politicians and government officials, business leaders, journalists, policy experts, academics, and nonprofit leaders. Discussions spanned a broad range of topics, from US-Japan trade and shared geopolitical concerns to domestic policy developments, strategies for promoting gender equity in the workplace and in government, women in peace and security, education, and women in the arts. A highlight of the week was a dialogue that brought together around 40 diverse leaders and experts—primarily women, but also including a handful of men—for the US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable. In preparation for the Roundtable, JCIE also convened a smaller online Working Group that produced a set of recommendations on ways the two countries can work to empower women in STEM in K-12 education, higher education, and in careers, which were presented at the Roundtable by Prof. Rie Kijima (University of Toronto) to inform the discussions.

The US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue series was first launched by JCIE in 2017, when a delegation of female Diet members traveled to the United States for talks in Washington DC and New York. That trip culminated in a weekend retreat at Pocantico, New York, 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 and 2022, in light of the COVID-19 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, Representative Noda and Hon. Diana DeGette (D-Colorado). The first year's 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. In the second year, we delved deeper into 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, and the three online meetings were supplemented by one smaller in-person meeting in May 2022, when Representative DeGette visited Japan. Reports from these earlier dialogues are available online at <https://www.jcie.org/programs/empowering-women-leaders/>.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our co-chairs for their continued support for this Dialogue and their input during our planning phase. We deeply appreciate their time, insight, and unflagging commitment to US-Japan relations and

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to empowering other women leaders. We are also grateful to J-Win, which worked with us to recruit two fantastic women leaders from the business sector to join our delegation this year. We would also like to thank Dr. Kijima for her invaluable input on the Working Group agenda and recommendations. And we would like to thank all those who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with our delegation and share their insights.

Our 2023 delegation visit was made possible by the generous support of the US Embassy in Tokyo. We greatly appreciate the advice and support of Shannon Dorsey, Cultural Attaché at the Embassy, and her colleagues in the Public Affairs Section for their guidance. Our sincere thanks go also to the MRA Foundation, whose continued support has made this dialogue possible, and the Toshiba International Foundation for their generous funding. The views expressed in this report are solely the responsibility of JCIE and are not intended to reflect the stances of our funders. Our sincere thanks to Ambassador Kurt Tong and his colleagues at The Asia Group for the courtesy they extended to us during the delegation's visit, and particularly for co-hosting a delightful reception for participants of our Women in STEM Roundtable and members of the local US-Japan community, which we hope created useful new connections.

In addition, we must thank Hannah Katz and Kazuko Shoji in our co-chairs' offices for their continued assistance and advice. We are also deeply indebted to our talented simultaneous interpreters, Shiori Okazaki and Sanae Sasajima, whose skillful translations made these conversations possible. And last but not least, we thank Kazuyo Kato, executive director of JCIE/USA for her leadership, and our colleagues Kim Gould Ashizawa, Hayley Hutchison, and Hifumi Tajima for their tireless work to ensure the success of this year's meetings.

We hope that the recommendations that emerged from this year's dialogue will further strengthen US-Japan partnership and bilateral relations moving forward, and will contribute in particular to the empowerment of more women in the STEM field.



Peggy Blumenthal
Board Chair, JCIE/USA



Hideko Katsumata
Executive Director and COO,
JCIE/Japan

REPORT OF THE 2023 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

Overview

The 2023 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue brought a delegation of six women leaders from Japan to Washington DC for a weeklong series of high-level briefings and discussions. Organized by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/Japan and JCIE/USA), this was the fourth US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, following an in-person delegation to Washington DC and New York in 2017, then two online dialogue series during the COVID-19 pandemic years. This year's program included a multipartisan delegation of four female Japanese Diet members, recruited with the cooperation of the Dialogue co-chair, Rep. Seiko Noda, and two business leaders who were recruited through the Japan Women's Innovative Network (J-Win), a member-based organization that aims to support the promotion and establishment of diversity management in businesses.

DELEGATION MEMBERS

Hon. **Seiko Noda**, House of Representatives, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

Hon. **Takae Ito**, House of Councillors, Democratic Party for the People (DPP)

Hon. **Aiko Shimajiri**, House of Representatives, LDP

Hon. **Kiyomi Tsujimoto**, House of Councillors, Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP)

Ms. **Aya Tsumura**, Executive Officer, SMBC Trust Bank

Ms. **Kyoko Okutani**, Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC

The delegation arrived in Washington DC on September 11, 2023, for what proved to be a highly productive and substantive series of sessions that allowed them to engage in dialogues with approximately 130 people from government, business, academia and think tanks, nonprofit organizations, and the media during their stay. These conversations covered everything from trade, security, and politics to education and the arts, with an underlying theme of gender equity informing many of the sessions.

A highlight of the week was the US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable on Capitol Hill. The event was intended to build on the findings of our 2022 Dialogue, which pointed to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) as an area offering the greatest room for growth for women in terms of well-paying and flexible jobs. In that Dialogue, the participants had called for greater efforts by the two countries to increase women's interest in and access to STEM, starting at the K-12 education level through to higher education, the workforce, and C-suites. On August 24, 2023, JCIE

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also convened a small online Working Group session with experts from both countries, which produced a set of recommendations that were offered as the starting point for the Roundtable discussions.

The Roundtable was held at the Congressional Visitors Center in the Capitol Building and brought together roughly 40 American and Japanese experts from various sectors, including two members of Congress who are deeply committed to empowering women in STEM, our Dialogue co-chair, Rep. Diane DeGette (D-CO) and Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), who founded a caucus to draw attention to this cause. The room was packed with dozens of inspirational women—and several men—who are leaders in their fields, and the energetic discussions touched on a number of existing studies, strategies, and initiatives that could be shared or scaled up, as well as areas where continued improvements and efforts are needed. The comments from panelists and participants reflected the many shared challenges, as well as some notable differences, between women's experiences in STEM-related careers in academia, business, and government in the United States and Japan.

The itinerary below briefly outlines the various sessions that JCIE organized for the delegation throughout the week. This report is not intended, however, to offer detailed accounts of each discussion held, many of which were off the record or convened under Chatham House rules. Rather, it will highlight some of the key issues that were raised during the discussions and then will offer a more detailed analysis of our findings on the key topic for this year's Dialogue: how the United States and Japan can work individually and together to empower women in STEM fields.

DELEGATION ITINERARY (September 10–15, 2023)

DAY 1

- Arrival in Washington DC and briefing by JCIE staff
- Meeting with DC-based journalist **Hirotsugu Mochizuki of Asahi Shimbun** to hear his on-the-ground perspectives on recent US political and socioeconomic trends
- Dinner and briefing by **Amb. Koji Tomita**, then **Japanese Ambassador to the United States**, to gain his insights into US-Japan relations

DAY 2

- Visit to the **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)** to meet with President & CEO Damon Wilson and learn how NED addresses inclusion and equity, women's empowerment, and political participation of underrepresented populations in the context of human rights and democracy
- **Corporate roundtable and lunch co-organized with Intel**, where more than a dozen American and Japanese businesswomen examined how the two countries can help women in business thrive, with a focus on AI, digital technology, and women in STEM fields
- Meeting with **Rachel Vogelstein**, senior advisor at the **White House Gender Policy Council**, to learn about the National Gender Strategy and how the Biden administration is working to address key issues facing women in the United States and worldwide
- Discussion on bilateral ties and the impact of the 2024 elections on Asia Pacific regional relations with **Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE)**, **co-chair of the Japan Caucus**
- Meeting with **Acting Assistant Secretary of State Kin Moy** and other staff from the Japan Desk to seek their views on key challenges in the Indo-Pacific region,

the recent trilateral summit, supply chain issues, China, the Global South, climate change, and other issues

- Dinner with four **Japan hands from DC think tanks and universities** to exchange views on the state of US-Japan relations and the latest developments in US and Japanese politics

DAY 3

- Briefing by two analysts from the **Eurasia Group, Alex Brideau and Tinatin Japaridze**, on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the political and economic implications of the ongoing conflict
- Visit to the **Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security Program (GI-WPS)** to meet with **Ambassador Melanne Verveer** and a number of Georgetown graduate students on the women, peace, and security (WPS) concept and areas for US-Japan collaboration
- Meeting with **US Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai** to explore trade-related issues as supply chains, sustainability, Japan-China trade, and the agenda for the November APEC meetings, where inclusivity was emerging as a key theme

DAY 4

- Breakfast meeting with three Congresswomen, our US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue co-chair, **Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-HI), and Rep. Carol Miller (R-WV)**—an off-the-record session to share experiences and outlooks on politics in their respective countries
- Meeting with **Susannah Welford, CEO & founder of Running Start**, a nonprofit that works to train young women for political office
- Lunch with alumnae of the Running Start programs to hear how the program has impacted their careers
- The **US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable on Capitol Hill**, featuring comments from four parliamentarians—our co-chairs, Representatives Noda and DeGette, as well as **Rep. Aiko Shimajiri (LDP)** and **Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA)**—followed by panel presentations and an open discussion
- Briefing on Indo-Pacific geopolitics from **The Asia Group (TAG)** managing partner, **Ambassador Kurt Tong**
- Reception co-hosted by JCIE and TAG for US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable participants and others from the US-Japan community, allowing new connections to be made between the US-Japan and the STEM communities

DAY 5

- Meeting with Deputy Director Ilene Gutman of the **National Museum of Women in the Arts** for a briefing on the history of the museum and its objectives, as well as the work it has done to promote working women artists
- Tour of the museum led by **Director Susan Sterling**—the museum was in the final stages of renovations during the visit, but the delegation donned hardhats for a behind-the-scenes peek at the soon-to-open space
- Visit to an elementary school in Great Falls, Virginia, that offers not only an **immersion program for Japanese language, but also STEM programs** taught in Japanese, where they were serenaded by third-graders who had learned “It’s a Small World” and other songs in Japanese and learned about the challenges facing their teachers.
- Dinner meeting with four **members of the Japanese business community**

Dialogue Report

The weeklong visit to Washington DC by a delegation of Japanese women leaders that was conducted as part of the 2023 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue was intended as an opportunity for frank and open bilateral exchanges of information and insights. What follows is an overview and some thoughts on key issues that emerged from the weeklong conversations, followed by a more detailed report on the US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable convened on September 14 on Capitol Hill.

Women in politics

The 2024 US-Japan Women Leaders delegation from Japan included two veteran politicians from the ruling and opposition parties, Seiko Noda (Liberal Democratic Party, LDP), who is in her tenth term in the Diet after also serving in the Gifu prefectural assembly, and Kiyomi Tsujimoto (Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, CDP), who served seven terms in the House of Representatives and now is in her first term in the House of Councillors. They were joined by Aiko Shimajiri (LDP), who served in the Naha municipal assembly in Okinawa for two terms before running for national office. She served two terms in the House of Councillors and is now in her first term in the House of Representatives. And last but not least was Takae Ito (Democratic Party for the People, DPP), who is in her second term in the House of Councillors. Having entered politics at very different times—1987, 1996, 2004, and 2016, respectively—each woman brought her own experience and perspective to the conversations, but there was a high degree of commonality in the challenges they have encountered and the solutions that they put forward as they engaged with their US counterparts and other interlocutors, including the two senior business leaders who joined the delegation, Aya Tsumura, executive officer of SMBC Trust Bank, and Kyoko Okutani, a partner at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC.

Before we discuss their conversations, however, it is useful to place these discussions in context. In 1946, Japan held an election that was both the first election after World War II and the first since Japanese women had been granted suffrage. A total of 39 women won seats in the House of Representatives (Lower House) that year, representing 8.4 percent of the seats.¹ That actually exceeded the number of women in the US Congress at the time, which stood at 11 in the House and 0 in the Senate.² But as of March 2024, that number in Japan had only grown to 48 women, or 10.3 percent of the

1. Tokuko Ōgai, “The Stars of Democracy: The First Thirty-Nine Female Members of the Japanese Diet,” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*, English Supplement, no. 11 (1996): 81–117, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42772102>.
2. Jennifer Manning and Ida Brudnick, *Women in Congress, 1917–2022: Service Dates and Committee Assignments by Member, and Lists by State and Congress*, Congressional Research Service Report RL30261 (October 13, 2022), <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/RL30261.pdf>.

