

# Creating female leaders who can truly accept Asia's diversity and work together to solve challenges



## YAMAMOTO, Eiko

Women Leaders Program to Promote Well-being in Asia Program member

### Bringing together a diverse mix of students and teachers from various fields

At the doctoral program in leadership education, "Women Leaders Program to Promote Well-being in Asia," four graduate schools of Nagoya University (the graduate schools of Medicine, Bioagricultural Sciences, International Development, and Education and Human Development) come together despite their divergent educational backgrounds in order to offer practical education on how to train future female leaders.

The program began in October of 2014, and the first generation of participants were 20 people (16 female, 4 male) from Japan, China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Jamaica, and were of varying ages and nationalities. This program involves a number of male participants who express strong concerns regarding gender equality, with teaching staff and involved parties coming from a variety of different backgrounds and fields. I am an obstetrician and gynecologist, and was astonished at how people from such divergent backgrounds could come together and collaborate so well, and sharing in their experiences helped me gain new perspectives. This is a field-uniting, boundary-crossing experience that perhaps only a university can truly offer, and I hope even students take advantage of this program to develop a wider perspective.

### Learning about Asia's problems and women's accomplishments through hands-on training overseas

In January of 2015, we held a hands-on training program in Vietnam, and investigated the on-the-ground realities of medicine and agriculture at each location. On the medical side of things, we paid visits to urban and regional hospitals. One on-the-ground reality our investigation revealed was that regional public hospitals tended to deliver 7,000 babies annually, while the largest national hospital in the southern region specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, located

in Ho Chi Minh City, delivered as many as 60,000 babies per year. What these numbers indicate is that patients tend to seek treatment from urban hospitals with more advanced equipment, a problem that certainly reminded our students of a similar problem in Japan regarding the difference in treatment capabilities of urban and regional hospitals.

I believe the program also provided our students with an opportunity to examine how social and familial structures supported the many female doctors working at those facilities, to compare them with such structures in Japan, and gave them a chance to think about women's participation in society more broadly.

Upon returning to Japan, we gave a presentation on our findings, but discovered that takeaways from the experience varied from person to person, with students and teachers presenting unique discoveries. Giving the students the opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts through research presentations provided an invaluable growth opportunity for our students.

### Understanding and accepting diversity, and encouraging accomplishments as female leaders across the globe

Two years from now, we plan to hold overseas hands-on training programs in Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia, and to have our students personally coordinate the details of their training. We hope our students will take that opportunity to think deeply on how they can practically utilize their expertise to bring true well-being to Asia. Through their personal experiences in the environments and cultures of the various Asian nations, students who participate in this program will certainly gain a greater ability to appreciate diversity, and use these experiences to broaden their human interactions. I hope that they take what they gained through this program to meaningfully contribute to the international community as strong, visionary, female leaders. And, eventually, I pray that they will take the knowledge they gain and use it to provide feedback on how Japan can improve its own social and gender issues.



## Program Outline

A program adopted by the MEXT in 2013. This will be the first female leader training program at a university. The program offers collaborative training of individuals from different fields, and focuses on solving the challenges faced by Asian countries of varying degrees of development in certain key areas, such as poverty, health, and gender inequality, with a particular focus on keywords deeply related to those challenges, "food, health, the environment, social systems, and education." The program seeks to develop globally-minded female leaders focused on realizing well-being in Asia that promotes physical, psychological, and sociological wellness, while assuring individual rights and self-realization.

### Well-being Overseas Fieldwork (Vietnam)

#### Medical care

- Tu Du Hospital (national obstetrics and gynecology hospital, Ho Chi Minh City)
- Mekong Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital (private obstetrics and gynecology hospital, Ho Chi Minh City)
- Nguyen Dinh Chieu Hospital (general hospital, Ben Tre Province / County)
- Service by midwives to visit newborns

#### Social activity

- School for handicapped students (Ben Tre Province)
- Peace Village (within Tu Du Hospital)

#### Female leaders

- Coconut confectionary factory (Female president, Ben Tre Province)
- Representative of NPO Japonica Agri

#### Agriculture

- Seeding Center (Ben Tre Province)
- Rice / cow / vegetable farmers (Ben Tre Province)
- Flower / banana / chicken / pig farmers (Hanoi)
- National Hanoi University of Agriculture



With the medical staff at Tu Du Hospital



At a farmer's home in Ben Tre Province



At a pig farm in Hanoi

## PROFILE

### YAMAMOTO, Eiko

Completed doctoral course in Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine in 2006. Doctor of Medicine. Presently serves as a designated associate professor at the Nagoya University Asian Satellite Campus Institute. Her fields of specialization are gynecological tumors and trophoblastic disease.