

# STUDY OF CAREER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN : DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCES

Mayumi Hori

Graduate School and Faculty of Business Administration, Hakuoh University  
Tochigi, JAPAN  
hori@fc.hakuoh.ac.jp

**Abstract:** *We are facing the rapid decreasing population caused by declining birth rate. To keep our nation growing, we need to cultivate the next generation's capabilities diverse global human resources which provide us higher quality of life. To create innovation, it is necessary to develop global human resources that possess advanced technical skills and composite abilities such as thought and management, and create new added value. Unfortunately, women's working condition is not the same as men's yet. Despite the increase in women's labour force participation rate and women's higher level of education, there are still women who experience sex discrimination in the working place where traditional concept of gender roles is still persisting. The aim of Global Human Resource Development is to overcome the students' "inward tendency" and to foster human resources who can positively meet the challenges and succeed in the global field, as the basis for improving the global competitiveness and enhancing the ties between nations. In this paper, I propose the career education for especially female students to globalize our workforce getting their empowerment to overcome the harsh working environment and keep their careers.*

**Keywords:** Global Human Resources, Career Education, Working Women, Globalization, Empowerment  
Active Learning

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Low birthrate, rapid increase of ageing people, globalization of the economy and business, and development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), these are mega trends that are forcing organizations to review and revise some of their traditional employment practices that were once the strengths of companies during the period of high economic growth. Consequently, ICT and these environmental shifts in society and business are having a strong impact on the labor environment. Combined with an increased presence of women in the workforce, these trends are forcing organizations to alter their traditional practice that women should play only a supporting role. Many organizations are now seriously exploring the potential of women as integral members of the team. Despite the increase in women's labour force participation rate and women's higher level of education, there are still women who experience sex discrimination in the working place where traditional concept of gender roles is still persisting.

For the sake of social system sustainability, the activity of women has become an urgent societal issue, as women represent one of the greatest sources of potential labor force. To keep our nation growing, we need to cultivate the next generation's capabilities diverse global human resources which provide us higher quality of life. To create innovation, it is necessary to develop global human resources that possess advanced technical skills and composite abilities such as thought and management, and create new added value. When doing so, it will essential to bolster the development of global human resources. In this paper, first I introduce working women's situation. And then, I propose the career education for especially female students to globalize our workforce getting their empowerment to overcome the harsh working environment and keep their careers.

## 2 WOMEN'S WORKING CONDITION

### 2.1 Back Ground

In Japan The Equal Employment Opportunity Law for Men and Women (1985) stipulated that employment must make an effort to offer women equal opportunity for employment and promotion and that they are prohibited from dismissing women employees who require maternity leave. A revision to this law was passed in 1997 which prohibits gender discrimination in job advertisements, hiring, assignment, and promotions. Though the childcare leave (1992) shows some effect as the number of women who take advantage of it is gradually increasing, improving their working environment and childcare infrastructure are still serious issues. It is difficult for working women with baby to continue to work.

The post-war Constitution of Japan clearly stipulates respect for the individual and equality under the law. Since the promulgation of the Constitution, Japan has consistently pressed forward with active efforts gender equality with the enactment of various legislations. The legal status of women has been radically improved. The average life expectancy of Japanese female is 86.99 years (2015), greater lifespan than the male average of 80.75 years. Japanese women have boasted one of the longest life expectancy of countries in the world since 1985. However, women remain under-represented in policy decision-making processes and women's labour force rate by age drops in their 30's, which is primary marriage and child-raising period. This suggests that opportunity for women to fulfill their potential and fully contribute to society remain insufficient<sup>1</sup>.