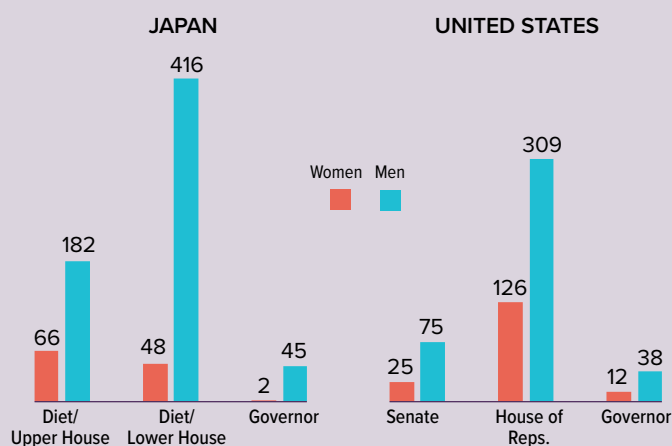
total seats in the Lower House. This abysmal lack of progress has fortunately not been mirrored in the House of Councillors (Upper House), which now has 66 women legislators, or 26.6 percent of the total. That latter number is more in keeping with the current US Congress, where 25 percent of Senators and 29 percent of Representatives are women as of 2024. These numbers place the United States at #70 and Japan at #166 on the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ranking of women in national politics—they are the two lowest of the G7 countries, and Japan ranks lowest among all G20 countries.³

The importance of role models and mentorship

The importance of role models and mentors is a theme that emerged in many contexts throughout the delegation's visit, but particularly when discussing the gender gap in politics. Noda, the delegation leader and co-chair of the US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, entered the LDP at a time when there were no women in leadership positions, and in 1993, she was the sole woman elected to the Lower House from her party (from all parties, there were only 14 women in the 511-seat House). She struggled to find her own path and noted that she tried to use her disadvantage—her gender—to her advantage. The opposition party did, however, have a strong female leader in the persona of Takako Doi. She became the first head of a Japanese political party in 1986, when she assumed the chair of the Japan Socialist Party (which was renamed the Social Democratic Party, or SDP, in 1996, under her second tenure as chair) and the first woman to serve as speaker of the House (1993–1996). Doi was a key role model for Tsujimoto, who prior to entering politics had been one of the founders of a nonprofit organization, Peace Boat, that promotes peace, human rights, and sustainability. She

first ran for office as a member of the SDP and is currently a member of the CDP. While Diet members Aiko Shimajiri (LDP), who came to the national stage from serving in the prefectural legislature, and Takae Ito (DPP), who came from a business background and from a perspective of being a young working mother, have had to face many of the same obstacles as their senior female colleagues, they have at least had the benefit of strong leaders like Noda, Tsujimoto, and others to whom they can look for guidance, advice, and camaraderie.

Figure 1. Number of elected officials at the state and national levels (as of March 2024)



3. See the IPU Monthly Ranking of Women in National Parliaments (as of December 2023), <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=12&year=2023>.

“You need to get into politics to change it!”

Both Noda and Tsujimoto have been active in offering training programs for the younger generation of women who are considering running for office, including those organized through their political parties. Noda, for example, has been deeply involved in the LDP’s “Women’s Future Leadership Program,” which offers not just the nitty-gritty information on policies and running for office, but also stresses that there are resources, networks, and mentors that potential women candidates can and should rely on. Rather than having others follow the difficult path she was forced to tread, she has tried to create a new path for younger generations.

Although newer to politics, Ito is similarly trying to change the system to smooth the way for others. When she first ran for office, her children were just one and three years old. The law at that time prevented politicians from bringing their children on the campaign trail, but given the grueling hours that campaigning requires, it was difficult for her to leave her children for that long. Moreover, she had been told that she had to quit her job before running for office, but without work, that would mean she would lose her access to childcare. She has since been able to change these laws in ways that should make campaigning a bit easier for mothers in the future.

The Diet members’ experiences epitomize the advice given to young women by one of the experts with whom the delegation met, Susannah Welford, the founder of Running Start, a nonprofit organization in the United States that trains young women to believe that they have what it takes to run for office. Her advice to young women who feel that the system is not made for them is, “You need to get into politics to change it!” Running Start has trained more than 25,000 women to date in the United States, Kenya, and Brazil. For teenage girls, they hold in-person and virtual meetings to introduce role models, and they train women in public speaking, media, and fundraising, helping them to overcome the internal barriers that women construct for themselves that hold them back from running.

The external barriers, however, remain as well, as was evidenced by a series of announcements made by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during the delegation’s week in Washington. He first announced his newly shuffled cabinet, which featured



five women—matching Japan’s highest number to date—including the appointment of a woman as foreign minister for the first time in nearly two decades. That move was at first applauded as a positive step, although it paled in comparison to the Biden administration’s record of 52 percent of cabinet-level posts going to women. But when images of Kishida’s picks for the 26 senior vice ministers and 28 parliamentary vice ministers came out, revealing rows and rows of only men and not a single woman, it was met with widespread derision in the global media.



Gender-based harassment as a barrier to entry

In both Japan and the United States, convincing women that politics is a place for them is not always easy. Delegation members shared that in addition to the challenge of raising funds for a political campaign, they have faced gender-based criticism and harassment during their campaigns and on the job as well, both from the public and from colleagues. This is a shared problem, as the United States has seen growing incivility and violence in the political sphere in recent years.

A Princeton University study of local government officials in the United States in 2023 found that while both men and women were experiencing high levels of insults, harassment, and threats, the situation was significantly worse for women, and particularly for women of color. The study offers a sobering look at the types of graphic and violent threats that women in office have endured, raising fears for their families’ wellbeing and in some cases, dissuading them from running again.⁴

Similarly, one delegation member mentioned a group in Japan called the Fifties Project, which was launched in 2022 by young people to promote gender equality

4. See Bridging Divides Initiative, Princeton University, “Threats and Harassment in Local Government, September 2023,” and “In Their Own Words: Threats and Harassment Facing Local Officials,” <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/UnderstandingThreats>.

While we are in an era of rapid technological development, we are also in dire need of innovations in policy to tackle the new and coming challenges that those technologies bring.

in politics. The group backed 29 female candidates in local elections in 2023, and it surveyed 21 of them after the election to get their impressions. Fifteen reported “insulting attitudes or comments based on their gender,” 15 reported “defamation and harassment on social media and in emails,” 11 reported “sexual or violent verbal harassment,” and 9 reported experiencing “excessive physical proximity.”⁵

The delegation learned that gender-based online abuse and harassment is a challenge that the Biden administration’s Gender Policy Council is currently working on, and this could be an area where further collaboration to share information and best practices would be extremely fruitful.

These issues, along with deeply ingrained cultural biases, financial hurdles, and other impediments have blocked progress on increasing the number of women in politics. As one US government official noted, while we are in an era of rapid technological development, we are also in dire need of innovations in policy to tackle the new and coming challenges facing our countries that those technologies bring.

In this respect, the leadership of women is critical and ongoing efforts are required to empower women and convince them to “get into politics and change it.”

Recommendations for US-Japan cooperation on women in politics

- promote exchanges on best practices in training and mentorship for aspiring female politicians, including through efforts of the nongovernmental sector that deepen the networks among women politicians and other women leaders in our countries
- support data collection, comparative analyses and dialogues on effective ways to address gender-based online abuse and harassment of women policymakers and candidates
- promote collaborative initiatives to examine effective methods of addressing implicit and explicit biases
- jointly examine and identify necessary structural changes, such as legislative reforms to support work-life balance for politicians, that promote a more inclusive political environment

5. Hiroyuki Tanaka, “Many Female Election Candidates Face Sexual Harassment, Verbal Abuse in Japan: Survey,” *Mainichi Shimbun* (online, English translation), September 11, 2023, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230907/p2a/oom/ona/010000oc>.

Women in the workforce

As will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this report, a main focus of this year's Dialogue was on finding ways to promote women's engagement in STEM fields, but broader concerns regarding women's economic empowerment were discussed as well. We will briefly outline them here.

Progress and ongoing impediments to women's economic empowerment

On a positive note, the post-pandemic economy in the United States led to record levels of labor force participation for women, which stood at 77.1 percent at the end of 2023 for women between the ages of 25 and 54 (although the rate falls to 57.1 percent for all women over the age of 16, as women over the age of 55 drop out of the economy at a high rate). The comparable number for men, however, was 89.2 percent (68.1 percent for men 16 and older).⁶ The gender imbalance is also seen in how the female workforce is utilized and compensated. The proportion of women who have associate, bachelor,⁷ or advanced degrees is higher than men,⁷ but they still account for 64.3 percent of the total *part-time* work force (2023 data), implying that their skills are not being fully utilized.⁸ And while women in general earn 83.7 percent of their male counterparts' wages as of 2023, those with advanced degrees earn just 77 cents on the dollar compared to men.⁹

Japan has also seen a rise in women's workforce participation, with women's employment reaching 79.8 percent in 2022. The rate for women in the 25–34 age bracket that year was 81.4 percent, and those working part-time (non-regular employment) in that age bracket dropped from 40.9 percent in 2012 to 31.4 percent in 2022.

In another significant shift, there are signs that Japanese attitudes toward women in the workplace are continuing to evolve. A 2019 Cabinet Office survey found that a growing number of both men and women believe that women should return to work after childbirth rather than wait until after their children have grown up. Compared to 2000, when more people tended to think women should wait, the vast majority of women now believe they should continue to work, and men are firmly in support of the idea as well.¹⁰ However, for the time being, the regular (i.e., full-time) employment

6. US Department of Labor, Women's Bureau (DOL Women's Bureau), "Labor Force Status of Women & Men," <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/widget>.

7. Among women aged 25 and over who were employed or actively looking for work, nearly 60 percent had an associate degree or higher compared to just under half of men. DOL Women's Bureau, "Educational attainment of the labor force by sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity," 2020 data, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/latest-annual-data/working-women>.

8. DOL Women's Bureau, "Percent Distribution of Workers Employed Full-time and Part-time by Sex," <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/latest-annual-data/working-women/Percent-Distribution-of-Workers-Employed-Full-time-Part-time-by-Sex>.

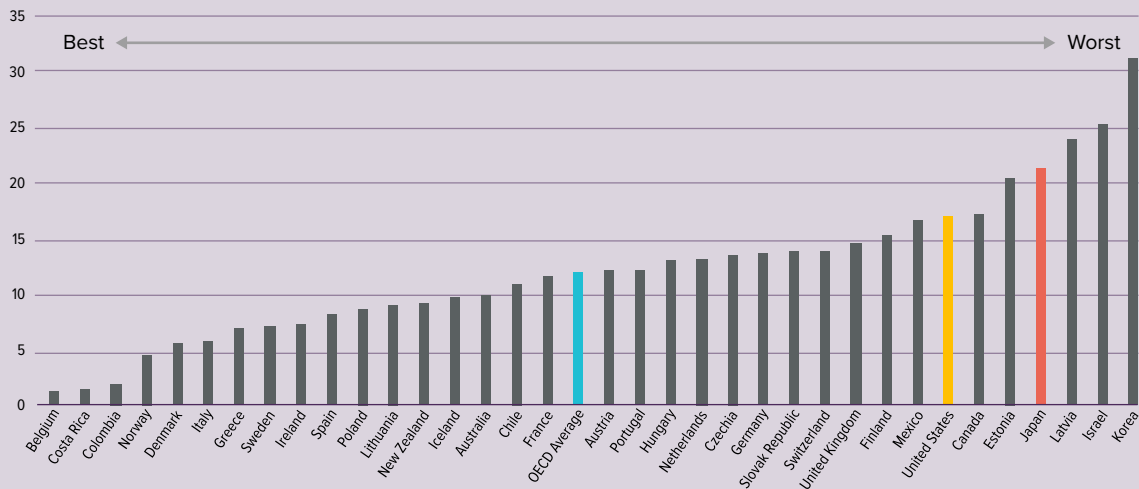
9. DOL Blog, "5 Fast Facts: The Gender Wage Gap," <https://blog.dol.gov/2023/03/14/5-fast-facts-the-gender-wage-gap#:~:text=Stats.,for%20Black%20and%20Hispanic%20women>.

10. Those aged 30 and older were the most progressive, with 68.4 percent of women and 62.9 percent of men 30–39 years old agreeing that women should continue to work, and 73.7 percent of women and 57.0 percent of men aged 40–49 agreeing as well. Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, "The White Paper on Gender Equality 2023," https://www.gender.go.jp/about_danjo/whitepaper/ro5/gaiyou/pdf/ro5_gaiyou_en.pdf.

rates for Japan's women are still dropping significantly from the age of 30 on, falling below 40 percent by the age of 40 and dropping off precipitously after the age of 55.¹¹ And the wage gap in the country remains among the largest among the OECD countries, with women earning 21.3 percent less than men in comparable jobs as of 2022.¹²

A consensus that emerged from the delegation's discussions with political leaders and government officials was that more needs to be done to ensure that women can play a substantial role in building tomorrow's economy. One Japanese political leader stressed that Japan's lack of women in decision-making positions in business and government was a major contributor to the country's long-term economic stagnation. Indeed, an IMF study noted that while Japan's overall GDP growth has been lagging, its per capita growth was second highest among G7 countries from 2012–2019, stating “A major contributor to per capita growth was the rising number of women entering the labor force... These additional female workers helped mitigate the country's chronic labor shortage, boosted family income, and fueled the growth engine.” It noted, however, that the type of jobs they hold has a significant impact on their ability to contribute to overall real GDP growth, with STEM jobs being an area that could hold maximum impact.¹³ Similarly, the Biden administration has recognized that a diverse workforce strengthens the country's economy and security and has implemented a whole-of-government analysis to identify barriers to entry at the recruitment, hiring, and retention stages.

Gender wage gap among OECD economies (2022 or most recent)



Source: OECD (2024), Gender wage gap (indicator). doi: 10.1787/7cee77aa-en (Accessed on 26 February 2024)

11. Ibid., 23.

12. OECD Data, “Gender Wage Gap (2022),” <https://data.oecd.org/earnwage/gender-wage-gap.htm>.

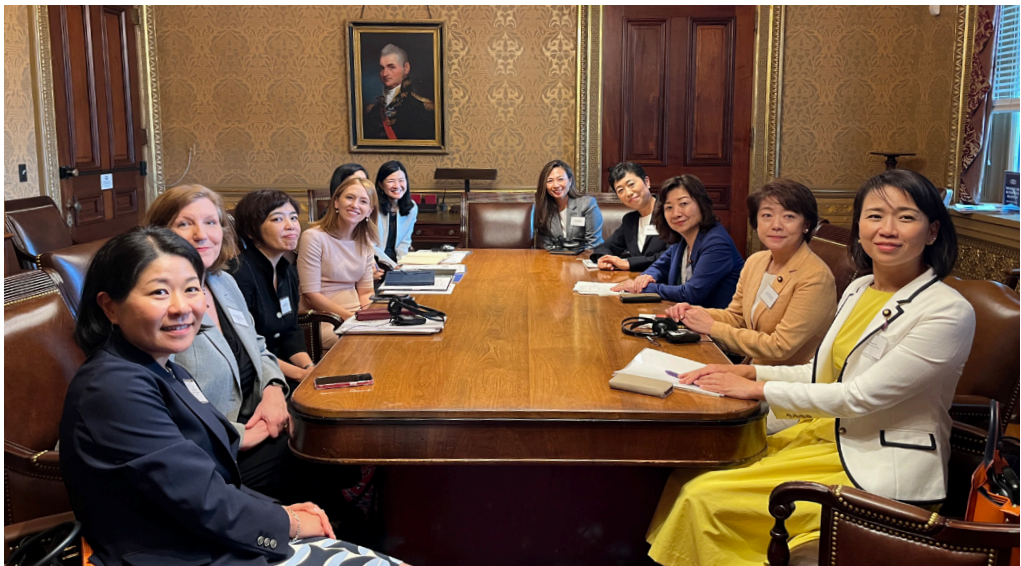
13. Rui Xu, “Japan’s Economy Would Gain with More Women in Science and Technology,” IMF Country Focus, November 13, 2023, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/11/13/cf-japans-economy-would-gain-with-more-women-in-science-and-technology>.

Childcare, eldercare and the impact on women in the workforce

As is well known, Japan has a serious demographic problem. From January to October 2023, it was reported there were 206 bankruptcies in Japan that were directly connected to labor shortages.¹⁴ To tackle this challenge, the government has been introducing a number of policies to address the declining birthrate and create family-friendly labor and social policies, and in April 2023, it launched the Children and Families Agency. Noda was a leading advocate for the creation of this new government body that seeks to put children at the center, and she was able to share information on some of the agency's priorities while in Washington DC.

One of the factors that has enabled more mothers to return to the workplace in Japan has been a substantial improvement in the availability of affordable childcare. The Government of Japan's efforts to address the shortage has led the number of wait-listed children to drop from 12,439 in 2020 to 2,944 in 2022, and substantial gains have also been made in increasing the proportion of public housing complexes offering care facilities for children, seniors, and those with disabilities (rising from 29 percent to 92 percent in a span of just two years).¹⁵ In addition, the government has been implementing a number of other policies intended to expand the childcare allowance, provide free preschool for children aged three to five, and expand scholarships and deferred tuition to ease the cost of higher education.

One Japanese scientist currently working in the United States shared her experience with the US system, stressing that childcare presents a major challenge for working mothers—particularly academics who may not be making much money early in their careers but cannot stay in the workforce without affordable daycare. The delegation heard during their visit that President Biden was able to include \$24 billion for childcare subsidies during the pandemic through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,



14. Waka Honohana, "A Look Back at Japan's Gender Laws and Fairness in 2023," *Japan Times*, December 29, 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/commentary/2023/12/29/japan-japan-gender-laws-2023/>.

15. Gender Equality Bureau, 6.

which made a tremendous difference in the affordability of childcare across the country and the ability to attract staff. However, requests for continued funding via the Build Back Better Act and subsequent Inflation Reduction Act were denied. In fact, the funding ran out the same month that the delegation visited, and the impact on prices and staffing were immediately felt. The delegation also learned that President Biden would go on to request \$16 billion in supplemental funding to support the childcare sector later in the fall, which was tied directly to “advancing women’s economic security” and targeted both the high cost of care and the underpayment of care workers.¹⁶ As of this writing, the funds had not yet been approved.

It should also be noted that caregiving does not only involve children, of course, and Japan’s aging population has had a tremendous impact on women. With more than 28 percent of Japanese people now over the age of 65, more and more women are experiencing the “sandwich” effect of caring for both parents and children, creating emotional and financial strains. One Japanese politician noted that she was surprised to see the concept of “caring for caregivers” included in the Build Back Better Act since that concept had not yet taken hold in Japan. Her own work has included advocacy for “young carers” in Japan, those 18 or under who are thrust into the role of caregiving for a relative with illness or disability. In fact, Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

announced in July 2023 that it would be introducing guidelines in fiscal 2024 that indicate support for family caregivers, including young carers. According to a *Yomiuri Shimbun* article, “The guideline is designed to encourage local governments to introduce measures aimed at reducing the burden of young carers ahead of 2025, when the first baby-boomer generation—which presently comprises about 5.9 million individuals—reaches the age of 75 or older.”¹⁷ Indeed, care for aging parents is one of the reasons that many Japanese women leave the workforce after the age of 55.

Finally, one important point that arose was the potential long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women’s careers and earning potential. As caregiving options disappeared during the pandemic and children attended school remotely, mothers dropped out of the workforce at substantially higher rates than fathers. It is important to

ensure that pandemic-related gaps in career trajectories do not end up placing women even farther behind on the path to success and financial stability.

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The importance of parental leave policy (and how to get people to use it)

Japan’s maternity/paternity leave and its family leave policies were another area that was discussed with admiration (and more than a tinge of jealousy) by Americans. Mothers in Japan are entitled to six weeks of leave prior to the due date and eight weeks after

16. White House, “State Breakdown: The Biden-Harris Administration’s Funding Request Would Help Prevent Families Across the Country from Losing Child Care,” November 2, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2023/11/02/state-breakdown-the-biden-harris-administrations-funding-request-would-help-prevent-families-across-the-country-from-losing-child-care/>.

17. “Japan to Bolster Support for Young Carers,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 9, 2023, <https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/society/general-news/20230709-121636/>.

To overcome social norms and worksite pressures that create reluctance among men to take paternity and childcare leave, requiring that employees take the leave, rather than simply “encouraging” them to take it, may be more effective.

birth, paid at roughly two-thirds of the mother’s normal monthly salary, with social welfare premiums waived during that time (making the net income closer to 80 percent of their normal pay). Amendments to Japan’s Child Care and Family Care Leave Act made in 2021 also included paternity leave at birth for up to four weeks (which can be taken within the first eight weeks after their child’s birth and can be separated into two installments), also paid at roughly two-thirds of the father’s salary. The benefits are paid by the government, or through a combination of company and government payments. Large employers (1,000 employees or more) are required to disclose the amount of paternity leave that their employees take and to create an environment that encourages parents to take the time off. Parents are also entitled to take childcare leave up until the child’s first birthday, again with partial pay. And the government provides a monthly allowance per child (equivalent to roughly US\$100 for the first and second child up to the age of two and US\$200 from the third child on¹⁸).

There were proposals in 2023 to raise that amount to 100 percent of income if both parents take at least two weeks of leave.¹⁹ Indeed, surveys have found that lower pay is one major disincentive to male workers taking paternity leave, which of course makes sense since the family’s costs are increasing with the addition of a child. Accordingly, a number of large corporations in Japan have begun offering 100 percent of salary for parental leave. Salesforce Japan introduced such a policy in November 2022, resulting in a tripling of paternity leave usage. And Aeon, Japan’s largest retailer, announced in early 2024 that from FY2025, their employees will get 100 percent of their pay for the child’s first 12 months, with the company compensating workers for the difference between the government leave allowance and their full pre-leave take-home pay once they return to work.²⁰

By contrast, the United States is one of only a handful of countries worldwide that do not provide paid maternity leave. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act gives employees up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave per year with job and health benefit protections. However, this is only applicable to those who have worked at least one year for the employer and have worked a certain minimum number of hours, and the employer must have 50 or more employees. Beyond that, policies vary widely by state. As of this writing, only 11 states had some sort of paid leave plan in place, while 5 more had plans that were pending and the rest had none. While some companies do offer paid leave, a US Bureau of Labor Statistics study found that only 23 percent of private industry workers in America had access to *paid* family leave, and only 13 percent had access to paid paternity leave.²¹ Not surprisingly, the vast majority of American men who

18. “Child Allowances in Japan to be Expanded from Oct. 2024,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 15, 2023, <https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/politics/politics-government/20230615-116165/>.

19. Kanako Takahara, “Japan Panel Proposes Child Care Plan Covering 100% of Income,” *Japan Times*, November 13, 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/11/13/japan/society/paternity-leave-benefits/>.

20. Ryo Asama, “Parental Leave in Japan: Aeon Offers Full Pay Up to Child’s 1st Birthday,” *Nikkei News*, February 2, 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Work/Parental-leave-in-Japan-Aeon-offers-full-pay-up-to-child-s-1st-birthday>.

21. Greg Rosalsky, “I’m a New Dad. Here’s Why I’m Taking More Parental Leave Than My Wife,” NPR, August 22, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/08/22/1194946948/im-a-new-dad-heres-why-im-taking-more-parental-leave-than-my-wife>.

do take paternity leave take fewer than two weeks off, and most take a week or less, cobbling together paid vacation and paid sick leave days rather than relying on unpaid leave. The delegation learned that paid family leave is a priority for the Biden administration, although efforts to date have been frustrated due to the Democrats' minority status in the House.

Our discussions revealed that in both countries, social norms and worksite pressures have contributed to an ongoing reluctance among men to take paternity and childcare leave. Japan's Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi made headlines in 2020 when he took 12 days of paternity leave, spread out over the course of a month, after his son was born.²² The delegation learned that First Gentleman Douglas Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, has also been working on this issue, trying to destigmatize paternity leave in the United States. But despite these efforts, one study published in 2022 found that Japanese men still fear they will create more work for colleagues and face career repercussions if they take advantage of the leave. The author of that study concluded that government mandates *requiring* that employees take the leave, rather than simply "encouraging" them to take it, would be more effective in changing the culture and alleviating peer pressure.²³

From reproductive health to reproductive rights

Also on the delegation's mind during their visit to the United States was the way in which reproductive rights and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives have come under fire from American conservatives. These issues have a direct impact on women's workforce participation and advancement, and the delegation members were curious to hear how their American interlocutors perceived the latest developments. The discussions, unfortunately, did not provide much hope that the deep divide on these issues would be rectified in the near future.

For Japan's part, it was noted, there has been a great deal of discussion on reproductive health, but the concept of reproductive rights is rarely raised. Abortion is widely accessible in Japan up to 22 weeks, although women are still legally required to get the consent of their spouse or partner.²⁴ In the spring of 2023, Japan approved the abortion pill for the first time, but once again the spousal approval requirement remained intact, and a woman must be hospitalized when using the pills. Neither form of abortion is covered by Japan's national insurance system, however, and access issues remain. In another recent move on this issue, the government also approved an initial trial of over-the-counter sales of the morning-after pill, which began in November 2023. Women are still the primary caregivers for children in both countries, and so the impact of reproductive rights has strong repercussions for labor force participation.

22. "Japan Environment Minister Takes 12 Days of Paternity Leave," *Kyodo News*, February 17, 2020, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/02/5fec369139a-japan-environment-minister-takes-12-days-of-paternity-leave.html>.

23. See Mary Brinton, *Shibarareru Nihonjin—jinko gensho wo motarasu 'kihan'wo uchiyabureru ka* [Japan Tied Up in Knots: Can the Norms Leading to Population Decline Be Broken?], trans. C. Ikemura (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho 2022).

24. See for example, Kathleen Benoza, "Consent issue casts shadow on safe abortion in Japan," *Japan Times*, September 28, 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/09/28/japan/science-health/international-safe-abortion-day/>.