## 2.2 Gender Gap of Working Condition

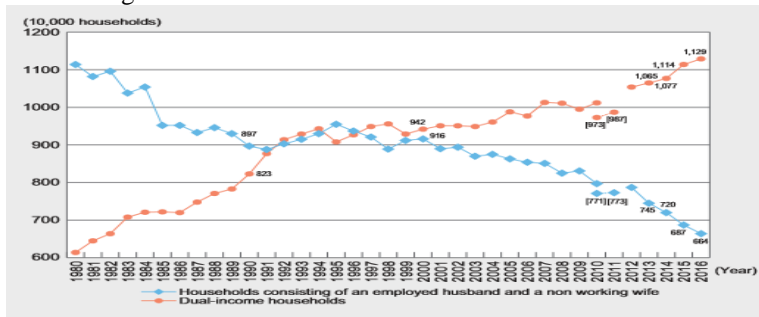
Recent trends for the Japanese working women suggest the changes in the quality of work as contributing factors of their environment as following: First, the Japanese working women are growing older as they extend the length of employment before having children and after finishing childcare. In recent year, the number of working women aged over 35 has increased remarkably, accounting for about 60% of the total number of working women. Second, after childcare many of them are employed as part-time workers because they work fewer hours and make their jobs compatible with their domestic duties even if they wish or not. Third, the number of working women with higher education has increased remarkably. Fourth, the types of job have changed since the mid 1970's as blue-collar occupation decreased while white-collar occupation increased. The number of female managers and officials has also increased appreciably.

Today, with advanced levels of education, more women are seeking positions to exercise their expertise, which would also entail them the independence and allow them to continue working without dropping out. Despite the increase in women's labour force participation rate and women's higher level of education, there are still women who experience sex discrimination in the working place where traditional concept of gender roles is still persisting. It was often said in Japan: "woman's place was in the home, man's was at work". This custom had long been a central value in male-female relations in Japan and this outdated tradition especially in old people is still causing enormous stress on the Japanese working women.

Gender equality in which men and women respect each other's rights and share responsibilities is urgent matter. Every society would provide every person the opportunity to make the most of their individual abilities and emphasize their individual characteristics regardless of gender. Although policies relating to a population's approach to work along with its values, needs, and demeanor differ depending on the shared culture and history of a particular country or company, the societal needs necessary for balancing work and life are becoming increasingly important, particularly within developed countries. In Japan, the number of women with higher levels of education and social advancement has steadily increased since the 1970's. The trend of women entering the workplace has given sway to a nationwide expectation, particularly in the face of an urgent labor shortage resulting from an aging population and a declining birthrate. As a result, it is essential to secure and maintain a competent women's workforce by creating a favorable environment for them to balance both work and family responsibilities. While the women's workforce has recently been recognized as playing a critical role in supporting industries and the larger Japanese economy, the social status and treatment of women has not necessarily improved. The conventional Japanese work centrism culture assumes the family's breadwinner to be a man who works outside of the home. Most of women assume the responsibility of housework.

Looking at the employment wives in households in which their husbands are employed (as salaried workers), in 1980 the number of single-income households (man was employed) was nearly double the number of dual-income households, however in the 1990s the number of dual-income households surpassed the number of those in which only the man was employed, and it continues to be on an upward trend in their number today (Figure 1)<sup>2</sup>.

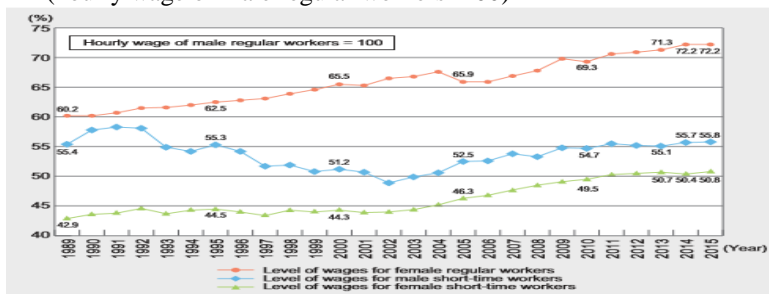
Figure 1 Number of Dual-Income Households



Source: [http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/pr\\_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf)

As for the wages, the gap between male and female still exists (Figure2)<sup>3</sup>. The gap wages between male regular workers and female regular workers is 73.0% (2016). The level of wages for male short-time workers and for female short-time workers were 55.8 and 50.8 (2015), respectively, against the level of wages for male regular workers being at 100. Compared to regular workers, the level of wages for short-time workers remains very low. In addition, although the wage disparity between men and women is decreasing, the average wage of female general employees is 27.0% lower than that of male general employees (as of 2016).