The value of networking, mentorship, and engaging men as allies

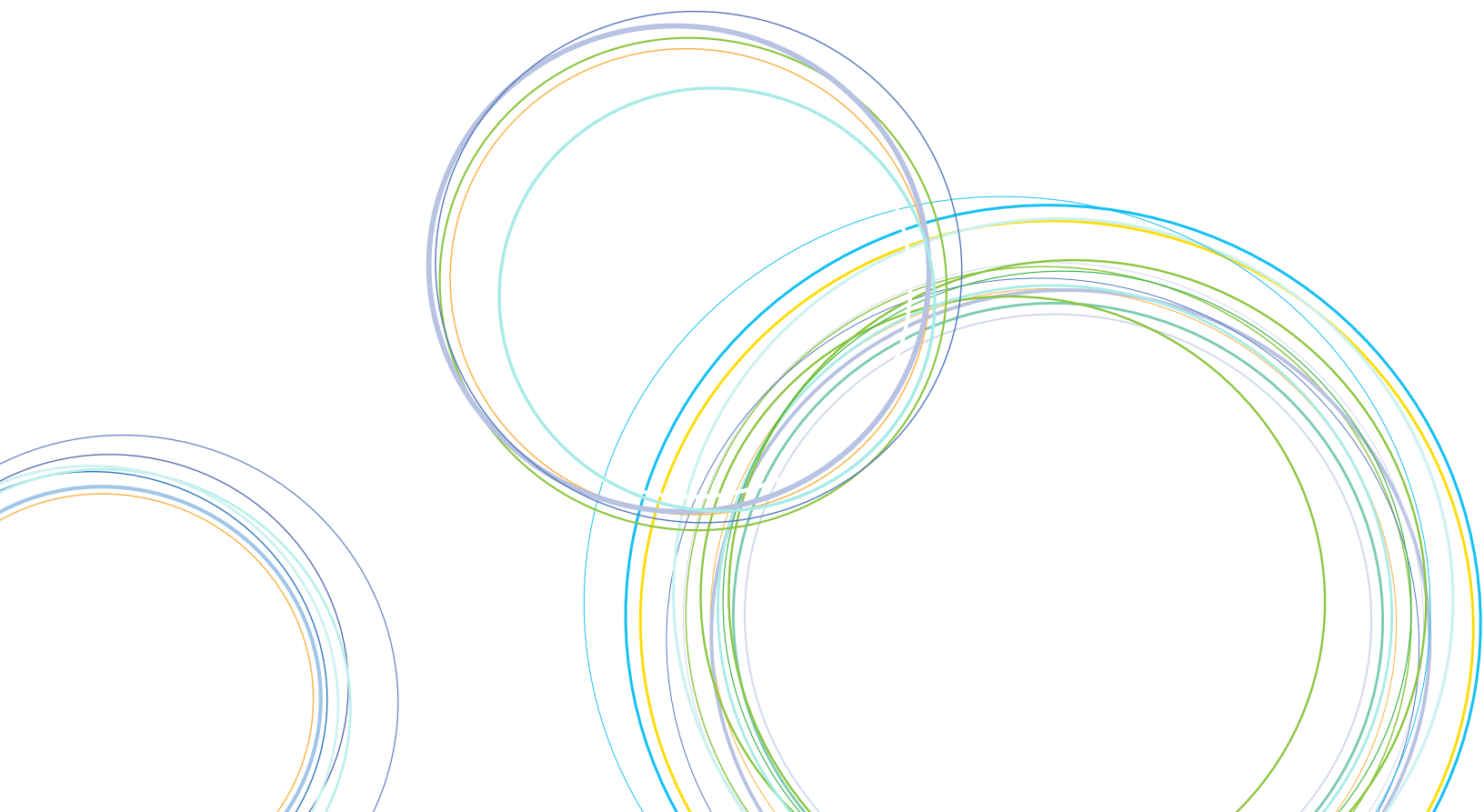
Finally, a recurring theme during the week, no matter the context, was the importance of professional networks and mentorships to help women succeed in the workforce. As noted above, two members of the 2023 delegation were recommended via the Japan Women’s Innovative Network (J-Win), a nonprofit member-based organization with over 100 member companies. The organization takes a three-tiered approach to developing women leaders, targeting younger “high-potential” women in managerial and non-managerial positions, the “next stage” women at senior management level, and executive officers. These members are engaged in various monthly meetings, study groups, global network-building activities, and mentorships. The importance of this type of network was brought home by one person who noted that her company’s target is to increase the number of women in middle management to 30 percent, but it is currently still at 17 percent. And obviously the number in senior management is even smaller. Being able to meet women in other companies and sectors through the J-Win network provides a much larger pool of role models and mentors that she can look to and learn from. Similarly, having the opportunity to network with women in other countries can offer new points of view and ideas on how to move on to the next step in one’s career.

At the same time, J-Win also works to promote diversity management by holding CEO meetings, “execution leaders’ meetings” for officers in charge of diversity and inclusion (D&I) programs, a men’s network to promote understanding of and champions of D&I, a best practices study group, and so on. The importance of these types of initiatives—i.e., bringing men into the conversation, creating shared values surrounding the benefits of diversity and inclusion for all workers and companies, and sharing best practices with men in leadership positions so that they can empower their female employees—was echoed again in our discussions of the STEM field in particular.



Recommendations for US-Japan cooperation on women in the workforce

- support comparative analyses and sharing of data and best practices on public and private sector policies designed to create inclusive workplaces (e.g., flexible working arrangements, training and advancement opportunities, etc.), address the gender pay gap, and create pathways to managerial and C-suite jobs for women
- support information sharing on how each country is working to provide accessible and affordable childcare and long-term care, and to “care for the caregivers” by improving the financial security and wellbeing of caregivers themselves
- promote greater understanding of the impact of ongoing gender imbalances in caregiving and household chores (e.g., Japan’s low birthrate and both countries’ high rates of women in part-time positions after childbirth)
- conduct joint studies of the impact of parental leave policies, examining in particular the impact of recent changes in Japanese law and corporate policies to encourage men to take parental leave, and the impact of reproductive health rights on women’s career trajectories
- carry out bilateral information exchanges on the impact of engaging men in efforts to encourage greater understanding and support for diversity and inclusion



International affairs and US-Japan relations

Another focus of our weeklong program was international and bilateral relations. The delegation spoke with US experts in government, think tanks, and academia, as well as Japanese government, media, and business experts to gain insights into the current issues impacting political and economic ties. The inclusion of two business leaders in our delegation proved to be highly beneficial as they were able to ask insightful questions and add a corporate perspective on such critical issues as economic security, supply chain management, and geopolitical risk. The meetings were eye-opening for them as well, as it fostered a deeper and more nuanced awareness of the interconnectedness between international relations and their own companies' interests.

Promoting democracy and human rights

One of the objectives of the US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, in addition to promoting women's empowerment, is to engage our participants in discussions on US-Japan relations and the key geopolitical issues facing our two nations. Democracy and human rights were issues that arose in multiple contexts throughout the week. They heard, for example, about the work of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) that is carried out in partnership with countries across the globe with the goal of helping support those countries' own aspirations for democracy. Other meetings touched on the need for the United States and Japan to do more internally as well as externally to ensure the health of democratic governance in the face of the rising populist and authoritarian threats around the world, and particularly in light of the increasing collaboration that is seen between countries such as China, Russia, and North Korea. One of the messages that was clear from the week's sessions was the important role of civil society and of people-to-people exchanges, including exchanges that engage the private sector, in terms of fostering support for democratic norms. The connection between successful democracies abroad and the national security of the United States and Japan was another point that was raised.

The United States and Japan must do more internally as well as externally to ensure the health of democratic governance in the face of the rising populist and authoritarian threats around the world.

Throughout the week, the delegation members asked numerous questions about the 2024 elections in the United States, reflecting concerns in Japan about what the results could bring and the political divide in American democracy. There were frank questions about whether a Biden-Trump rematch was inevitable. Their various American interlocutors acknowledged and expressed their own concerns about the ongoing divisiveness in public discourse, with one person noting that "democracy is messy," but they sought to reassure the Japanese delegation that the institutions of democracy may take time but will win out in the end.

Conversely, some in the delegation questioned whether the Japanese people, and even politicians, have a clear sense of what democracy means to them. It was noted that various outside pressures leading up to Japan's hosting of the G7 in 2023 had led the Japanese government to pass its first legislation on sexual orientation and gender

identity,²⁵ but that there has been slow progress on long-standing women's issues, such as allowing married women to continue using their maiden names or addressing the persistent gender wage gap. The political leaders were encouraged to engage their constituents in order to strengthen democracy both at home and abroad, and to fully use Japan's soft power, working together with democratic allies like South Korea, Australia, and others to support those working for freedom worldwide.

The delegation's business leaders were interested to learn more about the role of the private sector in promoting peace and democracy as well. They heard, for example, about the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), a core institute of NED that emphasizes strong democratic institutions as a prerequisite for business and entrepreneurship to succeed. A key point raised was that responsive and responsible businesses can demand good governance and the rule of law and can help shape norms of corporate citizenship both at home and abroad. Selecting investment and trade partners based on good business practices and good corporate citizenship can represent the best of Japanese values.

Assessing the Russian invasion of Ukraine

The war in Ukraine had been raging for more than a year and a half when the group was in Washington DC (the Hamas terrorist attack and subsequent conflict in Gaza had not yet occurred), and the delegation was anxious to hear American perspectives on the war. Experts noted that it was unlikely that the conflict would end soon, as both sides had little interest in negotiating. Ukraine, it was noted, views the battle as an existential threat, while Putin views Ukraine as being part of his sphere of influence, part of the Russian empire, and was being pushed by security elites to further escalate rather than retreat. They also heard that while the level of cyberattacks on Ukraine had been less than feared, the greatest risk factor remained potential attacks on critical infrastructure.

In discussions on the war's impact on trade and how it would be handled in APEC, they learned that the presence of Russian and Chinese delegations would make it extremely difficult to include strong language on the war. There were some hopes that APEC might be able to release a statement similar to that included in the G20 joint statement (produced shortly before the delegation arrived), which called on "all states" to "refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition," warned against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and "highlighted the human suffering and negative added impacts of the war in Ukraine with regard to global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth," although it also noted that "there were different views and assessments of the situation."²⁶ In the end,

25. Japan remains the only G7 nation that does not permit same-sex marriage, although many local governments allow same-sex partnership agreements. The bill that passed in June 2023 was largely described as a "watered-down" bill by observers outside Japan as it does not go so far as to ban discrimination, simply calling for greater understanding, the drafting of plans, and stating that "unjust discrimination" is not acceptable. See Reuters, "Japan Enacts Watered-Down LGBT Understanding Law," *Asahi Shimbun*, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14932051>.

26. G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (September 9–10, 2023), https://www.g20.in/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf.



the statement issued at the APEC Summit in November 2023 included no mention of Ukraine or Gaza. The United States issued a separate Chair's Statement, saying, "Most members strongly condemn the aggression against Ukraine," but that there had been objections to the inclusion of statements on geopolitical issues given APEC's nature as an economic forum.²⁷

The Trilateral Summit and geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific

The delegation's visit also came just weeks after the Trilateral Leaders' Summit between Japanese Prime Minister Kishida, Republic of Korea's President Yoon, and US President Biden, the first-ever stand-alone meeting of the three countries' leaders. The delegation was interested in hearing officials' impressions of the outcomes of the meeting, and more broadly about the current US policy on the Indo-Pacific region.

One positive outcome of the Summit was the inclusion of a section on a Women's Empowerment Initiative as part of the trilateral commitments on deepening economic and technology cooperation. The three countries "decided to continue building on existing trilateral initiatives on this topic through programs and events designed to build government, civil society, and corporate partnerships that advance women and girls in STEM fields, domestic care infrastructure, and women's full and meaningful participation in all sectors of society."²⁸

Several of the experts the delegation met with made a point that the Biden administration has been emphasizing cooperation with like-minded friends and allies, particularly given the changing environment surrounding Russia, China, and North

27. See the 2023 Leaders' Declaration and the Chair's Statement on the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting on the APEC website, <https://apec.sitefinity.cloud/meeting-papers/leaders-declarations/2023/2023-leaders-declaration>.

28. White House, "FACT SHEET: The Trilateral Leaders' Summit at Camp David," August 13, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/fact-sheet-the-trilateral-leaders-summit-at-camp-david/>.

One positive outcome of the US-ROK-Japan Summit was the inclusion of a section on a Women's Empowerment Initiative as part of the trilateral commitments on deepening economic and technology cooperation.

Korea. Some stressed that the United States is not trying to contain China, but that it is important to work together to offset what the US government sees as Chinese economic coercion, disinformation, intellectual property theft, and so on. The Japanese government's recent increases to its defense budget were pointed to as a positive sign, and the willingness of the Japanese and South Korean leaders to take a step toward rapprochement through the August 2023 Summit was also appreciated.

One expert observed that the US-Japan conversation in recent years has shifted from trade and economic growth to a focus on economic security, and indeed, this was a point raised in several discussions during the week. Both are necessary, and it is important to bring business into the conversation to ensure that economic security policy and trade policy work together to produce economic growth. The Japanese participants voiced interest in US policy on global supply chains and how it is engaging the Global South in that connection. Many countries in the Indo-Pacific are trying to strike a balance between their relations with China and the United States, and those who do so successfully appear to be the ones faring the best in terms of economic growth.

There was a clear understanding expressed by US officials and experts that the United States and Japan have different historical relationships and interests vis-à-vis China, and as one person explained, ensuring that we “figure out how to take on China without burning down the world” will require that the US and Japan bring their respective wisdom to the table. On a more concrete issue, it was noted that US assistance would be appreciated in addressing China's ban on Japanese fish due to the release of treated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Increasing cooperation on women, peace, and security

Finally, one topic where greater US-Japan cooperation could be fruitful is women, peace, and security (WPS). This issue was raised at a number of meetings and was the central focus of a session at Georgetown University led by Ambassador Melanne Verveer, one of the country's foremost experts on the topic. The ambassador and her colleagues have been involved in a US-Japan program on WPS organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, which brought a US delegation of young female experts to Japan in the summer of 2023. The result of those discussions stressed the importance of policymaker engagement in promoting WPS, whole-of-government strategies and frameworks for its implementation, and the importance of gendered approaches to disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding in particular.²⁹ These themes were echoed in our delegation's discussions as well.

The delegation further learned that the United States was actually behind much of the rest of the world in terms of preparing a National Action Plan on WPS. It was then

29. SEED Trip for Experts on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), SPF website, <https://spfusa.org/programs/seed-trip-for-experts-on-women-peace-and-security-wps/>.



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who got it passed by convincing male leaders that “it’s not just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do”—a sentiment that applies to engaging more women in politics and business as well. The Women, Peace, and Security Act was then passed in 2017, under the Trump administration, although it is unclear how involved the president himself was in passing the Act. That legislation established that “it shall be the policy of the United States to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.”³⁰

Japan has also demonstrated its commitment to WPS and has recently established a WPS Diet Caucus that now boasts more than 50 members. Serendipitously, Yoko Kamikawa, who served as the chair of that caucus, was named as the new foreign minister on the day that the delegation visited Georgetown University. One of the delegation members, Aiko Shimajiri, has also been involved in that caucus. Given that her constituency is in Okinawa, site of US military bases, she has a keen interest in peace and security. She and her colleagues contended that because women tend to bring empathy and inclusivity to their policies, they can contribute greatly on peacemaking and other related issues.

Indeed, Japan’s contributions through development, disaster risk reduction, and so on, were highly appreciated. Two of our delegation members referred to their work following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku region of Japan. One mentioned that she was the only woman on a government team responding to the Fukushima nuclear disaster response, and that through that experience, she realized that women have special concerns that have to be addressed in disaster relief efforts (menstruation, breast feeding, fear of harassment, etc.). Another noted that it was clear

30. Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, 22 USC 2151 [S. 1141] (2017), Sec. 4.

which evacuation centers were run by boards that included women since they provided solutions to those types of privacy concerns, such as providing vehicles that enabled doctors to examine pregnant women in privacy. These conversations confirmed that the United States and Japan should expand and enhance their collaboration on disaster risk reduction and recovery, but do so with an intentional focus on gendered perspectives. For example, the United States and Japan will certainly be engaged in the rebuilding of Ukraine when the conflict there ends, but it was noted that while there have been many donor meetings already on that topic, women have not been adequately included in those sessions.

Cultural and educational issues

On the delegation's final day in Washington DC, they were able to change gears for a bit to explore cultural issues. They began by visiting the National Museum of Women in the Arts, a museum founded in 1981 that remains the only museum in the world focused specifically on championing women in the arts. With the museum undergoing



renovations, the group was only able to visit one gallery, but they learned about the mission and goals of the institution. The museum's founder, an art collector and art historian named Wilhelmina Halladay, realized that there was little or no mention of women artists in the art literature of the time, including in the US Library of Congress. She therefore founded this museum to acquire works from all periods and countries and to engage with partners around the world to hold exhibits and promote learning about female artists.

One of the critical issues that the museum seeks to address is the failure by leading art museums and collectors to recognize the work of female artists. Even today, only around 11 percent of acquisitions at leading US museums were pieces created by women, and the problem is sadly universal.³¹ A study of worldwide auction sales from 2008 to 2019 found that works by women represented only 2 percent of the total sales, and of the US\$4 billion spent on their works, nearly 41 percent was spent on works by just five women (with Japan's Yayoi Kusama leading the total).³²

This trend is similar to what is seen in other fields. One area raised in the 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, for example, was the dearth of venture capital (VC) going to female entrepreneurs. A Morningstar study found that in 2022, companies founded solely by women received only 2 percent of VC funds, while start-ups that had a combination of male and female founders received 16.5 percent.³³ These types of statistics demonstrate how vital it is that we promote greater diversity and awareness among those making the decisions and allocating funds. In the VC field, for example, there is a small but growing number of women-led and women-focused VC funds. Advocacy, education, and awareness-raising are key to bringing about change.

The delegation also visited the Great Falls Elementary School in Virginia, where they were able to observe an immersion language program, with children learning not only how to speak Japanese but also learning about science and math in Japanese as well. The unique program earned the school a visit in 1994 by Japan's Emperor Akihito and



31. NMWA website, www.nmwa.org.

32. Beatriz Lozano, "Visualizing the Numbers: See infographics Tracing the Representation of Women Artists in Museums and the Market," Artnet, September 19, 2019, <https://news.artnet.com/womens-place-in-the-art-world/visualizing-the-numbers-see-infographics-1654084>.

33. Sara Silano, "Women Founders Get 2% of Venture Capital Funding in U.S.," Morningstar, March 6, 2023, <https://www.morningstar.com/alternative-investments/women-founders-get-2-venture-capital-funding-us>.

Empress Michiko. Families in the school district have the option to select from a number of language options taught at different schools in the area, and the delegation was encouraged to see the large number of students who had opted into the Japanese program, which is an encouraging sign for US-Japan relations. One of the insights from the discussion with the teachers that also resonated with the group was the important role that parents play in encouraging their kids to take on this type of challenge. It was echoed in our discussion of women in STEM as well, as will be discussed below.

Recommendations for US-Japan cooperation on women in international relations and WPS

- support efforts by civil society organizations and the private sector in both countries to promote democratic norms and human rights—both domestically and internationally—through educational and awareness-raising initiatives, incorporating a focus on gender equality
- implement and expand existing bilateral and multilateral commitments to address gender disparities and challenges
 - e.g., enhance government, civil society, and corporate cooperation/exchanges among Japan, South Korea, and the United States to advance existing commitments to deepen economic and technology cooperation and promote women’s participation in all sectors of society
- continue to coordinate closely with allies and partners to apply diplomatic pressure on Russia to end the war in Ukraine, and ensure women are at the table in discussions on post-conflict reconstruction assistance
- work collaboratively within forums and frameworks like IPEF and APEC to address the vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic and recent conflicts—i.e., disruptions to global food and energy security, inflation, etc.—and apply a gendered lens to identify measures that safeguard economic stability and resilience for all
- foster dialogue and collaboration among policymakers, government officials, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to promote comprehensive strategies and frameworks for implementing WPS principles
 - e.g., expand and enhance US-Japan collaboration on disaster risk reduction and recovery efforts, with a focus on gender-sensitive approaches; share experiences and expertise in responding to natural disasters and humanitarian crises to build more resilient and inclusive communities
- recognizing that cultural and educational exchange provide a crucial bedrock for international understanding and cooperation, provide increased public support for people-to-people exchanges, study abroad programs, and language immersion programs, and ensure that they are conducted in ways that promote inclusivity and equity

Empowering women in STEM³⁴

About the Roundtable

On September 14, JCIE hosted the US-Japan Women in STEM Roundtable as part of the US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, drawing roughly 40 American and Japanese women experts and several men from government, academia, science and tech-related business, finance, media, nonprofits, and more. The meeting was informed by insights and recommendations that emerged from a private online Working Group session hosted by JCIE on August 24, where a dozen American and Japanese women experts assembled to discuss steps to empower women in STEM-related fields. This section also draws on a business luncheon that JCIE co-organized with Intel on September 12 for our delegation, which brought together American and Japanese businesswomen to examine how the two countries can help women in business thrive, with a focus on AI, digital technology, and women in STEM fields.

The objective of these meetings was to build on the findings of our 2022 Dialogue, which pointed to STEM as an area offering the greatest room for growth for women in terms of well-paying and flexible jobs. At that time, the participants had called for greater efforts by the two countries to increase women's interest in and access to STEM, starting at the K-12 education level through to higher education, the workforce, and C-suites. We therefore sought not only to share ideas and best practices but also to generate concrete recommendations on where our two countries might effectively work together to move the needle on this issue.

Through these activities, we heard many positive notes sounded about women's progress, particularly in the life sciences. For example, it was mentioned that there has been a modest increase in the number of women receiving patents in STEM-related



34. For this section, we are indebted to Prof. Rie Kijima, who served as rapporteur on the Working Group Meeting and as a presenter at the Roundtable. This section draws on summary materials prepared by Prof. Kijima in collaboration with JCIE staff.

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fields. But at the same time, we also heard that the progress has been too slow. Taking the example of patents again, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) estimates that at the current rate of increase, it will be 2058 before women achieve parity in patent approvals worldwide, while projections looking at women inventors in just the United States put the parity date at 2092.³⁵

Despite—or perhaps because of—that lack of progress, the energy and enthusiasm in the room for our Roundtable was impressive. In addition to six legislators, there was a representative from Japan’s space agency, a polar and marine ecologist from the US National Security Agency, a marine microbiologist who previously headed the National Science Foundation, representatives from pharmaceutical and technology firms, women who have launched educational nonprofits to engage women in STEM or other career paths, and so many more exceptional participants. The meeting was held at the Congressional Visitors Center to allow members of Congress and their staff to attend. Despite the occasional interruption of the buzzer calling members to the floor of Congress for votes, the panel discussion and the subsequent open discussions never flagged for a moment. The two hours flew by as the sessions were brimming with substantive commentary and inspiration.

The Roundtable began with welcoming comments from our co-chairs, DeGette and Noda, who expressed their commitment to empowering women across all sectors and particularly to supporting collaborative US-Japan efforts to improve the status of women in STEM. They were followed by Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), who not only has a STEM academic background but also counts high school chemistry teacher among her impressive list of professional experiences prior to running for Congress. She was the co-founder of the Women in STEM Caucus in Congress, which now includes more than 50 members—both men and women. The Caucus is working to support a more diverse STEM pipeline, but Houlahan and others pointed to concerns that the pipeline is leaky, with young girls losing interest in STEM before they get to college, and those who do pursue STEM degrees opting not to stay in the STEM field as a career. These decisions can impact women’s earning potential for decades.

Also leading off the discussion was one of our delegation members, Aiko Shimajiri, who has served as minister for science and technology and for marine policy, among other posts. She recounted her own experiences supporting education for “*rikejo*,” women in STEM, and stressed that as we look ahead and reconceptualize the values and the world we want to see in this information era, it is critical that women’s perspectives be reflected in that vision.

The ensuing panel presentations and discussions were then focused on three critical questions, which we will explore below, drawing on the Working Group recommendations as well:

35. See WIPO, “Gender Gap in Innovation Closing, But Progress is Slow,” WIPO website, March 8, 2021, https://www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2021/news_0002.html; Jessica Milli, et al., *Equity in Innovation: Women Inventors and Patents* (Washington DC: IWPR, 2016), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/C448-Equity-in-Innovation.pdf>.

- What kind of support or initiatives are needed at the K-12 level and in universities to engage and empower girls and young women to pursue studies and careers in STEM?
- What policies or practices are most effective in helping ensure that women can achieve their full potential in terms of pay equity and access to the C-suite, board rooms, and venture capital in STEM industries?
- What efforts have been made by the US and Japanese governments and how can the two governments integrate gender equity in their bilateral agenda going forward, particularly as it pertains to cooperation on science and technology, including the climate change agenda?

Encouraging girls and young women to pursue studies and careers in STEM

Various studies have shown that the gender divide when it comes to girls and boys in STEM is connected to self-confidence and self-efficacy (i.e., whether they believe they are capable of accomplishing complex tasks). As one Japanese participant noted, science proficiency scores in Japan for 15-year-olds were almost identical between boys and girls, and they had quite similar scores in mathematics as well. But as of 2021, OECD data shows that among young Japanese women entering undergraduate programs, less than 8 percent were going into STEM fields other than health and welfare (the latter accounted for 15 percent). Women earned 47 percent of all bachelor's degrees that year, but they accounted for just 29 percent of the total in natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics and just 16 percent of those in engineering, manufacturing, and construction.³⁶

While the classifications used in the United States make direct comparison difficult, the trends are quite similar. The National Science Foundation found that women now earn the majority of degrees (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral) in social and behavioral sciences as well as agricultural and biological sciences. They receive a slightly smaller share (43 percent) of bachelor's degrees in physical and earth sciences overall, but within that category, they receive just 24 percent of physics degrees. And similarly, when it comes to mathematical and computer sciences and engineering, they represent roughly a quarter of bachelor's degrees. Despite a proliferation of scholarships and other incentives for women in STEM, the report shows only minimal progress from 2011 to 2020.³⁷

Perhaps the most striking reminder of how much work still needs to be done on this issue, however, was a comment from one American participant at the Roundtable who had received a degree in engineering from an elite university in 1980. At the time, there were only 10 young women out of the 100 or so students in the program. Thirty

36. These numbers include those going into ICT as well. On the other hand, 74 percent of degrees in health and welfare went to female students. See OECD, "Education at a Glance: Distribution of graduates and new entrants by field (2021 data)," https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=EAG_GRAD_ENTR_FIELD#.

37. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, "Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities—Science and Engineering Degrees Earned," National Science Foundation (NSF), January 30, 2023, <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf23315/report/science-and-engineering-degrees-earned#overall-s-e-degrees-earned-by-women>.

years later, when her daughter enrolled in the same program at the same university, that percentage had not changed. Those numbers echoed a comment by a Japanese participant about what she called the “10% barrier” in Japan. She explained that 10 percent has long represented the percentage of women in engineering, the percentage of women in Japan’s Lower House, and the percentage of women in decision-making roles in Japanese companies.

The critical question, it was agreed, is how we can change the perceptions of girls and young women about both their own capabilities and about the field itself. Young people are influenced by those around them, including teachers, guidance counselors,

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communities, and parents/caregivers. A 2014 study conducted by Yuko Hayashi and Hideko Kunii, for example, found that mothers play an important role in their children’s selection of an undergraduate major, and that mothers who themselves had pursued STEM degrees were more likely to encourage their daughters to select STEM studies as well. Part of the issue, they discovered, was that non-STEM mothers in particular did not have a clear image of STEM-related career paths beyond doctor or pharmacist.³⁸ But as one participant pointed out, STEM has applications across most sectors of the economy, so getting people to understand that is vital.

You do not have to be a doctor or a computer software designer—you might develop a STEM venture related to food science, fermentation, cosmetics, longevity, or a myriad of other topics that are directly relevant to our lives in ways that may be easily relatable for women.

For that reason, it is important to target young women themselves, but it is also vital that we work to strengthen teachers’ and guidance counselors’ capacity, inform parents about the benefits of pursuing careers in STEM, and expand opportunities within communities for experiential learning and STEM. Some of the recommendations that emerged from the Working Group and Roundtable included the following:

1. Increase student confidence and self-efficacy at the K-12 level

It is important that efforts are made to increase confidence/self-efficacy of girls looking to get into STEM through inclusive messaging. It was pointed out in a previous session of the US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue that framing science as problem-solving can make the field more inviting to young women, for example, and having women teachers in the classrooms also makes a difference when it comes to helping girls believe that they are able to accomplish STEM-related tasks.

But perhaps most important is to enable youths in middle school and high school to be able to imagine what it is like to pursue STEM as a career. Schools can increase the presence of female STEM role models for girls through mentorship programs, guest lecturers, career fairs, and so on. For a participant from Japan who had come from a farming family, it was the opportunity to attend NASA’s Space Camp in the United States as a teenager and to see first-hand what a career in that field would

38. From a presentation by Yuko Hayashi and Hideko Kunii on “A Survey on the Impact of Mothers in Course Selection of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) of their Daughters” (presented at the Gender Summit 6 in Korea, August 26–28, 2015).

look like that led to her career in astronomy. It is difficult to aspire to a career that you cannot envision.

2. Empower teachers and diversify educational resources

Particularly in public school systems that have limited resources, it is important to build teacher capacity and retention and support them through strong partnerships between schools and nonprofits/corporations to incorporate more hands-on, inquiry-based STEM learning in and outside of classrooms. In Japan, this is extremely important because the homeroom teachers play a critical role in younger grades, covering all subjects whether they have a background in the natural sciences or not.

Schools must provide more teacher-led, hands-on opportunities for girls to help them better visualize what pursuing STEM means, using videos spotlighting women in STEM, manga, a day in the life, virtual shows, etc., especially at a young age—around 11–15 years old—when interest in potential careers begins developing. To facilitate this, it is important to develop more STEM education resources and programs targeting underrepresented populations and areas; ready-to-go resources (e.g., STEM kits) and lesson plans can provide much-needed aid to overstretched teachers.

3. Inform parents/caregivers about the benefits of STEM education

Numerous studies have shown the impact of parents on their children's decisions to pursue STEM careers, and as noted above, Japanese mothers are particularly influential in their daughters' decision making. For that reason, it is important to engage parents in STEM—especially non-STEM mothers. This can be done through joint workshops that empower parents to provide career guidance and encouragement to youths, for example, or other activities and initiatives targeted to parents that present positive images and information about successful women in STEM and about potential career paths for their daughters.

4. Strengthen community involvement to expand opportunities for experiential learning in STEM

There are many actors within the community that can play a role in improving and expanding K-12 students' understanding of the types of doors that STEM opens to them. One example of an NPO working in this space is Career Girls,³⁹ which seeks to introduce accomplished women as role models in diverse fields to bridge what they call the “imagination gap.” They offer ready-to-go curriculum that teachers can utilize in their classrooms, as well as toolkits for school counselors, families, and mentors. Girls Who Code⁴⁰ is another example of a nonprofit that provides free computer clubs for girls from third grade up, as well as programs for college-aged and young women who have just begun careers, and online activities for students, educators, and parents.

39. See <https://www.careergirls.org>.

40. See <https://girlswhocode.com>.

Corporations are also key players in this space. Abbott, a health technology company, offers a number of educational programs, such as their Family Science Day at schools, where students and their families join in fun science experiments with Abbott volunteers to understand how science and engineering impact our daily lives. They also offer internships for high school and college students.⁴¹ And Intel has been working in partnership with foundations and government agencies to target middle-school girls in under-resourced locations through their She Will Connect program, conducting after-school and summer STEM camps to encourage girls to engage in technology, engineering, and computer science. They are also a founding partner of the Million Girls Moonshot, billed as “a transformative movement designed to help close the science and engineering gender gap by engaging one million school-age girls in STEM learning opportunities over the next five years across all 50 US States.” The program offers after-school programs, mentorships, teacher toolkits, and other initiatives to spark interest in STEM.⁴²

How can we ensure that young women who enter STEM studies remain in that course of study and then have career opportunities moving forward?

Finally, universities are another important resource for K-12 schools. One example is a university-K12-corporate program carried out by SKY Labo, a nonprofit that offers educational summer workshops for Japanese middle and high school girls to give them the skills and confidence they need to enter STEM and STEAM (i.e., STEM + the arts) fields. They worked with STEAM women (e.g., engineers and designers) from Hitachi, Panasonic, and Uniqlo to inspire girls to pursue STEAM subjects; with PwC Japan on design thinking and STEAM programs for girls from different prefectures; and with the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) to empower girls in Okinawa.⁴³

It is essential that these types of programs be supported and expanded, and that best practices be widely shared.

Higher education and academic careers for women in STEM

The next stage in the STEM pipeline is the university. The Kishida government’s Council for the Creation of Future Education called on universities in 2023 to introduce quotas to attract more female STEM students, and at least a dozen, such as the Tokyo Institute of Technology, are doing so starting with the 2024 academic year. The Council also proposed providing greater financial support to those universities that secure female students in STEM fields and mandating that universities disclose information on whether their numbers have increased.

These are encouraging steps, but the next question once you improve recruitment is how to ensure that young women who enter STEM studies remain in that course of study and then have career opportunities moving forward. We heard repeatedly

41. For information on Abbott’s initiatives, see <https://www.abbott.com/responsibility/social-impact/science-education.html>.

42. For information on Intel’s initiatives, see <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/corporate-responsibility/social-impact-and-educational-initiatives/she-will-connect.html>.

43. For information on SKY Labo, see <http://www.skylabo.org/home-eng>.

that female mentors and role models in universities are vital in order to retain women in academia and to encourage them to pursue STEM careers after graduation. One Japanese participant who had attended the University of Tokyo lamented that her male advisors there had tried to dissuade her from pursuing a career at international organizations like the World Health Organization or the US Centers for Disease Control following graduation, warning her that she would not be able to marry or have a family if she did so. Fortunately, she did not listen and has gone on to prove them wrong, but she noted that the lack of women in her former department faculty remains as low now as it was when she was there, and she hears from current students that the advice has not changed either.

What can universities do to improve their institutional practices and policies to improve hiring and retention of women and to create inclusive environments where female students and researchers can thrive? Some of the ideas that emerged from our discussions are as follows:

1. Reform institutional norms by revisiting hiring policies and practices

Universities should have clearly articulated, systematic plans and policies to improve diversity, inclusion, recruitment, and retention of female faculty and students. The issue starts with the faculty hiring process. An article from the *Harvard Business Review* revealed that if a pool of finalists for a job included only one female, the chance of hiring a woman for the academic post was zero. (The same held true for minority candidates.)⁴⁴ That means that universities need to cast a wider net in their candidate searches, and job descriptions must be reexamined to remove biased language.

It is also important that faculty members be assessed based on concrete criteria for research and teaching excellence, and that the university address biases that marginalize underrepresented groups. They should also ensure that assessments take into account career interruptions and milestones (e.g., rather than simply looking at the number of publications since the person earned their doctoral degree, an assessment should take into account maternity/family leave).

Finally, universities should provide institutional support structures, such as flexible work policies and leadership training.

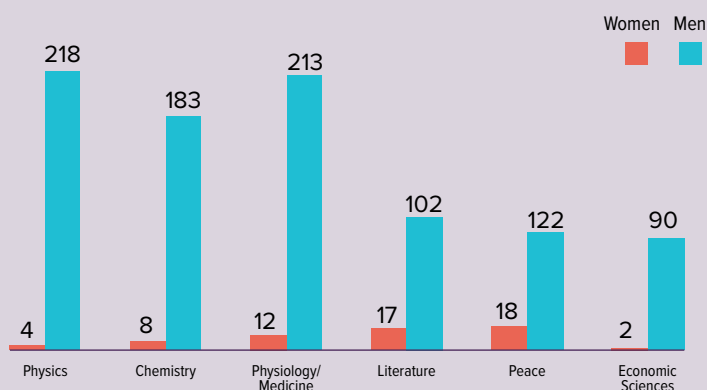
2. Harness an environment more conducive to mentorships

We heard repeatedly how important it is that female students and professors be provided strong mentorship from more senior women faculty in STEM. But the impact of mentorship is often overlooked when considering promotions and tenure. Universities should create clear standards so that women faculty who are providing mentorship are given credit in performance reviews for their contribution to the field.

Developing peer support networks and communities of practice can be an effective way to address the isolation faced by women in male-dominated fields. A study in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, for example, found that women studying engineering who had female mentors during their first two years of college,

44. Stefanie K. Johnson, David R. Hekman, and Elsa T. Chan, "If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired," *Harvard Business Review*, April 26, 2016.

Individual Recipients of the Nobel Prize, 1901–2023



the timeframe when students are most likely to leave STEM majors, were more likely to remain in the major compared to those with male mentors, and were more likely to pursue advanced degrees in engineering as well.⁴⁵

Providing mentoring and flexible support for postdocs is also essential for retaining women in academia. It is important to recognize the challenges women may face in terms of family and caregiving responsibilities and encourage them to ask for what they need to succeed in academia. Two of the women in the Roundtable shared

that they had both given birth to three children while completing their PhDs, and so for postdocs who are moms, access to childcare (which as noted above is a problem where the Japanese government has made progress, but the United States lags behind) and some degree of flexibility in terms of schedules and travel are critical in order to succeed.

3. Create curricula that is more inclusive and appropriate for all types of learners

It is important to build current and future faculty capacity through professional development on student-centered, hands-on pedagogies to support STEM learning. One participant from a Japanese graduate school pointed out that one of the reasons why students leave STEM studies within the first two years of college is that they feel a lack of belonging and community. She shared her university's efforts, in collaboration with Harvard, to work with graduate students in STEM to rewrite the curriculum in a way that authentically and scientifically represent those who are traditionally underrepresented, including women and minorities, in order to ensure that all students feel a greater sense of belonging in their fields.

Finally, as is often noted, AI and other technologies have the potential to eliminate certain jobs and thereby hamper some of the progress that has been made in women's workforce participation. (For example, as machine translation progresses, it may eliminate translation and interpretation jobs, which tend to be held predominantly by women.⁴⁶) But on the other hand, the rapid evolution of the technology field makes it easier for women to jump into or return to a STEM career, as long as they

45. The students showed a substantial improvement in belonging and self-efficacy. After the first year of the study, all of the women with female mentors remained in the field as compared to 82 percent with male mentors and 89 percent with no mentors at all. Tara C. Dennehy and Nilanjana Dasgupta, "Female Peer Mentors Early in College Increase Women's Positive Academic Experiences and Retention in Engineering," *PNAS* 114(23), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1613117114>.