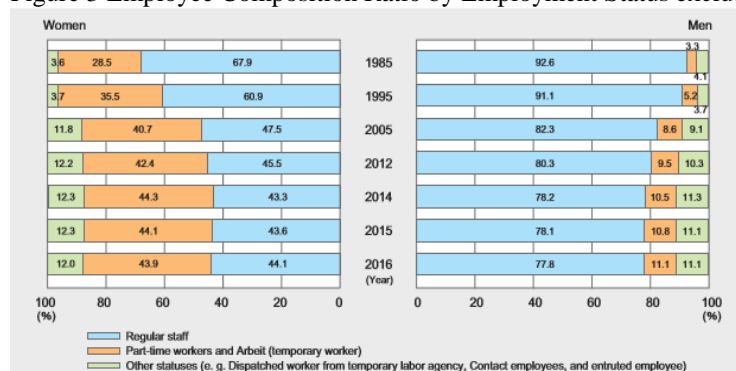
Figure2 Changes in Average Hourly Wages for Female Workers (hourly wage of male regular workers=100)



Source: [http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/pr\\_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf)

The graph indicates the declining proportion of regular staffs in recent years. Particularly, female regular staffs declined to less than half of the female labour force from 67.9% (1985) to 44.1% (2016)(Figure3)<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 3 Employee Composition Ratio by Employment Status excluding Company Executives



Source: [http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/pr\\_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men17/pdf/1-3.pdf)

Though there is a vast increase in women's labour force participation in a labour market, there are not a few women who experience the discrimination in the working conditions in Japan. The number of female employment is 25million (male: 31million) (2016) which accounts for 44.2% of all employees.

The number of female employees aged 35 and over has increased remarkably, accounting for 71.8% of the total number of female employees. The trends in female labor force participation rates in the industrial countries continuously have been increased<sup>5</sup>.

Many working women are working mainly in service industries, such as wholesaling and retailing, food services, banking, insurance and other services. An increasing number of female workers, who went on to higher education at university and graduate school want to perform the core functions in companies and other organizations according to their abilities and wishes. On the other hand, there has been a marked increase in the number of part-time workers. There are 13.67 million part-time female workers(2016). They account for 55.0% of the nation's female employees. The ratio of part-time workers to all employed females is expected to go on increasing in the future.

Recently, employment patterns have been particularly diversified. Part-time workers, temporary employees, contract workers and other non-regular workers account for a higher percentage both for men and women. This trend is particularly noticeable among female workers. There are still women who experience sex discrimination in the working place where traditional concept of gender roles is still persisting. However, with the change of the social and economical environments, the society is accepting women and making more use of their ability. For instance, many companies have improved the personnel system to comply with equal employment between men and women.

Female employment has increased in Japan and the proportion of female workers is almost the same as levels seen in Western countries. On the other hand, although the proportion of women in managerial positions is increasing slightly, as of 2016 it remains at a low level (13.0%) significantly lower than levels in Western countries and in Asian countries such as Singapore and Republic of the Philippines.

Looking at the circumstances of women over time between the years 1970 and 2014, the average life expectancy of women has increased. At the same time, we see an increase in the mean age at first marriage and mean age at first child birth. The impact of delayed marriage and birth has resulted in Japan's total fertility rate falling from 2.13(1970) to 1.44 (2016).

Although women in Japan who return to work after childbirth and childrearing often re-enter the workforce as non-regular employees, the proportion of women who wish to shift from non-regular employment such as temporary or part-time work to regular employment is high. It is inevitable to facilitate the transition of female staff from non-regular to regular positions and to improve their working conditions in order to increase the options of flexible working styles for women and to improve the working environment to become one where female workers can fully demonstrate their ability.

### 2.3 Workforce Rate by Age

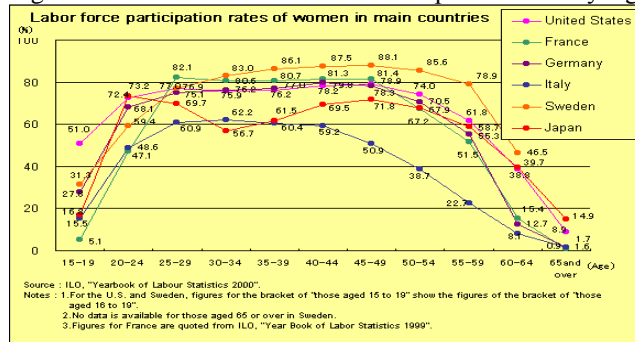
Looking at the female workforce rate by age in Japan, there is clearly a stronger tendency for women to drop out during the child-rearing years (Figure4). The labor force participation rate of women shows an M shaped curve, as labour force participation rate declines during the periods in a woman's life when she marries, bears children and raises them. The curve has M shaped curve with two peaks in those aged 25 to 29 (81.7%) and those aged 45 to 49 (78.5%) and with a bottom in those aged 35 to 39(71.8%)at childbirth and child care (2016). The latent labour force participation rate has a less concave portion than the labour force participation rate. Therefore, it would suggest that woman's aspirations to work are not being realized. The bottom of M has been rising to a trapezoid shape. The age of engaging in childrearing became older because of late marriage and late childbirth. The period of childrearing has shortened because of bearing fewer children<sup>6</sup>.

The women's labour force participation rate by age group shows Japanese M shaped curve that bottoms out in the 30s. That shows many women still quit their jobs at the time of marriage, childbirth, and child-rearing. The prominent aspect of the M curve indicates that the rate for women's labor hits its bottom between 30 and 39 years old of age. In Korea there is the same phenomenon. This feature is inconsistent with that of other advanced countries which draws a trapezoid shaped curve not M shaped for a number of reasons: a favorable working environment for working women through measures to harmonize working life and childrearing, the relative ease of switching between full-time and part-time jobs, and greater degree of advancement to higher education among women. That is to say that many Japanese women enter the workforce as permanent employees after graduating from university. However, after marriage they tend to leave their jobs to give birth and raise children. Once the children reach the ages of 4-9 years old, women prepare to return to the workforce, many of whom obtain only part-time status. If women who wish to participate in the labour force and added to the curve of women's labour force participations, the "M" form changes into a trapezoid, which is similar to the form observed in industrial countries (Figure4). As for the time useaged by married coupled in typical Japanese families,

husband spend significantly fewer hours at home, raising children, nursing care, regardless of whether their wives are working or not. Working women have a double burden to work and to take care of housekeeping.

Once the U.S.A in the 1960s, the United Kingdom until the early 1990s and even Sweden were the same situation formed the M shaped curve. In recent decades, the M shaped curve has been disappearing in most of the advanced Western countries although Japan and Korea still show it<sup>7</sup>. In recent decades, the M shaped curve has been disappearing in most of the advanced Western countries although Japan and Korea still show it. However, the bottom of M shaped curve is inching up, as is the drop-out age. As more couples marry later than ever, more women receiving higher education, and more women placing a higher priority on work than family, numerous attitudes toward work have been changing.