46. According to the website Data USA, nearly 71 percent of the interpreter and translator workforce in 2021 was female, with men earning 34 percent more than women in these jobs, <https://datausa.io/profile/soc/interpreters-and-translators>.

have access to educational programs that offer the latest knowledge. Universities therefore play an important role in providing training and reskilling of women for careers in STEM fields, and particularly for reaching out to women in rural areas, where opportunities are scarcer.

4. Build a collaborative ecosystem and strengthen women's participation in the innovation pipeline

Universities often play the role of community hubs, drawing in local businesses, governments, schools, and nonprofit organizations as partners in their initiatives. As noted above, they can provide crucial resources for K-12 students, teachers, and families.

They can also provide an important connection to employers and to capital for entrepreneurs and innovators. The University of Maryland, for example, created the University System of Maryland Launch Fund that offers small early-stage capital to help students, faculty, employees, or alumni launch new ventures in the state.⁴⁷ They note that they prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is important to ensure that women are aware of these opportunities and have access to training and mentoring on intellectual property and commercialization of innovations.

Gender equity in STEM business and entrepreneurship

During the Roundtable, as well as at the Intel-cosponsored dialogue held earlier in the week, the delegation had the opportunity to hear from leading women working in STEM and STEM-related fields. They identified some of the contributing factors to their own success, areas in which they or their companies are working to help more women succeed, and gaps where greater efforts are needed. The importance of the digital economy in particular was highlighted given that, according to World Bank figures, it currently represents more than 15 percent of world GDP and has been growing at a rate that is 2.5 times that of other sectors of the economy.

1. Diversify and provide greater networking and mentorship opportunities

The business sector can play a role at various points along the STEM pipeline. To help encourage more young women to enter STEM careers, they can encourage experiential opportunities, such as internships and fellowships for high school and college students in small companies and startups as well as large companies.

For women in the labor market, it is important to promote networking and peer support groups for women at different career stages. Women in Bio,⁴⁸ for example, offers a peer program for young women entering the field and networks for women looking to break into the executive level. And the Tokyo Metropolitan Government offers an Accelerator Program in Tokyo for women entrepreneurs (APT Women) in STEM and other fields, which provides knowledge, skills, mentorships, and

47. For information, see the fund's website at <https://www.usmd.edu/launch/>.

48. See <https://www.womeninbio.org>.

networking.⁴⁹ It is also important, as noted in the case of academia above, for companies to offer their employees mentorship programs and leadership training to attract and retain more women in STEM careers.

Finally, international assignments and exposure can broaden women's career perspectives and opportunities. This requires that companies pay greater attention to the conditions needed to facilitate such a move, given the caregiving burden many women shoulder. It was also noted that Japanese women's participation in the international community has often helped create pressure for more progressive change in Japan.

2. Identify champions for gender equality

Another commonly heard theme during the week was the need for male allies and the need to expand the conversation in inclusive and productive ways. As one participant who works in the legal field described, since men still hold more positions of power, whether it is in the law firms and courts, in the lab, or in the corporate C-suites, we need to understand that this is their battle too. They need to understand the implicit and explicit biases facing women.

For example, it is important to encourage men in leadership to champion women by proactively identifying and promoting women within their teams and organizations through projects, advice, and encouragement. It is equally important for men to support their spouses at home by sharing in housekeeping and childrearing duties to ensure that both partners can live up to their full potential.

It was encouraging to hear that in the US House of Representatives, a significant number of men were now involved in the Women in STEM Caucus, while in Japan, the Mama and Papa Caucus that was established by members of the 2017 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue to improve conditions for working parents more broadly, was also enjoying significant participation from male Diet members.

3. Diversify recruitment and retain talents

The recruitment of a more diverse workforce requires that employers re-examine their job requirements and the skills needed rather than defaulting to only hiring those with familiar backgrounds and career trajectories. Women may have gaps in their resumes or periods of underemployment due to childbirth and childrearing but may now be looking to reenter the full-time career track. They may have skills from a very different sector and have gone back to study so that they can combine those previous skillsets with new tools to tackle a new field. For example, the US National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy released in July 2023 focuses on lifelong skills development (upskilling and reskilling) and skills-based hiring as ways to strengthen the cyber workforce. It stresses that people should be able to “compete for jobs based on what they can do rather than merely credentials.”⁵⁰

Having a workforce strategy at the company level is critical as well. In the cybersecurity field, one participant noted, only 13 percent of the workforce in the US

49. See <https://apt-women.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/en/>.

50. Office of the National Cyber Director, Executive Office of the President, National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy (July 31, 2023), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NCWES-2023.07.31.pdf>.

and 10 percent in Japan are women, and even fewer are in executive posts. In that dynamic area, it is critical that companies put in a long-term effort to identify the skills they need for the future and assess what skills the current employees have. Once they know that, they need to figure out how to get the people they need into their company's pipeline, as well as working to reskill and upskill current staff. This type of skills-based strategy is expected to even the playing field and contribute to a more diverse workforce.

Once hired, flexible work policies such as work from home make a crucial difference in retaining talented women in the workforce. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), for example, set up a work-life support and diversity office in 2016 that focuses on improving workstyles for both men and women, recruiting and promoting more women—including the recruitment of female astronauts—improving the environment for having and raising children, and so on.

A representative from a life sciences company that focuses on women's health shared how her company had been examining how they can ensure that unmet health needs do not stand in the way of women's ability to succeed in their careers and lives. In addition to other topics discussed here, such as family leave, maternity and paternity leave, childcare, and mentorships, they have looked at health benefits, including mental health and fertility treatments, for example, and ways to provide mentorships and programs for women coming back to the company after a caregiving leave to help them reintegrate. She explained that in a field where there is a thirst for talent, this approach simply makes economic and business sense.

4. Address conscious and unconscious bias, including in AI

Some studies have suggested that the introduction of AI—for example bot interviewers for initial job screenings—creates a less biased environment and has led to more women applying and being hired for jobs.⁵¹ However, many other studies have found that AI algorithms can reinforce discrimination instead. Amazon, for example, developed an AI tool to rate prospective employees and used it from 2014 to 2017. What they found, however, was that the system was built on the previous decade's worth of resumes, and since the hiring decisions in those cases had led to an overwhelmingly male workforce, the algorithm also showed explicit bias toward women.⁵² Similarly, as noted above, thought should be given to ensure that gaps in resumes due to family caregiving responsibilities (particularly due to the pandemic) not be counted against female applicants when developing algorithms. In short, there needs to be safeguards to ensure that the algorithms that companies now depend on for much of the hiring process do not simply perpetuate existing biases. Legislators are now working to create legal guardrails to ensure that AI tools are examined regularly for bias, but it remains to be seen what impact these new regulations will have.

51. See, for example, Mallory Avery, Andreas Leibbrandt and Joseph Vecchi, "Does Artificial Intelligence Help or Hurt Gender Diversity? Evidence from Two Field Experiments on Recruitment in Tech," Monash Business School Discussion Paper no. 2023-09, https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3279449/2023-09.pdf.

52. Dave Gershgom, "Amazon's 'Holy Grail' Recruiting Tool Was Actually Just Biased Against Women," Quartz, October 10, 2018, <https://qz.com/1419228/amazons-ai-powered-recruiting-tool-was-biased-against-women>.

Biases also impact venture capital (VC) and funding systems and disadvantage women-led startups, as has been discussed in our previous US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogues as well. In 2023, according to PitchBook, which tracks VC for women-founded companies in the United States and Europe, “The share of female co-founded VC capital was the highest on record..., 20.7% of total US VC funding. For female-only founded startups, however, that number was just 2%, the lowest it’s been since 2016.”⁵³ One roundtable participant who works in the VC field noted that her firm does not set quotas, but by using data-driven decision-making, they have succeeded in raising their investment in women-founded companies to 25 percent. She also noted that those who have succeeded have an obligation to reach out and mentor others.

5. Analyze the impact of government and industry guidance and incentives

In our report on the 2022 US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, we noted that quotas had been introduced in the United States to promote women in leadership positions (e.g., NASDAQ’s requirement that listed companies have women and minorities on their boards or explain why not), and that Japan’s Financial Services Agency now requires firms listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange to disclose their “policy and voluntary measurable targets” to ensure board diversity, and to publish the proportion 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. This topic arose again in this year’s Dialogue with regard to the STEM industry, as it was recommended that the proportion of women employees in STEM positions be disclosed by companies as well, and that economic incentives be provided to those who perform well both from private investors and from the government.

One Japanese business leader shared that she and a colleague carried out a small survey among members of the J-Win professional network to get a sense of how companies are utilizing women in STEM. What they found was that 95 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to have more women in STEM, but their company had no set goals or strategy to do so. They believe that introducing a KPI related to advancing women in STEM would be an important step for the private sector. They cautioned, however, that Japanese companies tend to set various target numbers for gender equity but either fail to take substantial action or take actions without ensuring that women’s ideas are reflected. Thus, KPIs should be accompanied by inclusive planning and action.

53. Jordan Rubio & Rosie Bradbury, “3 Takeaways from VC Funding for Female Founders,” Pitchbook, January 9, 2024, <https://pitchbook.com/news/articles/female-founders-vc-year-in-review-2023>.

Recommendations for US-Japan cooperation on women in STEM

Given the common challenges facing the United States and Japan when it comes to this topic, participants were asked to offer ideas on how the two countries could effectively work together to promote the sharing of best practices and knowledge, and to expand the opportunities for women in STEM. What follows are a number of the recommendations that emerged. One underlying theme was that it is important to seek out existing mechanisms and frameworks to explore if they can be expanded or reimaged to promote US-Japan cooperation on this issue, and to bring men into these dialogues to promote understanding and create allies.

K-12 level

- increase opportunities for students living in Japan and the US who are interested in STEM to interact online or through in-person exchanges to build a sense of belonging to a community across countries
- provide American and Japanese public-school teachers with resources and opportunities to learn from peers implementing effective active learning and inquiry-based learning in their classrooms (in-person or virtual exchanges)—e.g., what could Japan learn from the Million Girls Moonshot that might be adapted to the Japanese academic context?

University level

- conduct joint studies of best practices on (1) hiring to recruit and retain women faculty in STEM; and (2) inclusive curriculum in STEM learning for undergraduate/graduate students and continuing education for women who want to join the STEM workforce
- jointly establish an international Community of Practice (CoP) to exchange and promote strategies and practices to broaden perspectives and career opportunities in STEM
- create a government- or privately funded endowment to provide scholarships and grants to promote US-Japan study abroad and collaborative research opportunities for women in STEM—this could build on existing institutional arrangements, such as expanding the TOMODACHI-STEM Women’s Leadership and Research Program that brings 10 university students from Japan to the United States for short-term research internships (funded by Dow Chemical Japan), or creating a program that leverages current relationships such as that between Tsuda University and Spellman College

STEM business and entrepreneurship

- promote the strategic planning of career paths and roles and share best practices in both countries, for example in the area of skills-based hiring practices
- compare and analyze the impact of US and Japanese government and industry initiatives such as quotas and reporting requirements on corporate and investor behavior

- promote US-Japan collaboration to share the findings of the White House's initiatives to bring industry and academia together to assess needs and ensure a diverse workforce
- encourage public and private bilateral collaboration to provide continuing education with a focus on reskilling programs for women that enable them to keep up with and take advantage of rapid changes in technology
- convene existing STEM entrepreneurship support organizations for shared learnings and potential partnerships
- explore joint alternative funding and access to non-capital resources for women entrepreneurs in STEM fields
- convene existing fellowship and internship programs (entrepreneurship and STEM generally) for shared learnings and potential partnerships





Participants and Agenda

US-JAPAN WOMEN LEADERS DIALOGUE CO-CHAIR AND DELEGATION BIOS

CO-CHAIRS



Diana DEGETTE

Member, House of Representatives (D-CO)

Diana DeGette is now serving her 13th term representing Colorado's 1st Congressional District. DeGette recently served as one of nine impeachment managers who presented the House of Representatives case in the Senate trial against President Trump in January 2021. 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 (HHS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). 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

Member of the House of Representatives; Chairperson, Research Commission on Info-Communications Strategy, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

Upon graduation from the Department of Comparative Culture, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University, Seiko Noda joined the Imperial Hotel, where she became the first female salesperson in the International Sales department. She was officially adopted in 1984 by her grandfather, Uichi Noda, a Japanese politician who served as Secretary of the Economic Planning Agency and the Minister of Construction, and she carried on the Noda family name. Ms. Noda moved to Gifu Prefecture and was elected to the Gifu Prefectural Assembly in 1987. She was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1993 and has now won 10 consecutive elections. Ms. Noda has served in numerous roles, including Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Minister of State for Special Missions, Chairperson of the General Council of the LDP, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment, Chairperson of the Committee on Budget in the House of Representatives, and Acting Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party, and Minister of State for Special Missions (Regional Revitalization, Measures for Declining Birthrate, Gender Equality), Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment, Minister in Charge of Policies Related to Children, and Minister in Charge of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation. She currently serves as Chairperson, Research Commission on Info-Communications Strategy, LDP (2022). In January 2011, she gave birth for the first time at the age of 50 to a baby boy, after receiving a donor egg from the United States.