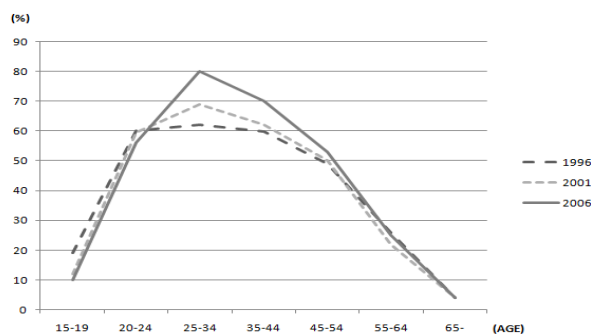
Figure4 Women's Labour Force Participation Rates by Age International Comparison



Source: ILO "Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2000"

Looking at the status of working women in Taiwan<sup>8</sup>, it shows triangle (Figure5). Though the female working force rate is gradually up year by year, it descends rapidly on the boundary of 34 years old. Labour work force rate is male 67.2%, female 49.4% (2007) compared with Japanese male is 73.1%, female 48.5% (2007). In Taiwan male labour force rate is decreased, on the other hand female labour force is increased year by year. Taiwan need to explore ways to bring the triangles closer to trapezoids.

Figure5 Women's Labour Force Participation rate in Taiwan



Source: <http://statdb.cla.gov.tw/html/nat/table1.8.doc>

On these hard working condition, working women have to get their own empowerment. At the same time, long working hours and traditional working styles must be changed in order to create a society in which businesses are flexible enough to handle the needs and skills of each employee individually. This is a critical issue toward facilitating diverse living styles and creating a society in which both men and women can live and thrive. Achieving a diversity in work styles and lifestyles will enhance our nation's ability to adapt to social change. This change is necessary if Japan is to continue its strong economic and social growth. Additionally, this change is vital for Japan in tackling the challenges of a low birth rate and an aging population.

### 3 FUNDAMENTAL COMPETENCIES FOR WORKING PERSONS

#### 3.1 Three Competencies and Twelve Factors

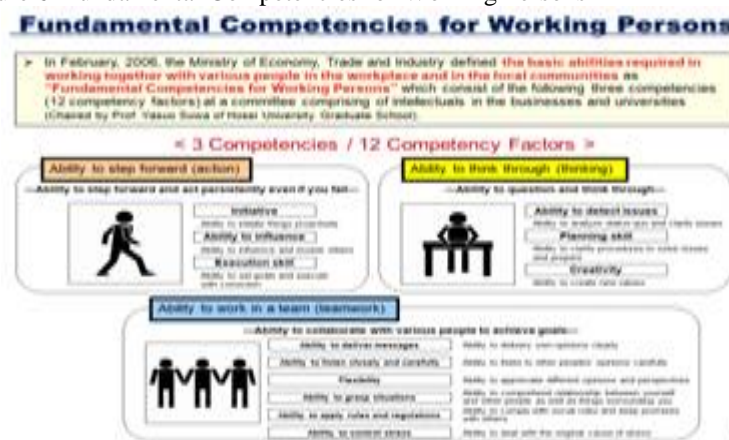
Supporting young generation, especially female students to enhance their communication ability to exchange their opinions with foreign people whose language and culture are deferent is required, without hesitating but in a proactive manner. Playing a vital role in developing highly capable human resources, universities are strongly expected to work on internationalizing their education and research environments. Universities should do our works to develop the global human resources who will have a mindset that can understand other cultures premised on in-depth understanding of own culture and their own identity. It is imperative to promote internationalization of universities in order to educate human resources who are capable of challenging and acting on the global stage, and to improve the international competitiveness of higher education. An increasing number of universities have established systematic and continuous programs by collaborating with foreign universities through credit transfer and double degree programs. It is urgent to expand study abroad opportunities at the higher-education level to foster the true global human resources so that they can survive against international competition in the future.

In February, 2006, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry defined the basic abilities required in working together with various people in the workplace and in the local communities as “Fundamental Competencies for Working Persons” which consist of the following three competencies (12 competency factors) (Figure 6) at a committee comprising of intellectuals in the businesses and universities<sup>9</sup>.