DELEGATION MEMBERS**Takae ITO**

Member, House of Councillors; Vice Secretary-General, Democratic Party for the People (DPFP)

Takae Ito is a Member of the House of Councillors representing Aichi Prefecture, elected in 2016 and 2022, and is Vice Secretary-General of the Democratic Party for the People (DPFP). She currently serves as Director of the Committee on Education, Culture and Science; Member of the Special Committee on Political Ethics and Election System; and Director of the Research Committee on National Life, the Economy and Local Affairs. She is also a member of the DPFP Child, Childcare, and Youth Research Committee, and Executive Director of the Nonpartisan Papa and Mama Parliamentary Group and the Assisted Reproductive Medicine Parliamentary Group. Born in 1975, Ms. Ito earned a degree in Japanese literature and began working for Television Osaka, later moving to Recruit, an advertising, publishing, and HR company. As a mother of two young children (aged 9 and 7 years), she campaigned on the promise of bringing a working mother's perspective to policies for Japan's future and on her belief that politics and people's lives are connected.

**Kyoko OKUTANI**

Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC; Executive Network Member, J-Win

Kyoko Okutani is Chief of Public Sector Healthcare Services (PSHC) Division of Deloitte Touch Tohmatsu LLC (DTTL) in the Kansai region of Japan. She joined DTTL in 2007, becoming a partner in 2014. She became concurrently Leader of Education Sector in 2016; Leader of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion activity in the PSHC Division in 2019; and Leader of Well-being activity in the PSHC Division in 2022. She is also Leader of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activity in the government and Public Services Industry of Japan, and a member of the Executive Network of the Japan Women's Innovative Network (NPO J-Win). Ms. Okutani graduated with a B.A. in business administration from Keio University in Tokyo, and joined Chuo Audit Corporation (Coopers & Lybrand) in Osaka in 1995.

**Aiko SHIMAJIRI**

Member, House of Representatives

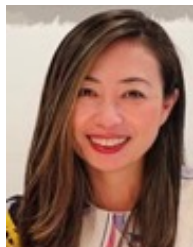
Aiko Shimajiri is a Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) Member of the House of Representatives, first elected in 2021. She is Director of the Special Committee on Okinawa and Northern Problems; member of the Committee on Internal Affairs and Communications and on Foreign Affairs; and Director of the Committee on Budget. She served as Special Advisor to the Minister, Cabinet Office in 2016, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, Minister of State for Space Policy, Minister in charge of Ocean Policy, and Minister in charge of Information Technology Policy in 2015. Ms. Shimajiri was also Parliamentary Vice-Minister, Cabinet Office in 2012–13. Ms. Shimajiri graduated from the Faculty of Humanities of Sophia University in Tokyo.



Kiyomi TSUJIMOTO

Member, House of Councillors

Kiyomi Tsujimoto was elected a Member of the House of Councillors (Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan [CDP]) in 2022. She is a member of the committees on Budget, Environment, and on the Constitution. Within the party, she is Deputy Director-General of the Office for Gender Equality Promotion and a former Executive Vice President. Born on 28 April 1960 in Nara, Ms. Tsujimoto was raised in Osaka and graduated from the School of Education of Waseda University in Tokyo. While still a student she established an NGO and has conducted private diplomacy with 60 countries around the world. At the 2000 Davos Forum, Ms. Tsujimoto was selected as one of the 100 Global Leaders for Tomorrow. She served seven terms as a Member of the House of Representatives and has been involved in the passing of numerous legislative acts, including the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, Act on Promotion of Specified Non-profit Activities, Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims, Information Disclosure Act, and Law for Punishing Acts Related to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Ms. Tsujimoto served as Senior Vice-Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (in charge of Transportation, Traffic, Tourism, and Crisis Management) in 2009 and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister in 2011.



Aya TSUMURA

Executive Officer, SMBC Trust Bank, Ltd.; Executive Network Member, J-Win

Aya Tsumura is Executive Officer, Special Assignment Sustainability/CSR of SMBC Trust Bank. She became Head of Customer Service in 2018 and Executive Officer of CX Promotion in 2019. Ms. Tsumura graduated from Gakushuin University in 1995, majoring in English and American literature. She joined Nikko Securities in 1995, Lehman Brothers in 1997, Goldman Sachs in 1999, and Citibank Japan in 2005. At Citibank Japan, Ms. Tsumura was Head of Retail Banking Control (2009–13), Human Resources (2013–2015), and Operations, until the Citibank Retail Division merged with Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG) in 2016. She is member of the Executive Network of the Japan Women's Innovative Network (NPO J-Win).

US-JAPAN STEM WORKING GROUP MEETING PARTICIPANTS

August 24, 2023

AISHA ALI, Executive Director, Career Girls**KIM GOULD ASHIZAWA**, Senior Advisor, JCIE/USA [*Moderator*]**TAKAKO HASHIMOTO**, Vice President, Professor, Chiba University of Commerce; Associate Member, Science Council of Japan; Former Chair, IEEE Women in Engineering**TOMOKO HAYASHI**, Director-General, Economic Research Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan**YUKO HAYASHI**, Professor, Graduate School of Innovation and Management, Yamaguchi University**HAYLEY HUTCHISON**, Program Officer, JCIE/USA**KAZUYO KATO**, Executive Director, JCIE/USA**HIDEKO KATSUMATA**, Executive Director, JCIE/USA**RIE KIJIMA**, Inaugural Director the Initiative for Education Policy and Innovation at the Centre for the Study of Global Japan, University of Toronto; Co-Founder, SKY Labo [*Rapporteur*]**MARIE KISSEL**, Senior Advisor, Government Affairs, Abbot**SIMONE PETRELLA**, CEO and President, CyberVista | N2K**ELIZABETH "LIBBIE" PRESCOTT**, Director, Fellowships Office, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [*NASEM*]**LINDSAY RYAN**, Executive Director, Economic Development, University System of Maryland; Former Chair, Women in Bio Capital Region Chapter**DESIRA STEARNS**, Board Member, Career Girls; Strategic Diversity Outreach Director, Leidos**HIFUMI TAJIMA**, Chief Program Officer**KATHY TAKAYAMA**, Executive Director for Professional Development and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Center for Professional Development & Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub), Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University**NAOMI WAKAYAMA**, Senior Director, Global Drug Metabolism and Pharmacokinetics, Eisai

INTEL ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

September 12, 2023

ELISSA ALBEN, Vice President and Head, Global Trade Policy & International Government Relations, Pfizer

KIM GOULD ASHIZAWA, Senior Advisor, JCIE/USA

ANN BAILEY, Executive Director, Government Relations, Morgan Stanley

KATE BEALE, Managing Director, Crowell & Moring LLP

AMY BURKE, Head of Global Policy & Strategy, HP

YASUKO FUMURO, Vice President & Deputy General Manager, Washington Office, Sumitomo Corporation of Americas

MONICA HE, Head of International Policy and Government Affairs, Organon

ALLIN HEDGE, Chief of Staff, International Government Affairs, Intel

MAKI HISHIKAWA, Vice President, International Affairs, Aflac International

NANCY HUNGERFORD, FTI Consulting

HAYLEY HUTCHISON, Program Officer, JCIE/USA

KAZUYO KATO, Executive Director, JCIE/USA

SARAH KEMP, Vice President of International Government Affairs, Intel

MARIE KISSEL, Senior Advisor for Government Affairs, Abbott

GREER MEISELS, Director of External Affairs, Intel

TOMOKO MULLANEY, Executive Director, US-Japan Business Council

AKANKSHA RAY, Global Program and Policy Manager, AI and Digital Readiness, Intel

HIFUMI TAJIMA, Chief Program Officer, JCIE/Japan

MELISSA TAN, Director and Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy Singapore, Japan, ANZ, APJ Public Policy, HP

PATRICIA WU, Vice President & Managing Director, Crowell & Moring International



US-JAPAN WOMEN IN STEM ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

September 14, 2023

Welcome & Introduction

KAZUYO KATO, Executive Director, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)

Opening Remarks by the Dialogue Co-Chairs

REP. DIANA DEGETTE, Member, House of Representatives

REP. SEIKO NODA, Member, House of Representatives

Additional Remarks by Legislators

REP. CHRISSY HOULAHAN, Member, House of Representatives

REP. AIKO SHIMAJIRI, Member, House of Representatives

Lead-Off Speakers

MODERATOR: **MARIE KISSEL**, Senior Advisor, Abbott; Trustee, JCIE/USA

RIE KIJIMA, Director, Initiative for Education Policy and Innovation, University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy; CEO, SKYLABO

SARAH KEMP, Vice President, International Government Affairs, Intel Corporation

MASAMI ONODA, Director, Washington DC Office, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, JAXA

HILA LEVY, Director for Science, Technology, and Workforce Strategy, National Security Council

Open Discussion

Closing Remarks

PEGGY BLUMENTHAL, Chair, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA); Senior Counselor to the CEO, Institute of International Education (IIE)

US-JAPAN WOMEN IN STEM ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

September 14, 2023

KAORI ARIOKA, Deputy Bureau Chief, NHK

PEGGY BLUMENTHAL, Chair, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA); Senior Counselor to the CEO, Institute of International Education (IIE)

JACLYN BRENNAN-MCCLEAN, 2022-2023 AAAS Science and Technology Fellow, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

MARY DEVLIN CAPIZZI, Partner, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

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 & Technology

PAIGE COTTINGHAM-STREATER, Executive Director, Japan-US Friendship Commission

DIANA DEGETTE, Member, House of Representatives (D-CO); Co-chair, US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue
[Speaker]

KIKKA HANAZAWA, Chair, Board of Directors, President, Fashion Girls for Humanity

MONICA HE, Head of International Policy and Government Affairs, Organon

DEBORAH HEMINGWAY, Managing Partner, Ecphora Capital

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AYAMI HOTTA, General Manager, Business Specific Security Solutions, Corporate Information Security Division, Sony Corporation of America

CHRISSY HOULAHAN, Member, House of Representatives (D-PA) [*Speaker*]

TAKAE ITO, Member, House of Councillors, Democratic Party for the People (DPFP)

YUKO KAKAZU, Astronomer and Sr. Specialist, Subaru Telescope; Education Ambassador, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST)

KAZUYO KATO, Executive Director, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA) [*Host*]

SARAH KEMP, Vice President of International Government Affairs, Intel [*Panelist*]

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, SKY Labo [*Panelist*]

MARIE KISSEL, Senior Advisor, Abbott; Trustee, JCIE/USA [*Moderator*]

DAIZO KOSA, General Manager, NTT Washington DC Representative Office

HILA LEVY, Director for Science, Technology, and Workforce Strategy, National Security Council [*Panelist*]

YOICHI MINEO, Senior Vice President & GM, Marubeni America Corporation

SUSAN MORITA, Co-chair, US-Japan Council, Former partner, Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP

SEIKO NODA, Member, House of Representatives, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); Co-chair, US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue [*Speaker*]

KYOKO OKUTANI, Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC; Executive Network Member, J-Win

MASAMI ONODA, Director, Washington DC Office, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, JAXA [*Panelist*]

SIMONE PETRELLA, CEO and President, CyberVista | N2K

JAKE SCHLESINGER, President, US-Japan Foundation

MONIKA SCHNEIDER, Director, Global Antimicrobial Resistance Policy, Shionogi; Former Chair, Women in Bio

AIKO SHIMAJIRI, Member, House of Representatives, LDP [*Speaker*]

KAYOKO SHIODA, Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, Boston University

DESIRA STEARNS, Board Member, Career Girls; Strategic Diversity Outreach Director, Leidos

HILARY STISS, Director, International Affairs, Managing Director, International Council of Biotechnology Associations, Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)

KATHY TAKAYAMA, Executive Director for Professional Development and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Center for Professional Development & Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub), Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST)

KIYOMI TSUJIMOTO, Member, House of Councillors, Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ)

AYA TSUMURA, Executive Officer, SMBC Trust Bank, Ltd.; Executive Network Member, J-Win

Observers

MAUREEN CRUZ, Director, Science, Regulation & Policy, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

SANDRA FISH, Journalist, Colorado Sun

TAKAHITO FUSHIKI, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan

LEE NAGAO, Principal, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

CHRIS SCHLOESSER, Deputy Chief of Staff & Legislative Director, Office of Rep. Diana DeGette

MAIKO TAKAHASHI, MSFS Candidate, Georgetown University

EMMA ZAFRAN, Senior Legislative Assistant, Office of Rep. Chrissy Houlahan

JCIE Staff

KIM GOULD ASHIZAWA, Senior Advisor, JCIE/USA

SIMEON BARRETT, Intern, JCIE/USA

KEVIN BAYES, Program and Administrative Assistant, JCIE/USA

HAYLEY HUTCHISON, 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:

Moving the Needle on Gender Equity through US-Japan Collaboration (2022)

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)

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