3 Competencies are as follows:

- 1) Ability to step forward (action):  
The ability to step forward and act persistently even if you fail. The competency factors are Initiative (ability to initiate things proactively), influence (ability to influence and involve others), and Execution skill (ability to set goals and execute with conviction).
- 2) Ability to think through (thinking):  
The ability to question and think through. The competency factors are ability to detect issues (ability to analyze status quo and clarify issues), planning skill (ability to clarify procedures to solve issues and prepare), and creativity (ability to create new values).
- 3) Ability to work in a team (teamwork):  
The ability to collaborate with various people to achieve goals. The competency factors are ability to deliver messages (ability to delivery own opinions clearly), ability to listen closely and carefully (ability to listen to other peoples’ opinions carefully), flexibility (ability to appreciate different opinions and perspectives), ability to grasp situations (ability to comprehend relationship between yourself and other people as well as things surrounding you), ability to apply rules and regulations (ability to comply with social rules and keep promises with others), and ability to control stress (ability to deal with the original cause of stress).

Figure 6 Fundamental Competencies for Working Persons



Source: <http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/kisoryoku/>, 2017/08/28

In addition to the basic academic ability (reading, writing, writing, mathematics, basic ICT skills, etc.),

expertise (knowledge and qualifications necessary for work) and the basic skills necessary for doing work with people by the basic skill of social workers (ability to utilize basic academic skills and expertise, ability to operate the society (basic people of society) is required). Human nature, fundamental Life habits (caring, public mind, ethics, basic manners, doing things around yourself firmly) are also necessary.

### **3.2 Skill for New Century**

The society is changing drastically. With the acceleration of globalization, the adoption of talented people regardless of nationality is becoming common. In addition to the fundamental competencies for working persons, environmental adaptability, language adaptability and ICT utilization power are required.

ATC21st (Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills) as a new skill for the 21st century were proposed at ATC21st (Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills) in 2009 by the University of Melbourne, Microsoft, Intel, Cisco Systems<sup>10</sup>.

The purposes of the project are as follows<sup>11</sup>.

- Mobilise international educational, political and business communities to make the transformation of educational assessment and, hence, instructional practice a global priority
- Specify in measurable terms high-priority understanding and skills needed by productive and creative workers and citizens of the 21st century
- Identify methodological and technological barriers to ICT-based assessment
- Develop and pilot new assessment methodologies
- Examine and recommend innovative ICT-enabled, classroom-based learning environments and formative assessments that support the development of 21st century skills

The following skills are proposed for the 21st century<sup>12</sup>.

- Critical thinking ability and ability to solve problems
- Communication and collaboration (teamwork) ability
- Ability to learn autonomously
- Ability and ability to handle ICT reliably
- Global awareness and awareness as a social citizen (regional and global)
- Education for finance and economics
- Acquisition of general education (Understanding and Creativity for language, mathematics, science, arts, and history)
- Collaborative solving ability (Social & Cross-culture Skills) (Diversity and Intercultural Understanding)

In these backgrounds globalization, progress of ICT and the speed of knowledge and technology has been rapidly increased, and the contents and types of job are changing accordingly. We need ICT to respond to problems newly occurring every day, and to work with people with expertise in correspondence. In order to survive the period of rapid change, skills such as problem solving skills and communication skills are necessary besides knowledge such as ICT, mathematics, science and so on. In the era of working and competing with people with diverse cultural backgrounds, the formation of qualitative abilities to live in the global society is essential.

## **4. PROPOSAL OVERSEAS PROGRAM**

### **4.1 Active Learning**

In order to utilize the Fundamental Competencies and the new skills effectively for education, I propose the overseas program which I have carried out for 6 years. The aim of the program is to get cultivate general capabilities (cognitive, theoretical, social, and cultural skills as well as broad knowledge and experience) through students' own proactive quest with active learning. The program entails discovery learning, problem-solving learning, experience learning, and explorative learning. It offers two credits and entails completing pre and post guidance, overseas program at local companies and compiling a final report.

At universities in Japan, most of classes are often offered in the didactic lecture style where many students are enrolled, and it is only recently that they began to promote a more "Active Learning" style in classes. Examples of an active learning style include students preparing and giving presentations, then

taking part in discussions and debates, or university offering experience-based classes such as domestic and overseas fieldwork and volunteering. More universities have started offering internship programs where students visit companies, collect information, conduct research, and find agendas on their own, then seek clues to address these problems through hands-on experience.

Students who enrolled in the class (credit course) can participate in the program. The class aims to teach business communication skills that are the foundation and basic requirements for global human resources, and are imperative for smooth interaction and transaction with colleagues and clients from a variety of backgrounds. Furthermore, it aims to teach cross-cultural communication skills and presentation skills that are essential for global human resources to exercise leadership, especially when major Japanese companies such as Toyota and Nissan rely on more than 70% of their sales from countries outside of Japan in a progressively globalized world economy. The program invites instructors with experience in international businesses to teach with a hands-on learning approach, as well as industry experts operating globally as guest speakers to give lectures. Moreover, in response to a pre-guidance request from students, the program invites a master of international protocols to teach table manners and etiquette at a French restaurant with a full-course dinner.

## 4.2 Summary

Below is the summary of the overseas program in New York (2016).

Day0:	Arrive at New York
Day 1:	All day: Visit commercial facilities in New York City: The Museum of Modern Art, The New York Public Library, Broadway musical theatres, luxury brand stores, etc.
Day 2:	Morning: Orientation Afternoon: The United Nations (UN) tour Evening: The Ride NYC bus tour
Day 3:	Morning: Visit Moses & Singer LLP, a New York City law firm Afternoon: Tour of Columbia University
Day4:	Morning: Courtesy visit to Consulate General of Japan in New York Afternoon: Lecture at JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) New York office Evening: Lectures from Japanese guest speakers working in New York
Day 5:	Morning: Visit and Lecture at Bloomberg Afternoon 1: Lecture at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN Afternoon 2: Debate at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC. (PwC)
Day 6:	Morning: Alexander Technique lesson and lecture Afternoon: Lecture at Kodansha USA Inc. Evening: Cross industry networking
Day 7:	All day: Visit of cultural facilities in New York as a creative city: Indoor complexes such as Chelsea Market, Macy's, etc.
Day 8:	Depart to Japan

## 5.CONCLUSION

We need to cultivate the next generation's capabilities diverse global human resources which provide us



higher quality of life. To create innovation, it is necessary to develop global human resources that possess advanced technical skills and composite abilities such as thought and management, and who will create new added value. Employment conditions continue to change as structural shifts in industries and economies are resulting in further diversification and mobility of labour, and lifetime job security has become a remnant of the past. With human power considered to be the most important resource in Japan, declining participation among youth in the workforce is a concerning trend that may lead to lower productivity. In order to cope with these issues, it is essential to provide female students with career education that enhances their qualifications for becoming highly capable professionals, and motivates them to enter the workforce.

In career education, it is also essential to foster human resources that one can trust and rely on. For that goal, students must be able to think critically without prejudice, and assert their opinions clearly. In order to articulate one's opinion on a timely manner and persuade others, logical thinking and debate skills, as well as English fluency to communicate ideas are all crucial, hence these skills must be trained in early years. Japanese students often tend not to speak up even when they have their own opinions due to their shyness and fear of making mistakes, or fear of standing out in public. Likewise, teaching them explicitly at home and school the importance of actively speaking up is a good thing to do. Structured and integrated explicit knowledge that academic courses at universities provide is objective and rational knowledge. In order to acquire this, our overseas career program is highly effective as it entails an active learning method through hands-on experience and practice which efficiently converts explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. It is necessary for career education to nurture human resources who can gain insight into systems not visible to the world, persuade people and think about realistic correspondence for it.

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